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THE AUSTRALIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

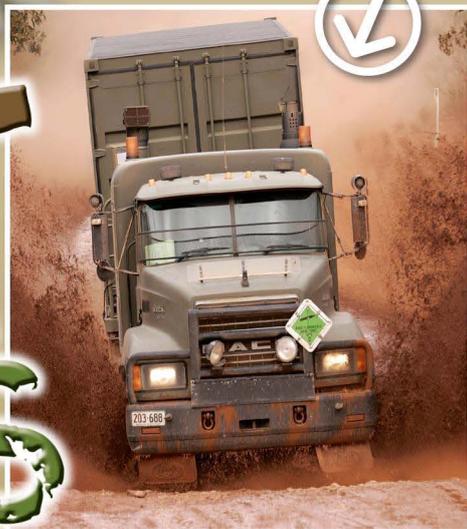


**AL MUTHANNA
TASK GROUP**

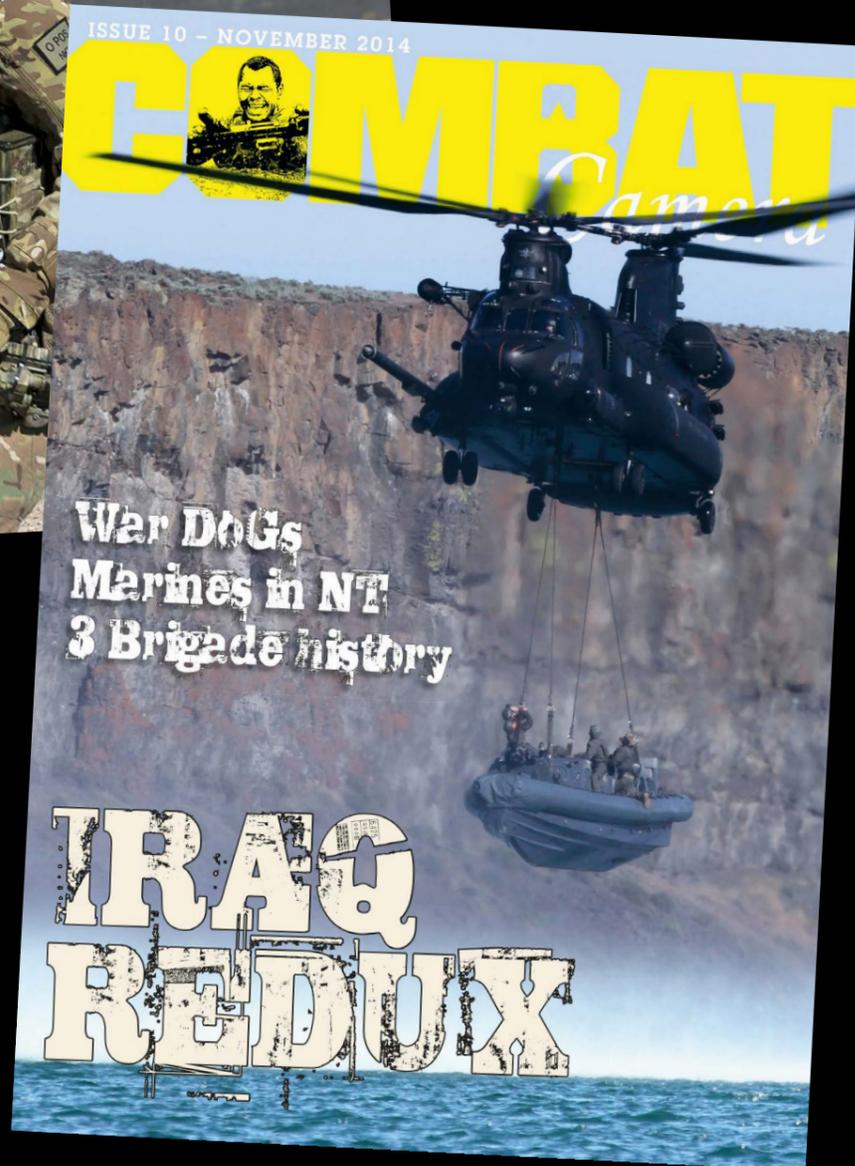
IRAQI OPERATIONS CONTINUE

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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.



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Issue 8 – December 2005

CONTACT

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Published by Contact Publishing Pty Ltd
PO Box 3091 Minnamurra, NSW 2533, AUSTRALIA
www.militarycontact.com

Printed by Pirion, Fyshwick, ACT

CONTACT – AIR LAND & SEA is published in March, June,
September and December each year. All advertising,
subscription and general enquiries should be
addressed to the editor.

Subscriptions \$34 per year (incl GST, postage and
handling within Australia). Check web site for costs
to other countries. Fill out credit card details on the
subscription form available in this issue, send a cheque
or money order made payable to Contact Publishing,
with the completed form, to the editor, or use our
secure on-line credit card subscription page on our
web site – www.militarycontact.com

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stamped, self-addressed envelope if material is to be returned.

RIGHT: Editor CONTACT Air Land & Sea Brian Hartigan with 1MSU mascot
'Bob'. This photo was taken in Dili, East Timor, during a visit in June 2000.
Bob died (coincidentally) days later. "Bob is not a lawney frogmouth!"

The first thing I'd like to talk about this issue is your response
to our competition giveaways. I think there's a psychological
phenomenon going on here that some bright uni student could
do an interesting thesis on.

It would seem that the more valuable the prize, the fewer of you are
interested in having it – or so it seems. My theory is that you all think to
yourselves, "Self, this is such a great prize that everyone will enter the
competition, so I won't bother". And when almost all of you think that
way, almost all of you fail to send an entry.

For those who do, the odds of winning become very good. But for me,
it gets very embarrassing when I have to tell the donor of the prize that
only x number of people entered (x being a very small number).

Then, it gets very hard to convince other suppliers that they should
give me nice prizes to give to you. So, please, for your sake and mine,
just send me an email. How hard can 25 words (or whatever) be?

Getting back to business. I'm very pleased to serve up another
smorgasbord of stories in this issue, just in time for your Christmas
reading pleasure.

First, just before the last issue went to print, I was asked to go bush.
As a soldier, of course, I had been bush several times before, but this
was different. Lear jet, one-night stay, guided tours – I was impressed.

Anyway, despite my luxury, the boys and girls at RAAF Base Scherger
were doing the hard yards, and it's my pleasure to report on their
successful efforts.

Next up is AJ Shinner's second instalment, the first of which generated
more feedback than just about anything else we've published. Quite
a few readers wanted to find out from AJ how to go about getting a
contract in Iraq. While AJ was very accommodating with personal
responses, you'll see from his conclusion that it's not easy and he is as
keen as anyone to go again – but can't seem to land a repeat gig. So,
while both he and I are happy to answer questions, please understand
that we may not have the answers you want to hear.

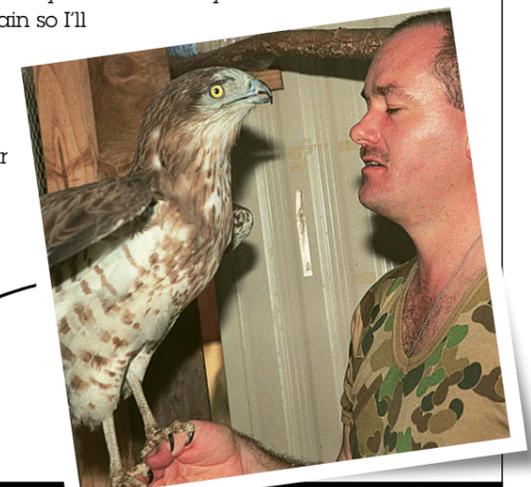
Iraqi coverage continues over the next two features. First, Corporal
Cameron Jamieson reports again on the activities of the Al Muthanna
Task Group. Then "Duke" gives us an insight into how exciting one of
the ADF's longest-running exercises can be. "Rocket attack on his first
night..." And, yes, that's incoming live-fire rockets we're talking about.

The main feature covers a very interesting subject that has long been
requested of me – snipers. I set out to discover what makes them tick and
what it's like to be a sniper, and what I found was a profession where
patience, doggedness and the right psyche are as important as being a
skilled marksman. I also discovered that it's a profession of great passion
and dedication – and is definitely suited to a very select few.

Space has beaten me again so I'll
simply sign off with the
assurance that there's
plenty more for everyone.

So for now, merry
Christmas, happy New Year
and see you in March.

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
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NETHERLAND AIR FORCE
 GERMAN AIR FORCE
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 KSK - GERMANY
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 ROYAL MARINES
 US SPECIAL FORCES - UZBEKISTAN
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PEOPLE WHO KNOW.

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INCOMING

SUSTAINED BURST...

I bought the mag the second day it was out and yep, read it cover to cover, word by word.

So what did I think? Well, from the moment I picked it up, it was hard to put down – definitely some of the best stories in there I ever read. Wayne Cooper's "Communication breakdown" was great. I can't wait to read the next issue of his tour in Somalia.

The fitness column was also really good. It sets the record straight on what is needed from a soldier, fitness wise. I'm really looking forward to the next edition.

I'm just flicking through the magazine now as I'm writing this, having a look at what I really liked and, you know what, as I turn every page I see something that interests me and was a great read!

So, saving you from reading a five-page email complementing every part of the mag, I'll just say thanks – thanks for another great issue and for expanding my knowledge of what the Australian Defence Force stands for and does.

Jakub M

I would like to correct a letter you published in issue #6 regarding the Edinburgh Military Tattoo written by Jakub Marciniak.

I was a performer at the Tattoo as a member of the Royal Australian Air Force. The letter said that the precision drill was the RAAF, but in fact it was the Queen's Colour Squadron, Royal Air Force, RAF Regiment who performed the display.

Although elements of the Australian Federation Guard's (AFG) Precision Drill Team (PDT) was there, they did not perform as the PDT, but performed with

the rest of AFG providing the Royal Guard at the opening and closing of the ceremony, which is their primary function.

Vaughn A

Thanks for a great magazine. I've got every copy.

The reason I decided to say thank you is because you give a different look at the armed forces of Australia, and having quite a few friends in the Army or just out, CONTACT gives me a better base to understand the stories they come back with, a context of understanding what they are doing and a few good-quality snap-shots of where they have been (some places haven't been that crash hot).

So, thanks to the Armed Forces of Australia – there is nobody better for the job – and thanks to the CONTACT team for bringing what they do to me and other readers.

Richard C

I felt the need to write to you and offer my compliments on this terrific magazine. I'm a civilian who has tried to enlist in the Navy, but was knocked back on medical grounds. However, I do like to keep myself informed on what is going on in the ADF. I have found your magazine to be a great way to do this, with such a wide range of interesting and informative articles. The one thing I like is that it is not just Army focused and covers different areas in all three services.

Despite the fact it costs a bit more, it's of a better standard and pleasing to the eye. You have made a terrific magazine, keep up the good work.

Ayden C

RAPID FIRE...

Kee up the good work with the mag. It is without a doubt the most informative one out there. Just wish it was a monthly mag – hopefully in the future?

Steven R

Anything's possible, Steven, but a lot depends on advertising support rather than reader support. Time will tell – Ed

G'day, just saying congratulations on another great mag. Awesome stories, particularly the Iraq ones. Keep up the great work.

Clarkey

I like your magazine. I was just looking at your article on the Rainbow Warrior. My man Shane was the first navy diver on the scene after the bombing. He had to look for unexploded limpet mines.

Mandi M

ON TARGET...

This issue's best letter wins a 3ltr Hydrapac worth \$115, from Cool Kit Australia – visit www.coolkit.com.au

Fantastic job on the magazine – I love reading it.

I am the recruit platoon commander at 22/29ACU and am also on my way to Kapooka in January. I'm going to the RACT, just like my father, who has just returned from service in Iraq.

My family goes way back with the Defence Force – my mother was a sailor in the RAN, my grandfathers and great grandfathers too. Come to think of it, my dad and I are the only ones to join the army – lol.

I just wanted to say, I can't wait to join and I will try my very best to make the Defence Force and Australia proud.

Jason D

Jason, best of luck at Kapooka – I know you'll enjoy it - and perhaps this Hydrapac will help you through it – Ed



WEB POLL (CLOSED)...

"Should women be allowed to serve in front-line units?" Result – No 66%, Yes 34%
 Anyone can vote – some of our registered users posted the following comments

Not everyone agrees but I voted yes because if they really want to serve on the front-line they can, but under restrictions. For example, if an attack was to take place they wouldn't be in the first two or three waves of attack.

kendog

I guess a lot of people would say yes, but not me. One comment talks about women on picket in East Timor being on the front line. Well, let's get one thing clear, women were not on the forward areas in Timor. Maliana is a few kilometres from the border and heavily secured to say the least.

The infantry ran the jp's and I can say there weren't too many women in those junction points, none that I recall.

As far as being forward, well that's

another story altogether. I was lucky enough to be the member of a small unit that was as forward as you could go without being in West Timor. Sometimes even the grunters were sitting behind us and away from the border.

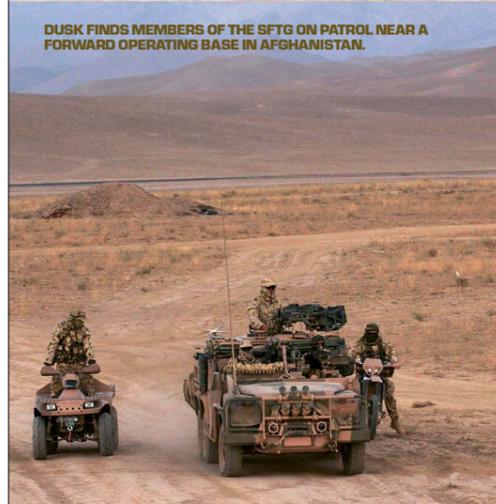
The only soldiers who can really say they were on the "front" were MRECFOR, and my hat goes off to those men. Brave buggers by any standard.

Hatchett131

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



AIR LOAD TEAM MEMBERS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN SFTG UNLOAD EQUIPMENT OFF A US AIR FORCE C-130 HERCULES IN AFGHANISTAN WHILE US ARMY CH47 CHINOOKS DEPART IN THE BACKGROUND.



DUSK FINDS MEMBERS OF THE SFTG ON PATROL NEAR A FORWARD OPERATING BASE IN AFGHANISTAN.



AN AUSSIE SOLDIER FROM THE AUSTRALIAN SFTG FIRES AN ANTI ARMOUR ROCKET IN AFGHANISTAN.

PICS BY SERGEANT JOHN CARROLL, 1JPAU



AUSSIE SPECIAL FORCES PATROL AFGHANISTAN — AGAIN

An Australian Special Forces Task Group (SFTG) is again operating in the deserts and mountains of Afghanistan following a Government decision to redeploy our troops on Operation Slipper.

The group is tasked with conducting special operations in support of US-led Coalition security and reconstruction efforts in the country.

Although information on their activities is strictly controlled by Defence, limited reports of firefights involving SAS members have been released. At least one Australian was injured in one incident in early October, but his injuries were reported as minor and he resumed duties after treatment.

Australia's special-forces professionalism and the experience built up working with other countries over many years, and specifically their experience in Afghanistan on the previous deployment, is highly valued by coalition partners involved in the operation.

SFTG's deployment has also been welcomed by the government of Afghanistan where it is adding an important and valued contribution to coalition forces' efforts to bring improved security and stability.

The SFTG deployment is an important part of Australia's involvement with the international community to combat international terrorism.

AUSTRALIAN SPECIAL FORCES TASK GROUP MEMBERS ON PATROL AT LAST LIGHT NEAR A FORWARD OPERATING BASE IN AFGHANISTAN. PHOTO BY CAPTAIN AL GREEN, 1JPAU.



DIESEL QUADS DELIVERED

Roush of England, who have begun delivery of a diesel-powered quad bike to the British defence forces, has extended its range of planned variants to include fully road-legal units and a two-seater option.

A full-time 6x6 all-wheel-drive variant will feature a 1.9-litre naturally aspirated diesel engine, coupled to fully automatic transmission and torque converter.

Kerb weight for the base platform is just 795kg, permitting a payload of more than 1000kg.

The machine uses high flotation tyres to achieve low ground pressure and a 32-litre fuel tank provides adequate range in standard guise.

Being diesel, the same as other military vehicles, will rationalise resupply lines.

The quad bike, initially ordered by the defence forces, boasts a torquey twin cylinder 686cc diesel engine, matched to a Roush-designed transmission. Front- and rear-rack payloads are 45kg and 90kg respectively, in addition to a towed gross-trailer-load of up to 500kg.



THE 1.9 LITRE DIESEL-POWERED UTILITY VEHICLE FROM ROUSH. PIC COURTESY OF ROUSH.

TWO PATROL BOATS COMMISSIONED

Two new Armidale Class patrol boats were officially named in October and will be in service by the end of the year. The naming ceremony, held at the Austal ship construction facility in Western Australia, saw NUSHIPs Larrakia and Bathurst christened.

"The two Armidale Class patrol boats named today will join HMAS Armidale in service before the end of the year, further strengthening Navy's capability to intercept and apprehend vessels suspected of illegal fishing, and quarantine, customs or immigration offences," Defence Minister Robert Hill said.

Three days later, and just two days into her service life, HMAS Armidale assisted Customs officers to apprehend a suspected illegal fishing vessel following "a dangerous and difficult chase off northern Australia", Minister for Justice and Customs Chris Ellison said.

Both the ACV Roebuck Bay and HMAS Armidale were forced to fire warning shots after the fishing-boat crew deployed anti-boarding poles and set them on fire, brandished knives and machetes, and threw lead weights and burning objects at the Customs boarding party.

F18 BOMBS GET SMARTER

Australia's F/A-18 fighter jets will soon be equipped with 'smart' bombs that can be accurately dropped during day or night and all weather conditions.

Boeing's Joint Direct Attack Munition - JDAM - solution was selected after a thorough evaluation across a range of areas including operational capability, level of current integration on F/A-18 aircraft, cost and risk.

Defence Minister Robert Hill said the new 'smart' bomb technology used Global Positioning System (GPS) guidance that can be used for dropping general purpose and penetrator bombs.

"The new guidance kits will transform the aircraft's existing inventory of bombs into 'smart' bombs with vastly improved accuracy and precision," he said.

"Improved bomb accuracy increases the effectiveness of our F/A-18 strike capability and reduces the risk of collateral damage."

Total cost of the project is more than \$50 million and will be in service in 2008.

GAME UP FOR FIGHTER PILOTS

Defence has turned to the Internet in its latest campaign aimed at recruiting new pilots.

Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence De-Anne Kelly recently launched an on-line game called ADF Aviator, building on Defence Force Recruiting's use of on-line technology to attract people to the ADF.

The game, which joins a number of challenging exercises already on the defencejobs website, will show potential recruits what it takes to be a pilot in the Navy, Army or Air Force.

"This innovative recruiting tool was commissioned as part of an integrated



A US AIR FORCE F-15E STRIKE EAGLE DROPS A JDAM GPS-GUIDED BOMB. PHOTO BY CAPTAIN JOE ESLER, USAF.

marketing strategy aimed at attracting people to the defencejobs website," Mrs Kelly said.

"Games also encourage positive approaches to learning because they often immerse players in complex worlds, encourage the player to keep on trying, reward persistence and encourage experimentation."

On-line games create a community of interest in the many activities undertaken by the ADF and have proven to be a valuable tool in gaining the attention of young Australians. www.defencejobs.gov.au has almost tripled its hit rate in just over a year.

UPGRADED ORIONS GULF BOUND

A group of 80 Air Force members from RAAF Base Edinburgh deployed on rotation to the Middle East Area of Operations in September in support of AP-3C Orions which are fulfilling a vital intelligence, surveillance

and reconnaissance role for Coalition operations.

Deploying aircraft with the group were the first to be fitted with phase one of a \$43.5 million Electronic Warfare Self Protection upgrade.

AP-3C Orion aircraft have been deployed to the Middle East since early 2003 and have conducted more than 650 sorties.



A 92 WING AP-3C ORION JETTISONS FLARES DURING A TRIAL OF ELECTRONIC WARFARE SELF-PROTECTION SYSTEMS. PHOTO BY CORPORAL PETE GAMMIE, RAAF.

ADF RECOGNISES SAME-SEX COUPLES

The Australian Defence Force has granted equal status to same-sex couples as those enjoyed by heterosexual married and defacto couples.

Gays and lesbians have been officially accepted in the ADF for more than 13 years, but until now, those in same-sex relationships were not entitled to married-couple benefits such as housing assistance and separation, removal and other allowances.

Defence issued an internal signal announcing the changes, intended for dissemination to all members,

in October. The changes were scheduled to take effect from 1 December, it said.

WOMEN IN LINES

Army is set to allow suitably qualified women to be posted to infantry, armoured and artillery units in support roles in headquarters and administrative companies, including clerical, medical, logistics, signals and transport duties.

Previously, women were prevented from performing these duties in combat units. Defence policy regarding the employment of women in direct combat roles will not change, however.

Up to 50 women are expected to take up the postings from December this year.

Following this announcement, CONTACT asked visitors to our web site, "Should women be allowed to serve in front-line units? 66% percent voted no."

VIP EARLY WARNING

EADS has equipped two helicopters, deployed by the Royal Thai Air Force for transporting VIPs, with its HELLAS obstacle warning systems.

The laser radar warning systems were integrated on site into the two Bell 412 EP helicopters.

For the first time, an additional LCD screen was installed in the cockpit and a video camera fitted to the sensor allowing pilots and passengers to see the obstacles parallel to the warning displays.

EADS TARGETS US MARKET

European aerospace giant EADS is targeting the lucrative North American market on several fronts.

The company recently announced several

involvements in the US including joining Northrop Grumman as teammate and principal subcontractor on the KC-30 advanced tanker bid for the US Air Force.

It has also teamed with Sikorsky to offer its UH-145 to fill the US Army's requirement for 300 light utility helicopters.

EADS will also establish a production facility in Mobile, Alabama, in 2006.

SHIP PROJECT ADVANCES

The government has approved the first stage of a \$2 billion Amphibious Ships project that will provide Navy with two new ships with the ability to transport up to 1000 personnel,

with six helicopter landing spots and provision for a mix of troop-lift and armed reconnaissance helicopters.

Each ship will be able to transport up to 150 vehicles including the new M1A1 Abrams tanks and other armoured vehicles. They will also be equipped with medical facilities, including two operating theatres and a hospital ward.

US TAPS IN TO AUSSIE RADAR

Australia and the United States have joined forces in the development of leading-edge technology by signing a joint agreement to further

develop Australian radar technology.

Defence Minister Robert Hill said that both countries will share the development costs, technical expertise and benefits of active phased array radar technology being developed by ACT electronics company CEA Technologies.

CEA WINS ANZAC RADAR CONTRACT

Canberra-based CEA Technologies has been selected to deliver a high-technology solution to protect the Navy's ANZAC Class frigates against anti-ship cruise missiles.

CEA was chosen to provide a lightweight active phased array radar system designed and developed at its Fyshwick headquarters in the ACT and will deliver a significant capability boost to ANZAC.

"CEA has developed a product that has a genuine competitive advantage in the weight, cost, capability and overall value for money," Defence Minister Robert Hill said.

"These radars have a clear export potential and the market for this technology is estimated in the billions of dollars."



A PREDATOR UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE TAKES OFF FROM CREECH AIR FORCE BASE, NEVADA, WHILE ANOTHER LINES UP. PHOTO BY MASTER SERGEANT ROB VALENCA, US AIR FORCE.

PREDATOR READY FOR PACK HUNTING

MQ-1 Predator has taken a step towards becoming a major battlefield player with the testing of an upgraded control system that could see swarms of the unmanned aerial vehicles used against enemy positions.

The upgrade, known as the Multi-Aircraft Control System, enables an operator to fly two-ship and four-ship Predator sorties.

Testers at Creech Air Force Base, Nevada, performed two-ship sorties on September 12 and 13 and progressed to four-ship sorties on 14 and 15.

Predator is an offensive platform armed with Hellfire missiles and has been used effectively in the war on terror.



NASA'S MODIFIED BOEING 747 CARRYING SPACE SHUTTLE DISCOVERY, STILL SCORCHED FROM RE-ENTRY, TAXIS FOR TAKEOFF AT ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE, OKLAHOMA. THIS WAS THE FIRST OF TWO REFUEL STOPS ON THE SHUTTLE'S RETURN TO KENNEDY SPACE CENTER AFTER LANDING AT EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA, ON 9 AUGUST. PHOTO BY STAFF SERGEANT MONIQUE RANDOLPH, USAF.

NAVY PAYS RETENTION BONUS

Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence De-Anne Kelly said the Royal Australian Navy was experiencing difficulties retaining skilled sailors as she announced a major package to enhance retention in the service.

"A comprehensive package of short, medium and longer-term initiatives has been developed with the immediate focus on offering a financial incentive centred on a combination of retention and completion bonuses of up to \$10,000 per year," Mrs Kelly said.

Defence has allocated more than \$10 million per year over the next three years for the scheme.



COMMAND CHANGE FOR TE MANA

WORDS KIWI MAC

HMNZS Te Mana, the Royal New Zealand Navy's second ANZAC class frigate marked a change of command in Auckland on September 15.

With the words, "I have the ship", Commander Wilson Trumper took over command of Te Mana from Commander Richard Cook.

A warfare and communications specialist, Commander Trumper has travelled extensively as he rose through Navy ranks.

Boarding foreign fishing vessels in New Zealand's southern oceans, technology project management ashore in Wellington and being part of Bougainville peace talks are just some of the highlights of his career.

Commander Trumper's last posting was as the NZDF's Chief of Staff at US Central Command in Florida, overseeing New Zealand's contribution to Operation Enduring Freedom.

He said that after a long stint ashore he was looking forward to getting his feet wet again.

The name Te Mana is Maori for status or authority and the ship's motto 'Kokiri Kia U' means 'striving for perfection'.

RNZAF IROQUOIS HELICOPTERS OPERATE IN FIJI DURING EXERCISE TROPIC ASTRA. PICS BY AIRCRAFTSMAN SAM SHEPHERD, RNZAF.



NZ CHOPPERS GO TROPPO

WORDS KIWI MAC PICS RNZAF

Operations in the hot humid conditions of South East Asia and the Pacific were once the mainstay of the NZDF, and a recent RNZAF exercise in Fiji prepared the latest generation of personnel for the delights of the tropics.

With Kiwi troops based at Terendak in Malaysia and then Dieppe Barracks in Singapore until 1989, jungle operations had been a mainstay of both our army and air force.

With tension never far from the region, it makes sense that the latest generation of servicemen be prepared to again fly the flag in hot humid surroundings – hence the need for Exercise Tropic Astra.

Situated in a self-contained tented camp on the edge of Fiji's Nadi airfield, 100 RNZAF personnel from the Ohaakea-based No.3 Squadron maintained four Iroquois helicopters.

Transported by C-130s to Fiji, the helos, aged in their late 30s, had more jungle time than most of the crews flying and servicing them.

Flying in the tropics presents a number of challenges for Iroquois pilots such as Flight Lieutenant Tony Budd.

"Not only does the heat and humidity affect the aircrew, but it also changes handling characteristics of the aircraft," he said.

"Things like high temperatures can affect the engine and the aerodynamics of the Iroquois."

A highlight of the exercise was the delivery of building materials for a conservation department hut in the highlands of Fiji. With not enough room to land, Flight Lieutenant Budd rested one skid on a ridge, balancing the other in the wind, thousands of feet above a valley, as the crew unloaded the helicopter.

"It was amazing flying. I wish I had a camera that day," he said.

KIWIS MULL WANING DEFENCE NUMBERS

WORDS KIWI MAC

Struggling to solve a personnel shortfall of 2000 staff, the New Zealand Army says the crisis is not compromising operations.

The manpower shortage was revealed in the Defence Capability and Resourcing Review (DCARR) completed earlier this year but only lately made public.

Finance Minister Michael Cullen recently announced a \$4.6 billion dollar package over 10 years for Defence to address concerns raised in the report.

In its conclusions, the DCARR stated the shortfall between numbers required to deliver the currently directed level of capability required by government without risk is about 2500.

Army communications manager Major Denise Mackay said the Army's share of that shortfall was about 2000. But she denied the shortage was affecting the Army's ability to deploy overseas or carry out core functions.

"I think it would be fair to say that in a number of areas, our personnel are stretched," she said.

The report found the three services were losing personnel faster than could be replaced.

"The Army is suffering significant attrition, at around 18 per cent or around 750 people per year compared to a long-term average of 14.9 per cent," it says.

Since June 1991 total NZDF personnel numbers have dropped from 20,785 to just 12,889 in 2004.



AUSTAL WINS LITTORAL SHIP CONTRACT

An Austal-designed trimaran has been chosen by the US Navy as the basis of its Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) project.

The US\$223 million contract for the first of two planned "Flight 0" vessels was awarded to prime contractor Bath Iron Works, a General Dynamics company which has teamed with Austal, Australia's leading aluminium ship builder. Approximately half the contract value will be the Austal component for construction of the seaframe.

The benefits of the Austal hull, which measures 127 x 32 metres, in commercial service are better seakeeping, passenger comfort and efficiency. For naval operators, these features, combined with a top speed in excess of 40 knots, shallow draft and significant aviation capabilities, will deliver the most advanced high-speed military craft in the world.

AUSTAL'S WINNING DESIGN FOR THE US NAVY'S LITTORAL COMBAT SHIP. ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF AUSTAL

NZ PARA SCHOOL CELEBRATES 40-ISH YEARS

WORDS KIWI MAC PICS RNZAF

It was a case of reflecting on the past before stepping into the future for Kiwi parachute jump instructors attending the Parachute Training Support Unit's 40th anniversary reunion held at Whenuapai in October.

Outgoing PTSU OC Squadron Leader Severn Smith welcomed the 50-odd guests to the reunion, remarking that they were on the eve of a new concept in parachute training in New Zealand.

"As of tomorrow we will no longer be training on round chutes but straight to Ram Airs at the request of the NZ SAS. The course starting tomorrow will be the first to start the new program," he said.

Considered by many to be the face of military parachuting in New Zealand, Squadron Leader Smith started at PTSU in 1984 and, apart from brief stints away, has been there ever since.

"Yeah, 21 years is a fair stretch. Even when posted to 3 Squadron for a year I was brought back – so I've had a good run," he said on the eve of a posting to The Sinai.

Acknowledging to assembled guests, the discrepancy in holding a 40th anniversary in the 41st year of the unit's existence, Squadron Leader Smith explained why a reunion wasn't possible last year.

"Overnight in 2003, 90 per cent of our chutes were grounded, so we decided to cancel last year as we had nothing to jump with. We decided instead to have a low-key get together this year and,

with the arrival of new low-level chutes next April, plan a much larger get together for 2006," he said.

Keith Hamley was PTSU's first warrant officer working under the first OC, Squadron Leader Bob Wiltshire. The retired SAS man said that before the school was established in Auckland all sorts of things were tried.

"We trained at Rukuhia in Hamilton using what could best be described as para-sailing methods. A bloke would be towed aloft behind a rover then cut away when airborne to make a controlled descent," he said.

Much like today, resources were scarce. As the Air Force had no planes available, jumps were made from Cessnas and there were only seven chutes.

"A team used to run behind the guy descending to catch the chute to keep it dry so as to repack it as quickly as possible," he said.

"It was very exciting stuff in those days, setting up a capability when parachuting in New Zealand was in its infancy."



PTSU STAFF AND FRIENDS AT THIS YEAR'S UNIT REUNION

MELBOURNE RESTS IN AUCKLAND

WORDS KIWI MAC

A familiar Australian visitor to the waters of the Hauraki Gulf tied alongside at Auckland's Devonport Naval Base in September after exercising with ships of New Zealand's Navy.

HMAS Melbourne, a guided missile frigate, last featured in CONTACT's issue #6 after playing the aggressor role in an inter-service exercise between Australia, Britain and New Zealand.

In port for five days, Commander Tony Raeside said his crew had earned their R&R after a busy exercise programme with their Kiwi counterparts.

Punching well above her weight, HMAS Melbourne is armed with

Harpoon anti-ship missiles, medium-range anti-aircraft missiles, a 76mm gun and a 20mm Phalanx CIWS. The ship also carries the Nulka active

missile decoy system, designed and manufactured in Australia as a joint effort with the United States. Aboriginal for 'be quick', Nulka is an expendable decoy that uses a unique hovering rocket to protect RAN ships against advanced anti-ship missiles.



HMAS MELBOURNE HEADS FOR WELL-DESERVED R&R IN AUCKLAND. PHOTO BY KIWI MAC.

PIMPS MERC'S

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PIGS MIGHT FLY?

Well, actually, they have done – and in the process stamped their authority as a key capability in defending Australia’s northern frontiers.



More than 1700 defence personnel from Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia participated in the multi-national maritime Exercise Kakadu 7 held in the seas off Darwin in July and August this year. Conducted in the Northern Australia Exercise Areas, Kakadu aimed to improve the Australian Defence Force’s ability to work with its regional counterparts. Participating forces were tested against air, surface, and submarine threats in order to improve skills in maritime operations.

Australia’s commitment to the exercise included units from the Royal Australian Navy and Royal Australian Air Force. Participating RAN elements included HMA Ships Adelaide, Ballarat, Kanimbla, Westralia and Warrnambool and the Collins Class submarine HMAS Farncomb. The significant air component included F-111 strike aircraft, F/A-18 fighters, Hawk lead-in fighter trainers and a RAAF AP-3C Orion.

While the major focus and emphasis of Kakadu was the training and exercising of naval forces in the seas off Darwin, another major achievement took place in the bush, nearly two thousand kilometres to the east, where more

than 600 airforce personnel turned RAAF Base Scherger near Weipa on the Cape York Peninsula from a bare base into a fully functional military airfield.

This wasn’t the first time that Scherger’s runways were used, but it was the first time the base was fully activated, transforming it from “bare base” to a fully stood-up war footing.

RAAF Base Scherger is located just 18km outside the mining town of Weipa in far north Queensland – but thousands of kilometres from pretty much anything else in a military-support sense. Even the sole access route is a bone-jarring 680km of unsealed, weather affected dirt ribbon through the largely uninhabited bush.

The base is one of three – with Learmonth and Curtin – so-called bare bases across our north that, in concert with Tindal, Darwin and Townsville form continental Australia’s first line of air defence. Maintained by a skeleton crew of civilian caretakers, the bare bases – in theory at least – can be activated and brought on line in a matter of days.

And it was that theory that 381ECSS (Expeditionary Combat Support Squadron) set about proving as part of Exercise Kakadu.

One of three Expeditionary Combat Support Squadrons – one of which is always on line – 381ECSS, based at RAAF Base Williamtown near Newcastle, coordinated the effort that saw massive resources pooled in the project to wake Scherger from its slumber.

First to go were 120 personnel, mainly from 2AFDS (Airfield Defence Squadron), who conducted a tactical insertion into location on 18 July and spent the next two to three days completing a full security screening of the massive airbase and its surrounds in preparation for the arrival of the force proper and, ultimately, the aircraft they were all there to support.

On 20 July, an advance party of 20 personnel arrived to instigate reception procedures for the main force.

Meanwhile, most of the force proper was on its road journey north. Starting out from RAAF Base Williamtown and collecting additional assets in Brisbane and Townsville on the way, 381ECSS conducted a six-day road move to Karumba in the south of the Gulf of Carpentaria to connect with a civilian barge service for the final leg north – thus avoiding the 680km unsealed Peninsula Developmental Route and its potential for damage to sensitive equipment.

Arriving almost simultaneously by barge and C130 Hercules on 24 July, the main elements hit the ground with a huge task in front of them. They now had exactly a week to prepare a disused airfield and transform it into a fully functioning air force base capable of sustaining round-the-clock aircraft operations.

Difficult as this first-time task was, it was also hampered by rogue ground elements – insurgents determined to disrupt activities and frustrate activation of this key operational element of the exercise.

Despite peppering and harassing attacks that continued for days, 381ECSS and its supporting elements continued with their task undaunted.



the answer was resoundingly positive. But what is RAAF Base Scherger when it is fully stood up? Is it simply a case of opening the gates and driving in? Far from it.

Although the base has a small live-in caretaker cadre for basic maintenance and security, activating the complex does take considerable time, effort and resources.

Although the base has all the basic infrastructure built, wired or plumbed in, most movable equipment, supplies and spare parts are brought on base as the ECSS rolls in.

Everything from computers to toilet paper, aircraft parts to entertainment equipment is brought in by road (either up the Peninsula Development Road or via barge through Weipa) or by air.

381ECSS takes great pride in the boast that RAAF Base Scherger has pretty much every facility you'd expect to find on any southern, permanent base – except, perhaps, the car parks full of private vehicles ready for an end-of-shift escape.

So what do more than 600 personnel do on a remote base in their down time? Well, with a philosophy aimed at relieving boredom, everything from top-notch catering to the best in entertainment facilities and organised activities are laid on.

Even a fully equipped gymnasium is shipped in, packed in four freight containers and manned by highly qualified personal fitness trainers.

Sound too good to be true? Well, perhaps surprisingly, it is true. The four containers form a quadrangle over which a cyclone-rated marquee is erected and then the sides of the containers fold open to reveal the latest and the best in modern gym equipment – everything from dumbbells to

mechanical devices of varying complexity, and even the ubiquitous stereo system for those aerobic workouts.

And the personal trainers? Sergeant Tony Benfer and his team are on hand all day and well into the evening to run classes, give advice and even develop personal training programs, just as they would back at Williamstown.

Sergeant Benfer says the need for such a facility was recognised during INTERFET and expedited by the Iraqi deployment.

"This is the first time we've deployed it on an exercise, though," he says. "But it was well worth the effort. The troops have really taken to it and it gets used quite a lot – probably even more than the gym back home."

The "white mafia" – otherwise known as the cooks – on the other hand, probably have the biggest job to handle. Feeding 600 hungry souls, three times a day, falls to just 21 people in the base's hot kitchens, made even hotter by the tropical location and absence of air-conditioning.

Starting shift at 0430hrs every morning and with only short breaks during the day, this group of dedicated individuals on whom the whole show depends so heavily, labours to keep a captive clientele happy until about 2000hrs each evening – and then pitch in for their share of guard duty as well.

Leading Aircraftsman 'Max' Walker says a good selection and good variety are key to keeping service personnel happy and healthy.

"We offer steamed and grilled choices and four or five salad choices that we try to change each day," he says. "But no matter what it is, if you crumb it and deep fry it, it will always get eaten – even vegetables."

Serviced by the supply chain just once every seven days, the cooks at RAAF Scherger are masters at compiling shopping lists.

"Ordering the right things in the right proportions is the most important thing around here," Leading Aircraftsman Walker says.

"It's not like you can duck down to the supermarket if you run out of something," he says as he leaves me with one last, sound piece of advice, "Always be nice to the cooks."

Squadron Leader Lee De Winton, Executive Officer of 381ECSS, agrees that keeping peoples' bellies full will keep them happy when there's work to be done – and there's certainly plenty of that.

"Generally I think everyone here is enjoying the whole experience," she says. "As long as you are aware that everything you planned along the way will probably change and you are prepared to adapt, then you can achieve your goal."

"It was me and my team that set all this up and we are all very proud of that."

Preparations of the base included such things as installing equipment and establishing communications, activating support facilities such as accommodation and messing facilities and, of course, ensuring that the base was fit to receive aircraft.

Unlike the supporting C130s that can operate from much less salubrious facilities, advanced and specialist aircraft such as the F-111 require a more sanitised operating environment with considerable emphasis placed on reducing the risk of foreign object damage (FOD) to sensitive and very expensive engines. As such, specialist street sweepers spent five solid days patrolling up and down the kilometres of runway, taxiway and other apron areas to remove the detritus of long periods of inaction.

And then, finally, with enemy ground forces defeated or disbursed and all the facilities and systems of a modern air base in functioning order, 1 August saw the arrival of five jets from 1 Squadron, 82 Wing – and the commencement of operational sorties on the same day.

Group Captain Leo Davies, Officer Commanding 82 Wing, says Exercise Kakadu 2005 was a true test of the long-range maritime strike capability of the F-111 and a cementing of the symbiotic relationship between his unit and 381ECSS.

"Our missions out of this base are excellent training for us," he says. "Operating from Scherger adds a certain realism to the mission, given that sorties on Kakadu are typically 800 to 900 nautical miles out and up to 4.5 hours duration. Real-time factors of fuel and weather have to be considered."

"But we rely heavily on the support of 381 and the other supporting elements. When we arrived here on the first of this month, the base was ready to receive us and ready to turn us around for two sorties on that first day. That was very pleasing."

He says that for 82 Wing and for 381ECSS, Exercise Kakadu was a proof of concept – can a bare base be fully stood up and how long does it take. On both counts,





INTO HARM'S WAY

PART TWO

IRAQI ELECTION SECURITY CONTRACT, JAN-FEB 2005

WORDS AJ SHINNER PICS SUPPLIED BY AJ SHINNER

I was watching a SWAT guy strip and clean his rifle when I noticed that his ammo was old, crappie, locally manufactured stuff, prone to misfire or explode in the chamber. On inspecting others, most of the issued ammo had miraculously transformed into the cheap crap. The thought that someone in town now had better ammo just so some of the SWAT guys had a few more dollars in their pockets annoyed us no end. Next time the Special Forces boys came by they were very embarrassed and pissed off too. One of them, looking very tired, simply shrugged and said, "It's easy to change a government – harder to change a way of life."

The nights were cold and long in the compound but rarely boring, between ING guys leaving their posts or sleeping in the towers, to regular gunfire outside the compound.

It's very hard as a soldier when you're trained to react, to just say, "Fuck it, that doesn't concern me," as automatic gunfire cracks nearby.

On the night of 28 January (two days short of the election) a large car bomb was detonated only several hundred metres up the road from us. The target was a school that was to be used on polling day. Several large firefights erupted around the neighbourhood that night in the hours after the blast.

We all spent the night in the towers with the ING soldiers, looking out into the darkness. As true Australians, we complained and cursed about everything from not enough illumination flares, no night vision gear, the ING soldiers crapping on the ground around their towers and my mate Shrek's farting.

Apart from an ominous silence, election day was quite uneventful in Al Kut and, quite honestly, a bit of an anti-climax. Even the return and counting process in the following days went smoothly enough.

When the election officials were happy and it was clear that no recounts would be needed in our province, the sealed tally sheets were taken back to Camp Delta.

This was a very tense run. I was driving a civvy 4x4 with the boxed results, with three Ukrainian BRDMs in front and three behind. Although I felt very important, we might as well have had "VIP" spray-painted on the doors. But the fact remained that it was an independent election and no MNFI (Multinational Forces Iraq) were going to touch those boxes, let alone put them in one of their vehicles.

Once all the election paraphernalia was safely tucked away, the convoy team stayed on site at the warehouse to boost numbers.

Our warehouse was one of many inside a huge walled compound. The compound's front gate and towers were manned by Iraqi National Guards (INGs) who, although independent to our mission and outside our control, could quite easily be coaxed and manipulated to get the best perimeter security possible.

After studying satellite photos and maps, as well as doing the reces with the Spec Ops boys, we sat down and nussed out a few concerns. The warehouse compound, although very defensible with its high walls and towers, had one major flaw – the front gate was the only way in or out. If attacked and the compound was over-run or compromised, we would have to fight our way to the front gate or risk getting cornered and cut to pieces.

Several options were considered and put in place. Having some of the vehicles permanently placed and ready to go to simply plough our way through to the front

gate was considered a good option, as was leaving a cleared area inside the compound for choppers – it was a tight fit but do-able.

Another untested but technically feasible plan was to simply put several RPG rounds into a wall and walk out. I wasn't sold on this idea because of the unreliable potency of Combloc ammo, and the thickness of the wall. But, nonetheless, an RPG magically appeared – it's good to have friends.

One other option was a bit more spectacular. Jerry, the local US Spec Ops boss, was happy to give us as much C4 as we needed to have a key section of the wall pre-rigged so we could simply blow it and run off into the night.

The Yank Spec Ops boys were regularly dropping in to say hi between doing whatever those secret-squirrel types do. On one such visit Jerry asked a favour. He had under his wing an Iraqi SWAT team that had been sent down from Baghdad. They were trained and kitted out by the American Special Forces and, because of this, the new local police boss didn't want a bar of them. Jerry needed to keep them busy and off the streets for a while until he worked out what to do with them. They were cocky, overly

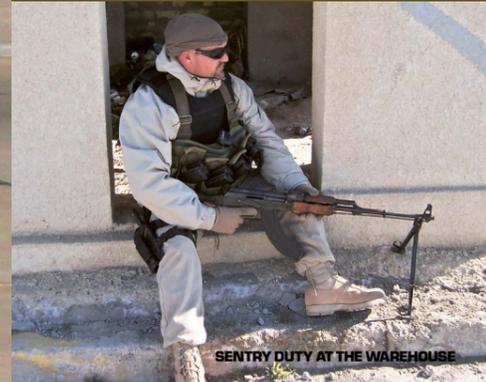
keen and very young – but more firepower on site had to be a bonus.

Besides, Jerry owing us a personal favour was also a big plus.

There was some tension between our guys and the SWAT initially. Our Iraqi teams were getting paid far better and actually seemed more switched on than the SWAT – or the ING's for that matter. But generally speaking, they all learned to get along and quickly fell into a cycle of sentry duties, gun pickets, sleeping and eating.

One little problem did arise through having the SWAT team on site with us. Jerry had insisted that it was OK for them to leave the compound to go to the markets every few days to buy bread and essentials. Even though they were under our control, they had their own ways, and we had to trust them. Being a part of an American-trained and funded unit meant their vetting processes would be very thorough, but greed can't always be spotted easily.

When they first arrived we noticed, when we inspected one of their AKs, that their ammo was new and Russian. We had gone to great lengths to acquire the same ammo for ourselves and our men. But a week later



Back at Camp Delta the suits checked the boxes and seals, papers were signed, hands were shook, photos taken and the boxes flown out. Although that was the end of the story as far as our dealings with the ballot papers, tally sheets or electoral commission were concerned, we still had to get packed up and back to Baghdad.

Most of the run up to Baghdad was along a modern, three-lane expressway designated "Tampa", which ran south from Baghdad towards Basrah. Our two teams were split into different packets and sent off with a 24-hour interval.

The first half of the trip involved a massive dogleg to avoid a particularly hazardous stretch of road with an MNFI security warning on it. Once on Tampa, though, we picked up speed and tried to shrink into our body armour.



SWAT, IRAQI STYLE

geographically embarrassed twice (good one boss) and had a group of morons in a car who thought it was hilarious to play chicken by speeding up and backing off behind our gun truck – kids these days.

Back at Camp Bristol, we all swapped stories and waited for the other teams to arrive. By pure fluke, I was allotted a flight out of Baghdad within a day and, just like that, I was gone.

In all, I spent only seven weeks in country in Iraq, which makes it hard to compare to the four months I spent in Somalia. But, looking back on it now, the "what-the-fuck-am-I-doing-here" thought, which I must admit I felt once or twice in Somalia, wasn't there in Iraq and I'd even go as far as saying that I actually felt safer in Iraq than in Somalia on Operation Solace.



EFFECTS OF AN IED



TALLY SHEETS LEAVING CAMP DELTA

THE THREE-ROUND BURST HIT THE ROAD JUST IN FRONT OF THE CAR SENDING RICOCHETS AND DEBRIS UP TO SHATTER THE WINDSCREEN

Every operator will have their own thoughts and theories on driving in Iraq, whether it's PSD (personal security detachment) or convoy-protection work. Guns out, guns in – windows up or windows down – dress like locals or Kevlar and all black like Stevie Segal – fast and tight or play the grey man and vary spacings and speed. I guess in the end they all have their time and place.

We opted for going as covert as possible, but with windows down and guns out in towns or locations where we had possible targets at close range where we needed to spot and engage quickly.

At the time, our main concern (according to our intelligence sources) was stationary command-detonated IEDs (improvised explosive devices). However, the gun trucks at the rear of the convoys played a key roll in stopping VIEDs (vehicle-borne IEDs) from passing and ramming the convoy or lead vehicles. VIEDs are essentially terrorists driving

around with explosive devices in the back of a car or truck looking for something interesting to ram into.

Shrek was manning the machine gun in the back of the Chev on the second convoy. They had been cruising along Tampa when a car came screaming up from behind. He kicked open the back doors to wave him off, but got no response. The silly bugger then sped up and moved to overtake. Taking no chances – the car definitely fitted the profile for a VIED – Shrek took a bead and braced him up. The three-round burst hit the road just in front of the car sending ricochets and debris up to shatter the windscreen. The guy was last seen, eyes as big as dinner plates, spinning off the road and disappearing in a cloud of dust. His intentions and motives will never be known, but it's fair to say we spoiled his day.

Although our team didn't have to brass anybody up, we did have some interesting moments as well as getting

Nearly a year later and I'm now looking for more work overseas. The international security industry is definitely not a secure or stable lifestyle when you have a family to support, but the bucks certainly are there if you know where to look and if you're in the right place at the right time with your bags packed.

I'll keep you posted.



CONVOY POINT PROTECTION



TRAINING SMART IN IRAQ

PRIVATE AYN AL SAID, C COMPANY, 1ST BATTALION, ON GUARD IN AL KHADIR

The landscape is flat, barren and hostile beneath the blazing Middle Eastern sun.

The heat is incredible, and the air feels like the exhaust from a vacuum cleaner as it flows into my lungs. I look at the Iraqi soldiers on duty, but they show no sign of giving in to the heat. In front of me is a Bailey bridge across a wide canal that transfers water from the Euphrates River to a lake further to the east. The water looks cool and inviting, and for a moment I dream of jumping in and escaping the oppressive heat. But this is not the time or place for such dreams. It is too dangerous for that.

The canal acts as an obstacle to smugglers, some trafficking in consumer goods, others in items far more deadly to the Iraqi and coalition security forces further north.

This is the only crossing for many miles in either direction, so all vehicles must pass through here, and only a few weeks ago this Iraqi vehicle check point was engaged by men with automatic weapons during a night-time incident.

A distant cloud of dust signals the approach of a decrepit utility. The vehicle is stopped, and the driver searches for his identity papers, constantly coughing with a force that sounds like tuberculosis. Smiling, the driver finally produces his papers for the Iraqi guards. The vehicle is cleared and the driver pauses to speak to the guards before leaving. A translator informs a nearby Australian soldier that the driver is thanking the guards for doing their job here. The driver says it's a sign that Iraq's democracy is working.

Sharing the heat with the Iraqis is Sergeant Michael Groves, a platoon advisor from Australian Army Training Team Iraq 4 (AATTI4). He has been watching the Iraqis at work, and is impressed with their dedication.

"Their standard is better than we had anticipated," he says. "Their basic skills are really good. Now it's just a matter of touching up the finer points of their soldiering."

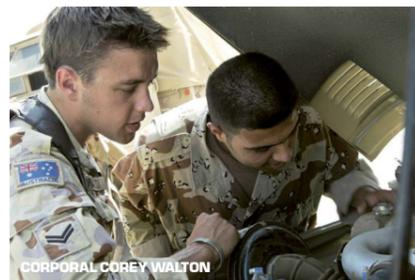
WORDS AND PICS
CORPORAL CAMERON JAMIESON,
DIRECTORATE DEFENCE NEWSPAPERS



MEMBERS OF AATTI4 FIRE AKM ASSAULT RIFLES



SERGEANT MICHAEL GROVES



CORPORAL COREY WALTON



SERGEANT DAVID GREGSON



Training smart is how you could describe the engine that is driving the training team. Drawing on a lineage from the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam, Australian AATT14 has the responsibility of advising and training the 2nd Brigade of the Iraqi Army's 10th Division. Team Four's job is to enhance the skills of the 2nd Brigade so that it can take over responsibility for military operations within the Al Muthanna province. AATT14 deployed into Iraq with the Al Muthanna Task Group (AMTG) in May 2005. The team consists of a brigade headquarters training team and a battalion training team for the brigade's 1st Battalion. A second battalion training team will join them when

the 2nd Brigade's 2nd Battalion is raised later this year. In a tent at the AMTG's base at Camp Smitty, CO AATT14 Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Tulley tells me his team has a dynamic role to play. "The Iraqis had already received a lot of training from other coalition nations before we arrived," he says. "They're now on operations, so we're in the field with them. Our main effort is mentoring, advising and training the Iraqis in the planning and conduct of their operations, including vehicle and dismounted patrols, vehicle check points and cordon and search tasks." Lieutenant Colonel Tulley tells me he decided when the team arrived it wouldn't

be smart to train the Iraqis in things they already knew, so they spent the first two weeks looking, learning and understanding what the Iraqis were doing while, at the same time developing a rapport. "We then worked out what levels of proficiency they had in different areas, and developed training plans that were aligned to each of their mission-essential tasks. Their immediate aim was to conduct low-level counter-insurgency security and stability operations, so we've steered away from high-intensity war fighting because that's something they can cover in the long term. We're here to make them self-reliant in their immediate mission in as short a time frame as possible."

There's been more to it than mentoring though. The team have also been assisting the Iraqis with their doctrine, personnel, equipment and facility issues. "It's been a very challenging three months so far, but it's been very rewarding too," Lieutenant Colonel Tulley says. "They've been extremely accepting and appreciative of our efforts, and their feedback shows we're providing them with a lot of new information. We've lifted their level of capability significantly already, and they can see it. There's a new confidence in the way they conduct their operations, the level of their operations are more complex and they are taking more and more responsibility for

the running of their own operations. "They are preparing to take full responsibility for securing the province, and that indicates to me that we are fulfilling our mission." At the barracks of C Coy in Al Khadir the old Bath Party star can be seen everywhere, like the latent eye of Saddam Hussein watching over the country. Even the water tank beside the railway line bears the mark, beaming across the town as a reminder of how things use to be. It is early morning, and a whistle is blowing to call the troops to morning parade. I am talking to CSM (Company Sergeant Major) Warrant Officer

WE'RE HERE TO MAKE THEM SELF-RELIANT IN THEIR IMMEDIATE MISSION IN AS SHORT A TIME FRAME AS POSSIBLE

"I RELIEVE YOU, SIR"

HISTORIC AUSTRALIAN NAVAL CHAPTER CLOSES

WORDS AND PICS CORPORAL CAMERON JAMIESON, DIRECTORATE DEFENCE NEWSPAPERS

With the words "I relieve you, sir", at 08:00 on 12 August 2005, a unique chapter closed in Australian naval history in Iraq's territorial waters in the northern Persian Gulf. The radio call marked the end of command for Commodore Steve Gilmore and his RAN team of Coalition Task Force 58 – the coalition's naval force conducting maritime security operations across the northern Persian Gulf.

While TF58 will continue to operate in the Persian Gulf under US Command, it is time for Commodore Gilmore and his team to return to Sydney to be debriefed over the success of the Australian command group. Doubtless there will be many lessons learnt to be discussed, as Commodore Gilmore's command has been the highest-level at-sea tactical command held by an Australian naval officer for 60 years. "Having an Australian in charge of such a large coalition task force with a mission of such significance made this a very unique opportunity for Australia, myself and the members of my team," Commodore Gilmore says. "I think the request for Australian command is a direct reflection on the high regard the coalition forces have for the professionalism of the ADF. We have worked together over a very long period and we have gone to great lengths to ensure our interoperability is such that, at short notice, we can come together and

focus on a mission, and be effective and efficient in its prosecution. "These operations focus on a number of sub-tasks, the most critical being the protection of Iraq's offshore oil platforms. "TF58 also conducts maritime interception operations, including boardings, where we seek to detect, deter and deny movement across the Gulf by criminal or insurgent elements." The oil terminals are absolutely vital to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Iraq, producing 80 per cent of the country's GDP. TF58 comprises ships from the Royal Navy, US Navy, US Coast Guard and Iraqi Navy, with HMAS Newcastle representing the RAN. Commodore Gilmore says that one of his greatest challenges was harnessing the terrific capability of the force and bringing it together as one. "The coalition is a very effective way of prosecuting a mission as complex as this one," he says. "Each of the individual



LEADING SEAMAN PAUL CROFT MARSHALS A US NAVY SEA HAWK



ABLE SEAMAN JORDAN DICKINSON



HMAS NEWCASTLE BOARDING TEAMS

navies here brings something special to the table. They all have some aspect of their normal operations that has been fine-tuned to a point that we can use it here to fill specialist roles. When I look at TF58 and what is has achieved over the past few months I must say that the whole of our capability is far greater than the sum of the individual parts."

Another major responsibility for Commodore Gilmore and his command team was the training and integration of the Iraqis into the Task Force. "That was a particularly satisfying part of my command," he says. "I was tasked with the integration of the Iraqi Navy so they may eventually take charge of maritime security in their own

territorial waters. The new Iraqi Navy was established in 2003, and it has come a long way in a short time, and over the past four months, our Task Force has been instrumental in getting the Iraqis into the final straight of the integration process. We now have all five Iraqi patrol boats integrated – not just as additional craft, but replacing coalition vessels. Iraqi Marines are also taking their place on the oil terminals which will see them take responsibility for the point-defence of the facilities." One person who will be particularly sorry to see the Australians go is US Navy Captain Stephen Hampton, CO of the USS Normandy, a Ticonderoga-class cruiser that has been Commodore Gilmore's flagship for the past couple of months. "It has been an honour and a pleasure to work for Commodore Gilmore and his team," Captain Hampton says. "The Australians bring a unique perspective on maritime security operations, and they bring a focused war-fighting and mission-accomplishment attitude to the way they do business. Their different focus and perspective has brought progress to the situation in the northern Persian Gulf and I think that's been the most important thing we got from this partnership. "There has been tactical progress, we've improved the defence of the critical infrastructure here and there's been significant progress towards our end state of having the Iraqi Navy and Marines taking over responsibility for their own territorial waters and infrastructure."

Captain Hampton says that although the Australian team was small in number, their professionalism and knowledge made them a potent force. "They were very focused and really kept their eye on the ball," he says. "That has allowed us to move forward towards our common goal – personal freedom and freedom of choice for the Iraqi people and a new stable government in Iraq."



LEADING SEAMAN JASMINE GREGORY



ABLE SEAMAN 'SPIKE' JONES AND LEADING SEAMAN KEVIN CLOSE

Mohammed Abaid, who has spent many years in the Iraqi Army and looks every inch a hardened soldier. Yet he has no bitterness at being taught soldiering skills by the Australians. Instead, he embraces the concept as he believes the new skills are creating a professional army that will serve the people of Iraq, relegating the memory of the old army that served Saddam Hussein to the history books.

"We are 100 per cent different now, and we have learnt so many things from the Australians," he says. "Through the training in the barracks and out on patrols, we are becoming better at our jobs. You can see how we are developing with the help of the training team, and as our skills and equipment improve, we know that we are moving closer to our goal of being able to take full responsibility for our military operations here in Al Muthanna province."

Later, at a monthly range practice where some training team members are qualifying on the Russian-designed AKM assault rifle, Captain Steve Howell tells me how genuine the friendship is between the two armies. He has been mentoring the 1st Battalion in their personnel and logistics staff work, and enjoys how cooperative and friendly the Iraqis are.

"They like us being here," he says. "They like our easy-going attitude and how friendly we are. And I have a lot of respect for them. I find it quite amazing that when you look at the Iraqis and all they've been through, they can still smile and get on with it."

The armoured vehicles from the AMTG have moved forward to collect the training team members at the canal, and as I walk back to the refuge of an air-conditioned Bushmaster Infantry Mobility Vehicle, I learn from Sergeant Groves how the team is creating Iraqi solutions by not imposing Australian tactics and procedures on them.

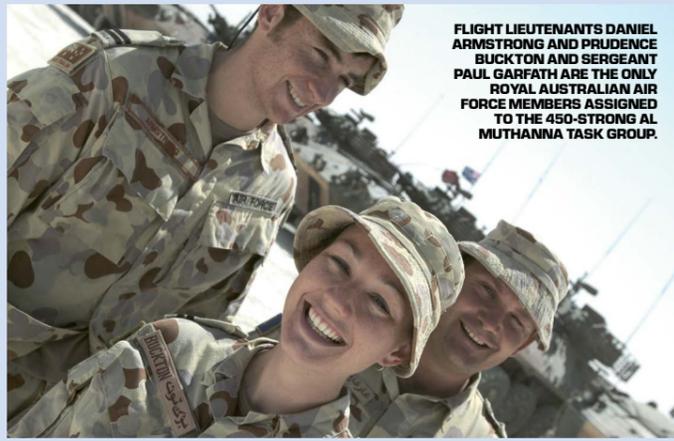
"The way we would do things compared to the Iraqis is different because of their unit structure, so we have to think of ways to better their capability using their manpower," he says. "We don't try to enforce our western ideas and approaches on them. Instead, we're offering a different point of view, and they can take from that, and anything else they've learnt from other coalition partners, and create one SOP (standard operating procedure) that suits them."

As the convoy of Australian vehicles pulls away, I can see the Iraqis smile and wave as they resume their vigil at the bridge. Like the land they defend, they are a tough breed, able to deal with the harsh unforgiving sun.

And like us, they are a happy lot, who want nothing but the best for their families and their country.



**SURROUNDED
BY SOLDIERS**



FLIGHT LIEUTENANTS DANIEL ARMSTRONG AND PRUDENCE BUCKTON AND SERGEANT PAUL GARFATH ARE THE ONLY ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE MEMBERS ASSIGNED TO THE 450-STRONG AL MUTHANNA TASK GROUP.

WORDS AND PICS CORPORAL CAMERON JAMIESON, DIRECTORATE DEFENCE NEWSPAPERS

Many things in Iraq can test your sense of humour. There's the 50 degree heat, the sandstorms and the basic food. Then there are all the soldiers – hundreds of them.

For three Canberra-based RAAF personnel, the reality of serving with the Australian and British soldiers assigned to the Al Muthanna province in southern Iraq is not quite what they expected when they enlisted into the RAAF. But like all good service personnel they have approached the situation with good humour and have found the experience enjoyable – except perhaps for the heat.

The three communications and information systems specialists have been assigned to the Al Muthanna Task Group (AMTG), the 450-strong cavalry and infantry combined-arms unit sent to southern Iraq as part of Operation Catalyst. The AMTG shares Camp Smitty, located near the Euphrates River city of as Samawah, with the British Army's The Light Dragoons. Together they make up Task Force Eagle, the coalition group assigned to assist the Iraqi security forces in the Al Muthanna province.

Flight Lieutenant Prudence Buckton says it is great to be out of her office and in a field environment where she's surrounded by people from different countries, specialties and backgrounds.

"We work pretty closely with the British, and since we got over the language barrier, it's been a great experience," she says with a grin.

Sergeant Paul Garfath says he found translating army language into RAAF words was his first big challenge.

"It's certainly very different here," he says. "I've had to get used to the army way of doing things."

"While it is a joint-service environment, there is the army paperwork and regimental appointments, such as adjutants, to deal with."

"But the air conditioning makes life easier, and there are some basics shops where you can buy a cold drink. We have a welfare tent to relax in, or you can hang out in your room, which is thankfully air conditioned too."

For Flight Lieutenant Daniel Armstrong, the opportunity to work in a real-time operational environment has been a career highlight.

"You can see the results of your work," he says. "At home we do a lot of exercises, but here, our work impacts directly on the operations being conducted, and that's been very satisfying."

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Exercise Long Look is coined "the experience of a lifetime." After completing it, I can see why. Ex LL is a tri-service exchange program between Commonwealth countries – in particular Australia, New Zealand and the UK – that occurs once a year, between June and October. Don't ask me how they select personnel for it – that's like asking a **Sertain Career Management Agency** (wink, wink) how they select people for promotion or postings each year – but, after the nomination process and finally being selected, I commenced the admin that goes with the trip.

I looked forward to it with an open mind, yet could scarcely believe I was picked until I was on that freedom bird out of Oz. Even with a few months notice, time had flown. Before I knew it, the trip and the experience of a lifetime was here.

Approximately 120 Aussies, from private through to lieutenant colonel and equivalents from the Army, Navy and Air Force, were assembled for a Spanish civilian chartered flight. After nearly 22 hours in the air, with stops in Darwin, Bangkok and Milan, we arrived at RAF Brize Norton in the UK.

Following dispersal to our host units, we began the exercise. I conducted adventurous training with 158 ProCoy (Provost Company), RMP at Lands End. Yeah that's right, Royal Military Police – 'Red Caps', Provo's, 'Meat Pies' and 'Meat Heads' – or, as they are affectionately called by the Brits, 'Monkeys', apparently because their old uniform looked like that worn by an organ-grinder's monkey – and he's always on your back.

The first activity I took part in was a regimental-sized field exercise on the infamous Salisbury Plain. Somehow, though,

sitting on the side of the road at a traffic control point sucking in bulldust was very familiar. Only the scenery, British accents and vehicle types – including AS90 155mm tracked arty among others – were different.

Eventually, though, I was taken out of ex on approval from the Australian High Commission, via the valiant efforts of our Long Look contingent staff, headed by Major John Liddy at Australia House on The Strand in London.

July 7th – I know I will never forget it – I went in to sign my paperwork. It was also the morning the London Tube and the number 30 Bus to Tavistock were blown up by suicide bombers. Was this an omen for the operational tour to come, I thought?

I arrived in London, about half an hour after the first bomb went off. After being locked down in London for six hours, while police, fire, ambulance and bomb squads cleared the scenes and treated the dead and wounded, I signed my deployment paperwork and headed back to Bulford Camp, near Stonehenge, an hour west of London.

Within a week I was sent to Senalarga, Germany to conduct Operational Tactical Advisory Group (OPTAG) training. Here, I learnt the finer points of Iraqi language and culture and foreign weapons, as well as mine incident drill – Brit style – and "top cover" – but more on that later.

The end-of-course function was a binge session in a local German pub, where I was introduced to the interesting game of 'Nails'. Try hitting six-inch nails into a log with the thin end of a miners pick – while you're off your face. Last one to hit his nail in buys a round of shots, and on it goes. Besides that, it was also very interesting to talk to diggers

or 'squaddies' and other ranks who had operational tours of Northern Ireland, Sierra Leone, the first Gulf War and two or more tours of Iraq up their sleeves.

With OPTAG finished and my Brit kit issued, I boarded a RAF bird, direct from Brize Norton to Basrah for Op Telic6. My host unit, 158 ProCoy had just returned from Op Telic4 – after the war-fighting phase of Iraq, renowned as the most active of the Iraq tours because of the increased number of mortar and RPG attacks, public-order incidents and IED attacks on Multi National Forces (MNF).

I worked with numerous RMP in my host unit who served on Op Telic4. Some of them even had confirmed kills to their credit after being embedded with infantry units, or were hit by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and, obviously, survived.

Some of the racks of medals on these guys – lance corporals and corporals – would put most of us to shame, let alone the SNCO's 'fruit salads'.



This was my first deployment on operations in 15 years – what a shame it took another Army to send me.

Anyway, 10 minutes out of Basrah air space we get the warning to don Kevlar helmet and body armour – that's a funny sight to see on board an aircraft. We happened to land in the middle of the two hottest and most humid days in the past few months in Iraq. Darwin in the wet season has nothing on this place!

I spent the first night in Camp Bedouin and was greeted in the morning by the sound of a familiar Aussie accent – a fellow 'Monkey'. After being introduced to 174 ProCoy OC's Rover Group – 'Jonno', 'Rob', 'Massive', 'Stu-Pid', 'Lex', 'H' and 'Bomb Head' – we left the APOD (aerial point of departure) for the Shaat Al Arab Hotel, just outside Basrah city, next to the river by the same name.

About 0300hr on my first night, we were awoken by people screaming out, "Mortars, mortars" – insurgents firing Chinese rockets at the Shaat Hotel, from across the river. After scrambling out of bed, we donned helmets and body armour and hid behind the waist-high, Besser-brick blast walls that surrounded our tented, 10-man-block accommodation. Some parts of the wall already had frag marks from previous mortar strikes. 'J' Jenkins, a corporal or 'full screw' of the Rover Group, got orders on the personal radio headset to move to hardcover inside the Shaat.

We were eventually released following that incident about 0600hr, just in time for breakfast – or 'scoff' as they call it – and get back to work.

We found out later that a QRF (quick reaction force) went out to secure the firing

point and destroyed two more rockets that had been abandoned on a makeshift firing point and set up facing our hotel.

Based at the Shaat were the Coldstream Guards and Staffordshire Infantry Regiment, who rotate between taskings of route clearance and mounted and dismounted patrols of Basrah. A battery of the Royal Artillery also provided convoy protection for vehicles and personnel in transit around Basrah. Also at the Shaat were your usual REME (Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers), medics and sigs. I was with the RMP 174 ProCoy HQ based at the Shaat, attached to the OC's Rover Group.

The Rover Group is a 14-man section of RMP JNCOs (junior non-commissioned officers), armed with 9mm Browning pistols, light support weapons (SA80 5.56mm rifles) and red phosphorus to destroy electronic counter-measures equipment (ECM) if need be, and travels in lightly armoured Land Rovers. The Rover Group travels independently throughout Basrah, and is the most exposed unit within the company.

Bear in mind that 'lightly armoured' vehicles means exactly that – up to level 2 or 3 armour that would be hard pressed to stop a 7.62mm round at best. No hope for the new IEDs that were being smuggled across the Iranian border. Those bad boys were reported by the Weapons Intelligence Section (WIS) as being able to defeat Warrior armour, which was very worrying each time you'd mount up to leave the base, in your 'Snatch'. I saw first hand the remains of a 'Snatch' that was penetrated by the new passive infra red (PIR) censored IED. It resulted in two fatalities of the Royal Fusiliers just outside Basrah, during my tour.

For the next four days, I couldn't leave

the base, because I had to zero my weapon and complete the RSOI (Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration) course. Basically it's a short course for first-timers, involving standard in-theatre inoculation lectures and lessons and finishing with a live-fire 'top-cover' shoot and red phosphorus demo. With the course complete, I could now be legally employed as part of the Rover Group.

The OC's Rover Group was independent, but also could assist RMP HQ staff and 12 Mechanised Brigade. Anything from admin pick-ups and drop-offs, to transporting the OC on visits to RMP Dets (detachments) at the Old State Building (OSB), Shibah Log Base and 'O' groups at Brigade HQ, Basrah Palace and the APOD. I thought the nick name 'Red Cap Taxi' was a nice description, considering we spent a lot of time out on the road 'on task'.

The fact was, that the less time spent outside the walls of camp, on the road, in and around Basrah, the better. As the lads explained, they were near the end of their six-month tour and wanted to get back safe, but the threat of an IED, suicide bomber or burst of fire from an unhappy local or insurgent, was always there whenever you left the camp. The political tension in Basrah itself was on the incline, and daily intelligence updates always brought home the reality of where I was.

Civilians, Iraqi Police Service (IPS) members and hierarchy were being executed and hacked daily. The Iraqi Tactical Support Unit (TSU), conducting searches on the border and in Basrah, were constantly finding bomb-making equipment (BME). Numerous gunfire (not always celebratory) in town or from our sentry gun pits, were the norm.

During my very first move with the Rover Group we were shot at.

My first job was as the rear dismount inside the 'Snatch'. After this, I was moved to top cover and acting in-charge while Scotty, a sergeant and IC of the group, took some well-deserved R&R for a few weeks.

Top cover is where you stand upright through a square hatch in the roof of the rover and provide physical and visual cover for your own vehicle and others. The standard configuration for us was one person facing front and his mate next to him facing left or right. The rear vehicle would alternate the front vehicle's setup.

This system was devised by Scotty, since he was also a former Royal Marine and RMP close personal protection specialist (CPP). His method gave the convoy 360-degree protection, as apposed to the two-facing-front and two-facing-rear method that some other units used.

It was after an APOD run, on return towards Basrah, we got a call that an



LONG LOOK

I laugh in amazement at the wording on my report – "Rocket attack on his first night, subject to occasional rocket and mortar attack and indirect LMG fire on his first formal move". Ha! I bet the boys back home will have a laugh at this. Looking back on my operational tour in Iraq, it was hard to believe I had just finished four months on Exercise Long Look 2005.

WORDS 'DUKE' PICS SUPPLIED BY 'DUKE'

explosion was reported at the IPS checkpoint near 'Green 19'. We called in that we were five minutes away heading towards it and would investigate.

In the distance we could see a rather large vehicle convoy heading towards us down the highway, about a kilometre away. We pulled up in front of the checkpoint and got the word to dismount and 'go firm'.

The OC spoke to the IPS guards who indicated with broken English and frantic hand gestures, a rocket launcher of some sort.

"RPG", the guard yelled pointing to our left. "Yeah, yeah" I thought, he's saying someone fired an RPG at him.

It was at this point that a fellow 'Monkey' saw a muzzle flash. A split second later we heard the crack – no one was keen to keep their heads up listening for the thump or looking for the strike.

People outside who were going firm, now went to action on their weapons. The Q, who was driving our vehicle, shouted the bleedin' obvious, "Someone's firing at us". I saw one of the rover group girls outside go to action or 'make ready' as the POMs say, and hit the dirt. I popped up out of the hole without a thought and gave cover to her and the others as they began to withdraw.

A quick glance to the vehicle behind me confirmed the direction of fire – approximately 600m away from a bombed-out building in the distance.

The OC gave the word to mount up and bug out. As this happened, the vehicle convoy to our front was now passing through the checkpoint, past us, towards the APOD, from where we had just come. We learnt later that we may have been caught in the middle of a regular attack on MNF convoys that run that route. Looks like I was in the wrong place at the wrong time – depending how you look at it.

Another eye opener on my tour was when I was appointed IC of an RMP search team attached to a 12 Mechanised Brigade search op in Basrah. The mission was to conduct a joint search operation with IPS, TSU (Tactical Support Unit), Iraqi Army, US CPATT (Civilian Police Advisory Training Team) and International Police Advisors (IPA). We were to search for bomb-making equipment (BME).

This was to be an Iraqi-led operation with the MNF simply monitoring.

After briefings, hurry-up-and-wait-periods and a 5am start, the search panned out to reveal no BME, just the poor, homeless slum areas of Basrah and the people who lived in them. One area we searched had a dead and decaying mule not 5 metres away from the front door of a dwelling, surrounded by awoken

family members. Wild dogs or family pets scavenged through the waste remains of humans and animals. The stench nearly made me sick. A woman was milking a goat and gave the cup of milk to a child.

This was poverty like I had never seen before.

Most of the MNF picked up on the vibe of the mission, realising that the people were no threat and switched from patrolling posture to slung weapons and snapping amazing and surreal photos of the locals and the landscape.

We walked past makeshift homes in the rubble, where people were still asleep – in the open, on the ground or on makeshift beds.

Some people were washing under a broken tap, while the head of one family was washing his car-turned-taxi with a bottle of water, taking much pride in his effort. We saw young children running around playing, while others stared at us – while we stared back in amazement.

It shocked me how they were so oblivious to the squalid surroundings they lived in. I will never again doubt my quality of life or living conditions in Australia – or the quality of life my children have. Those images of Iraq will always stay with me as a sober reminder.

The search op ended on a quiet note with the IPS, TSU and MNF hierarchy shaking hands and thanking each other for the support – all via interpreters.

We pulled back to our vehicles and just smiled and waved to the locals as we left. Some Brits gave small amounts of rations and water to the smaller children that approached. It was a very humbling experience for even the most experienced soldiers.

Later during my tour, I was attached to the RMP Court Liaison Team (CLT) at Shibah logistics base. Here, I took part in another search op, this time with the Royal Anglian Infantry Regiment looking for shoulder-launched weapons platforms (rocket launchers), as well as deploying with the RMP CLT on liaison monitoring visits of outlying rural courts and police stations.

During this time, an infantry call sign was hit by an IED while traversing Purple One, a checkpoint that we all travelled daily.

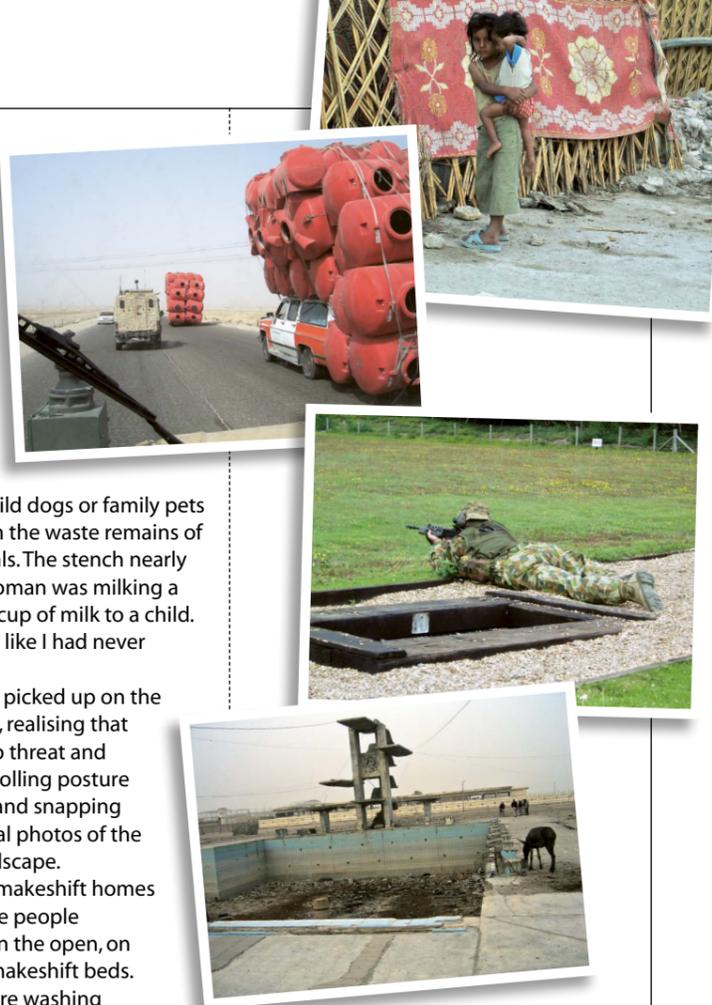
At various times, I was also attached to the RMP Det Al Muthanna and to the British Army Light Dragoons infantry unit, for patrols in the town of as Samawaha. I took part in foot patrols with the Coldstream Guards and again with the 'Staffords' on arrival back at the Shaat.

Two days before I left Iraq, four Americans from a local security firm were killed by an IED in Basra near Green 18, an area I assisted the Coldstream Guards to clear the night before.

Iraq is a very volatile country that must be seen to be believed. I am thankful for the opportunity to have served with the British Army, in particular 174 ProCoy, while in Iraq and my UK host unit 158 ProCoy, Bulford. My thanks also go to the OC, staff and NCOs of the RMP whom I met while in the UK and in theatre and for taking me under their wing for the experience of a lifetime.

Obviously, I have more stories and finer detail than space allows here, but I'll save them for a different audience in another place – perhaps where a beer or two might help my memory!

Thanks for listening. Duke.



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SILENT STALKERS

THE ART AND SKILL OF THE MODERN SNIPER

WORDS BRIAN HARTIGAN PICS BRIAN HARTIGAN AND ADF

Unlike in the movies where a good sniper bags an impressive collection of bad guys in a single day and, in fact, quite unlike his counterpart in either World War, today's sniper may never fire that one, well-aimed shot he is so highly trained for. But yet, he remains one of the most valuable battlefield assets under a battalion commander's control.





The Battalion Sniper Cell is truly an elite cadre of highly-trained soldiers. Known for their skills in the art of shooting, these warriors have a far wider skill-set than may be appreciated, and are consequently more valuable to their bosses than mere triggermen.

It is recognised and understood by every skilled hunter – professional or otherwise – that the art of stalking and observation is equally important in the pursuit of prey. The ability to shoot through the eye of a needle at great range is quite literally useless if the hunter is not equally endowed with patience, cunning, stamina, knowledge and observation skills.

Sniping as an organised capability of war only came to prominence (especially on the British side) during WWI. As the war stagnated into a trench-warfare stalemate, the philosophy of the sniper gradually – and despite the establishment – gained favour. Upper-class British officers such as Major H Hesketh-Prichard (see book review page 61), accustomed to deer hunting in the forests of Scotland, enthused their hierarchy with the potential to be gained from proper schooling in the use of high-powered weapons and good optics. Hesketh-Prichard and the wider British adoption of sniping was in fact in response to a similar capability employed earlier by the Germans from an early stage. And, as both sides developed their skills, the art form became more and more sophisticated and advanced as a consequence of necessity and survival. Accurate and skilled shooting remained the core of sniping, but it was in the areas of observation and stalking where

refinement and skills development were most evident.

Unlike the Germans in WWI, British snipers were organised in pairs. Initially this was so that an observer could scan the opposing trenches for signs of enemy activity and, calling out accurate range information to his partner, would quickly bring the rifleman to bear on what was often a fleeting target. Having gathered such information, it was a simple step to then record his observations in a logbook in case further activity in the same area might indicate a developing trend. And since the information was now logged, passing it up the line through the intelligence chain, where the information may prove to be a valuable piece in the bigger-picture jigsaw was a logical step.

One anecdote Hesketh-Prichard recounts, illustrates the alertness and deductive powers of a particularly switched-on sniping pair.

A ginger cat was observed on the berm of a thought-to-be disused section of enemy trench. When the same cat was observed to sunbake in the same spot day after day, the sniper deduced that, since there was a prevalence of rats in the whole area among which the cat could roam, this particular cat must belong to someone resident. And since it was a fine pet, it must surely belong to a well-to-do officer. Therefore, there must be a post of some significance in that area.

Sure enough, once artillery was called down on the area and the location cleared by a follow-up raid, not only was one dead moggie located, but also the remains of a substantial underground command post – and its occupants.

It also became apparent, even to the skilled snipers, that after identifying a target, shooting it then and there may not always serve the greater good. Hesketh-Prichard tells of one particular battle where an intelligence picture had been built up over weeks as sniper pairs identified and logged more than 200 otherwise concealed machinegun and other defensive positions on the German lines without engaging them. Then on the night of the attack, intelligence-guided artillery accounted for most of these positions at once and the infantry assault went ahead unopposed, except for small-arms fire.

Today's snipers, most of whom never have and never will fire a lethal shot, are equally skilled in the art of battlefield observation, and it is for this they are primarily employed.

In the case of 3RAR, it should come as no surprise that the sniper teams are parachute qualified. Unlike their regular infantry brothers, however, 3RAR's snipers use ram-air, steerable canopies.

They are, in theory, dropped into an area of operations well ahead of the main force. It is their job to insert themselves, undetected, in a position affording maximum observation of the proposed battlefield, to gather invaluable eye-on-the-ground intelligence and report back to commanders on the suitability or otherwise of a major force landing in the area.

Having observed the force insertion, the snipers remain in overwatch, reporting enemy as well as friendly activity back to commanders, who may not necessarily be on the battlefield.

In this instance, the snipers are employed strictly as a reconnaissance asset and are not expected to take any other part in fighting, even though they may be well armed to do so.

Today's Australian snipers carry a range of weapons, depending on their commander's intent for their employment. Both members of the sniping team carry 9mm sidearms. Number 2 – the observer – is armed with standard-issue Steyr 5.56mm rifle and 40mm GLA (grenade launcher assembly), while #1 – the actual sniper, or team leader – carries the Australian Army issued 7.62mm Accuracy International L96A1 sniper rifle.

A third weapon employed by snipers in Australia is another from the Accuracy International stable, designated AW50F. This .50 cal (or 12.7mm) weapon is intended – as its descriptor name suggests – as an anti-materiel weapon. Accurate to 1500 metres, this heavy hitter can take out other weapon systems such as mortar tubes, artillery



Accuracy International AW50F

Calibre: 12.7mm
Barrel length: 690mm
Barrel twist: 1 in 15
Magazine capacity: 5
Weight: 13.5kg
(no sight, empty magazine)
Length overall: 1350mm
Length folded: 1105mm
Range: 1500m

Accuracy International L96A1 Sniper Rifle

Calibre: 7.62 mm
Effective range: 900m
Weight: 6.5 kg
Length: 1124–1194mm
(adjustable)
Muzzle velocity: 838 m/s
Feed: 10-round box

pieces and so on, or light vehicles such as four-wheel-drives or trucks, its exploding, penetrator projectiles making light work of engine blocks or other relatively soft targets.

But such firepower comes with a price. Weighing in at around 15kg plus ammo, the AW50F usually requires the addition of a third member to the sniper team. But, it is felt, this disadvantage is by far outweighed by the benefits of deploying a weapon of such power and range.

Parachuting in to an area of operations is not as simple as hitting the ground and going into hiding. To avoid detection, the sniper team will usually walk quite a distance from their insertion point, often up hill, to gain best advantage and to distance themselves from where an enemy observer may have seen them come down. All this walking, especially given that the weight of weapons, ammunition, parachute, communications and other equipment, as well as sufficient water and rations to sustain a long emplacement, necessitates that the average sniper is above average in his fitness. In fact, snipers are by necessity above average in most aspects of their personal traits, skills, training and stamina – making them almost elite in the military sense.

Officer Commanding 3RAR Lieutenant Colonel Adam Findlay says the snipers'

course is probably one of the toughest courses in the land army and as such has one of the highest failure rates of any other course. "It's a very demanding course – both mentally and physically," he says. "It takes a special kind of soldier to become a sniper."

Snipers are selected from among the battalion's soldiers who have at least 12, but preferably up to 18 months, infantry experience behind them. Being nominated does not guarantee success, however – in fact it doesn't even guarantee a place on the next course.

Of 20 nominees stepping up for the latest course run at 3RAR, only eight eventually went on to start the course and, if history is any guide, only half of these will pass.

The basic sniper course, of six weeks duration, is a local liability, run in-house at the Battalion Sniper Cell, just once per year. The barrier test that accounts for more than half the aspirants, concentrates on physical fitness and navigation proficiency.

Naturally, navigation is of high importance to a sniper. Not only do they depend on it for their very lives in a hostile environment but, static navigation is equally important to their value as battlefield reconnaissance assets.

continued on page 40



IT TAKES A SPECIAL KIND OF SOLDIER TO BECOME A SNIPER.

SNIPER OVERWATCH IN ACTION

BY CORPORAL CAMERON JAMIESON, DIRECTORATE DEFENCE NEWSPAPERS

The air is hot and dry as it drifts around the exposed concrete skeleton of a destroyed building in the heart of Baghdad.

The familiar sound of a pair of US Black Hawk helicopters hugging the rooftops can be heard in the distance.

Suddenly, a different, angrier growl reaches the ears. Down the road a tight pack of ASLAVs moves into sight, their large-calibre weapons sweeping the streets for signs of a threat.

Quickly they decelerate and come to a halt near the building, dropping their ramps onto the rubble and grime. Infantrymen spill from the vehicles and start to clear a path to the remains of the stairway.

Among them can be seen the sniper pair, who the infantrymen will escort to a pre-determined vantage point on the roof of the decaying structure.

After a few moments the snipers commence their commentary via the team's radio net, ensuring all call signs have situational awareness.

In the distance can be heard the growl of the Ambassador's convoy.

All eyes focus outwards, ready for any signs of unwanted visitors as the second pack of ASLAVs bear down on the position.

SECDet VII is a team without a corps. Eight weeks of mission rehearsal exercises has removed any barriers between the soldiers who were predominately from the cavalry, infantry and military police. Now they are mobility, security and protection specialists banded together with the combat support personnel to form a single combined-arms team.

To see them work is like watching an opera, their seemingly choreographed moves the result of the countless rehearsals of their drills.

SECDet VII has its headquarters and main element located at Coalition Operating Base Union III in Baghdad's International Zone (IZ), with detachments at the Australian Embassy and another further north at Taji, supporting the Australian Army Training Team Iraq.

Back at the ruined building, the protection element has ushered the Ambassador from the ASLAV into a waiting up-armoured vehicle that will take him the short distance to his meeting.

The protection element is comprised of military policemen who have been

trained in the demanding art of close personal protection.

Corporal Peter O'Brien is one of the protection specialists guarding the Ambassador. "You have to be on your toes all the time," he says.

"You have to be aware of the person you're protecting, your team mates and the outer cordon. You need to be listening and watching to maintain the security of the area you're in.

"Your mind is going at a thousand miles an hour. You constantly think of worst-case scenarios to determine where you would go and what you would do should it happen. You're always asking yourself 'where's the best cover?' 'where will I take the VIP in an emergency?' We are always thinking about the VIP because you must protect him to complete the mission."

High above them, the snipers maintain their vigil.

Suddenly there is a sound of a pistol shot a few hundred metres away, but the reassuring voice of the number-two sniper tells the team that it's just an Iraqi policeman using gunfire to clear traffic.

"That's common now," sniper team leader Corporal Nathan Heckel says.

"The people in Baghdad have become blasé about traffic management, so the Iraqis have found a new way to clear the roads."

Providing an overwatch of the surrounding terrain is a crucial part of the snipers' job. "We provide a live commentary feed to let them know what we are seeing, so they have an eye-in-the-sky idea of the situation," Corporal Heckel says.

"My number two, who acts as my spotter, and myself are an integrated team. We constantly bounce ideas off each other, and we both provide the commentary."

The snipers also provide a counter-sniper capability, so the pressure is constantly on them to keep a sharp lookout – although Corporal Heckel wouldn't have it any other way.

"I see sniping as the premier job for an infantryman," he says.

"To do urban operations in Iraq is definitely a career highlight. I don't think anything else compares to working here in Iraq in the over-watch and counter-sniping role."

Down on the ground Lance Corporal Chris Holz remains at his station within

the commander's cupola of his ASLAV personnel carrier.

"The ASLAV is ideally suited for this environment because of its mobility and firepower," he says.

"The situation is also enhanced by our pre-mission briefings. The crews need to know about any obstacles and any particular threats, such as stolen cars, that may come our way.

"We also need to be on top of our navigation as you can get into a lot of trouble if you get lost."

Nearby Sgt Mick Hunter is in the turret of his ASLAV gun car.

"A lot of things go through your mind as you move through the Red Zone," he says. "You're constantly thinking about the threat, civilians, coalition forces, traffic conditions and how we are managing the convoy. There are a few worries in the back of your mind but you shut them out – you have a job to do and so you get on and do it."

The Ambassador's meeting finally ends, and the protection team escort him back to his waiting ASLAV.

TO DO URBAN OPERATIONS IN IRAQ IS DEFINITELY A CAREER HIGHLIGHT. I DON'T THINK ANYTHING ELSE COMPARES TO WORKING HERE IN IRAQ IN THE OVER-WATCH AND COUNTER-SNIPING ROLE.



Excerpted from a story that first appeared in ARMY newspaper. Reproduced with permission.

Static navigation is the skill of accurately calculating the location of another point separate from where the observer is lying. Such calculation is essential when reporting enemy dispositions back to HQ or, indeed, in calculating the range to one's own target before firing a telling shot.

During the recent training program at 3RAR, I had the pleasure of observing the latest batch of would-be snipers during both static navigation and stalking sessions of their basic sniper course.

It was in this latter phase I was most impressed and it was here the traits of the sniper – stamina, cunning, stealth and, of course, crack shooting – were impressively demonstrated.

A stalk of almost two hours duration saw the students advance over some distance of bushland, approaching a target in the open. This “target” was a fellow sniper, skilled in the art of observation and detection, whose job it was to spot the students before he got “shot”. He was aided in this by more than 50 metres of open ground and a good pair of binoculars.

To pass this test, the students had to approach the target and, without being detected, fire two clear shots on their quarry.

At any time, the “target” could steer two runners, directed by radio, to any spot he believed he saw movement. If the sniper student is located within a metre of where the runner arrives, he fails the stalk.

One successful student I witnessed on the stalk, patrolled, stealthily, through the bush until he spied his quarry without himself being detected, then slowly withdrew, bending or breaking vegetation in a very narrow passage as he went, to form a “keyhole” through which he could take his well-aimed shot, with the absolute



minimum chance of being detected. Save for this very small keyhole, his presence was concealed by upwards of 30 metres of thick vegetation, yet through it he was able to fire his one telling shot – although in this case the percussion was from blank ammunition. To prove he would have found his mark had the bullet been real, the student maintains position and, when a runner comes to him, he reads a small number held up by the “target”.

Further testing his sniping skills, the student is then asked to nominate his calculated range to target, which he must give within 15 per cent accuracy.

The final test of his chosen fire position comes when the runner, holding aloft a fluro jacket, identifies to the “target” that he is standing within 10 metres of the sniper and a second shot will be fired. After this, the “target” again directs the runner to where he saw the muzzle flash – if indeed he did see it. And again, if the sniper is within 1 metre of the runner, he fails.

Only two of the eight students passed this, the eight of 10 such stalks on their course. Fail the tenth and they fail the course.

Those that do pass will be employed as number two snipers for a minimum of 12 months before progressing – nominated on merit after careful and prolonged scrutiny – to the next level.

The Sniper Team Leaders' Course is a further six weeks of intensive training that focuses on leading a very small team on a mission – preparing orders, backbriefs, insertion and extraction plans and overall mission planning and execution. This second course is run at the Sniper/Reconnaissance Wing at the School of Infantry, Singleton and, if completed successfully, qualifies the soldier to take command of his own sniping missions as a sniper team leader.

“These guys are very well trained, and if they get through their courses and are employed as snipers, they are a cut above the rest,” Lieutenant Colonel Findlay says.

“When a soldier passes these courses, he is justified in his pride when he wears the Crossed Rifles with S for sniper.”

Hesketh-Prichard supported the sentiment – albeit more than 80 years earlier. “If you who read this know a man who served his year or two in the sniping section of his battalion, you know one whom it is well that you should honour.”

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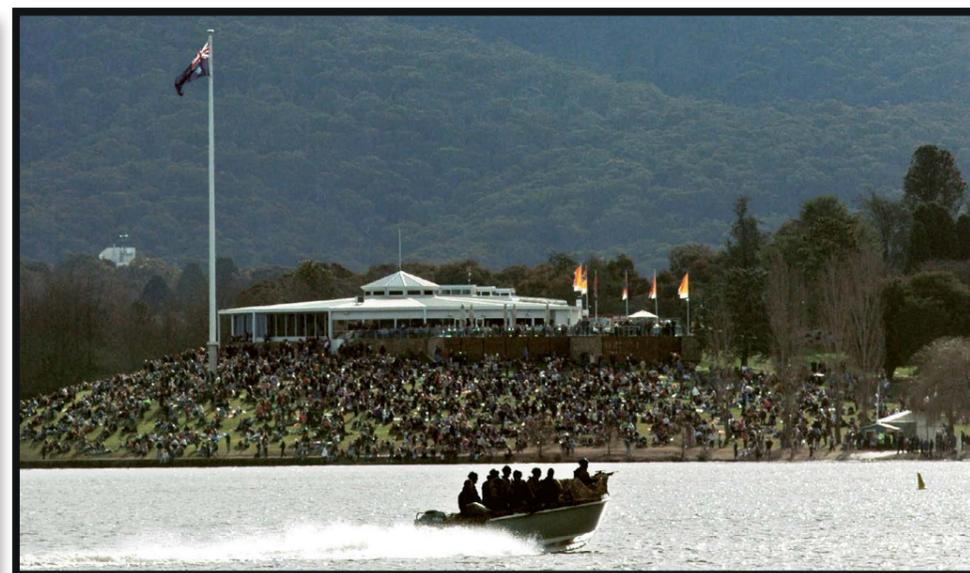
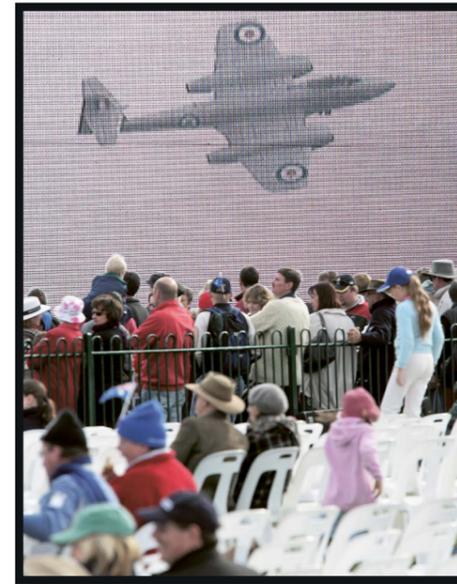
TRAGIC FOOTNOTE: The sniper featured on the front cover of this magazine was Private Jake Kovco, 3RAR, who accidentally killed himself with his own pistol in Iraq on 21 April 2006. May he rest in peace.

VP DAY 60TH ANNIVERSARY

VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC

PICS ADF

"Fellow citizens, the war is over." Prime Minister Ben Chifley announced to the nation on 15 August 1945, after almost six years of war that engulfed the world. A major centrepiece public event was held in Canberra on 13-15 August 2005 to thank Australia's World War II veterans for their contribution, achievement and sacrifice on the 60th anniversary of Victory in the Pacific - VP Day. But Canberra's event (pictured) was but one of many held in regional centres around Australia. "From Fremantle to Sydney, from Hobart to Townsville - throughout the nation, we saw thousands turn out for receptions, concerts, special displays, parades, sporting events, school visits and, of course, services of remembrance and thanks for the service and sacrifice of our veterans," Minister for Veterans' Affairs De-Anne Kelly said. "Around Australia during the past few days, people have shown their gratitude to our veterans in the warmest, most appreciative way, as they remembered and celebrated the anniversary of Victory in the Pacific and the end of war." More than a million Australians served during World War II - almost 40,000 were killed.



EXERCISE MERCURY 2005

MERCURY RISING

PICS ADF

Defence was just one of many Federal, State and territory departments that participated in Mercury '05, the major annual counter-terrorism exercise run by the Attorney General's Department.

In excess of 1000 reserves and full-time ADF members, including naval vessels, aircraft, Army units and special forces, took part in what is seen as a vital training activity for the ADF to practise counter-terrorism and consequence-management skills.

Chief of Defence Force Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston said the ADF's ability to respond effectively to terrorist incidents required constant training and regular coordination with both Federal, State and territory authorities.

"You don't get this training in isolation. Responding effectively to terrorist threats is a team effort and we all need to come together regularly and practise our procedures and processes within a realistic scenario," he said.





WO2 'SCOFF' COOTES (THIRD FROM RIGHT) IN VIETNAM - AWM P01008 002. AND (BELOW) AT HOME IN NEW ZEALAND - PIC KIWI MAC.



"We were sort of a mobile fire brigade – no fixed home, just flown or trucked where ever there was trouble," he says.

After Borneo it wasn't long before the warning order came for Vietnam.

It was May 1967 and Victor 1 (V Company, 1RNZIR) arrived for a six-month tour, at Nui Dat, Phouc Tuy Province. Originally joining 6RAR (Royal Australian Regiment) V1 Company soon married up with 2RAR – "The same guys we'd worked alongside in Malaya" – on 30 May.

In Vietnam for six months, Victor 1 was relieved by V 2 on 12 November.

"During Vietnam, the whole battalion virtually disappeared – while two companies were over there, another was at Terendak preparing to go. So there was only bloody odds and sods left at home.

"By Christ, I would've loved to have seen the whole battalion deployed together over there," he muses.

Back in New Zealand, Scoff filled a number of training positions and was in

Vietnam," he thought. "I didn't even know what the bloody AATTV was.

"We flew to Brisbane on a Sunday and on the Monday went to the Jungle Warfare School at Canungra. I was posted as a WO2 (warrant officer class 2)."

Living six to eight in a tent in the middle of the Australian blue-gum bush, Scoff said the training for the team initially was a bit of a shock, but was thoroughly professional.

"We got there, in the middle of bloody nowhere, and about 60 of us were herded into a shed.

"We were asked, 'Hands up who hasn't been to Vietnam?' I think all of us had been. Then we were asked who didn't want to be here, and half the bloody room stuck their hands up!"

Told by a major, one in eight of them would be wounded and one in 12 killed, Scoff wondered what the bloody hell he'd let himself in for?

But, he says, the training they received

was all geared up for Vietnam and was some of the best he'd ever had.

"I never understood why we weren't doing it in New Zealand, though," he says.

Finishing up at Canungra, the trainees were to head down to Sydney to the School of Infantry.

"Here's how tight-fisted our government was – the Aussies flew down, but we were made to go down by train. What a bloody long haul that was," he says.

At the School of Infantry, they learnt all about the different weapons they might expect to encounter – Aussie, US and Viet Cong – and fired them all.

From there it was down to Adelaide for Vietnamese language training.

Scheduled to fly straight to Vietnam from there, a plane breakdown saw the Kiwis sent home for a couple of days.

"I headed up to Papakura and went to a briefing from 'Ugly' Martin at SAS headquarters.

"We were told they had no idea how or when we'd be resupplied but we'd still be paid. Resupp would be word of mouth – just tell them you're broke, we were told."

Flying to Singapore via the RNZAF, the Kiwis were reunited with their Aussie counterparts, flying to Saigon with Qantas.

"We arrived wearing J/Gs [jungle greens] but were then kitted out by the Yanks. You started at one end of a hangar and helped yourself down to the other end," he says.

Arriving in theatre, they quickly found out the AATTV served with virtually



SOUTH VIETNAMESE REGIONAL FORCE TROOPS AT BONG SON. FROM COOTES' COLLECTION.

IT ALWAYS AMAZES ME HOW ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER OVER A BEER AND, BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, YOU'RE ON TO A GOOD STORY.

WORDS KIWI MAC

THE PEOPLE YOU MEET

BOY FROM THE BREWERY DOES GOOD IN VIETNAM

There we were, having a barbie and a few quiet ones, when one of my mates picks up CONTACT issue six and starts reading about the Australian Army Training Team Iraq.

"Mac you wanna track down Scoff Cootes, mate – now there's a story for ya."

So, I track down former Warrant Officer John 'Scoff' Cootes at his home in the small Waikato town of Ngaruawahia.

"What the hell do you want to interview me for. I was only in the Army long enough for breakfast and left not long after lunch," he said.

Not a bad way to describe 30 years in the infantry, including active service in Malaya, Borneo and Vietnam.

"It was 1957, I was working at a brewery in Wellington when one day we were in the pub and saw an advert in the paper for blokes to join the Army for Malaya.

"They were raising the 1st Battalion of the New Zealand Regiment to replace the SAS over there. My mates said they were all keen but, one by one they all came up with excuses why they couldn't go. But I thought, bugger it, I'm going," he says.

Signing up initially for three years, Scoff spent two of those in Malaya. When he came back there was still a job at the brewery if he wanted it but, "They were sending the battalion back to Malaya, so I opted to head back to Burnham.

"After 12 months over there, I came back, went on an instructors' course and then was posted to Gurr's Battalion in Singapore."

By 1965 Scoff was a sergeant in what had become the 1st Battalion of the Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment, based at Terendak, Malaysia and was subsequently sent into Borneo during that confrontation.

Auckland about 18 months later when he received a call from Major Bruce Ponunga.

"We want you to go on a course in Australia."

"When?" Scoff asked enthusiastically.

"Hang on – you'll have to think about it," Major Ponunga said.

Suspicious, Scoff asked why.

"Because you won't be coming back.

You'll be going straight from Australia to Vietnam. You're going to the Australian Army Training Team."

Scoff broke the news to his wife of just a few months – he was shipping out in two weeks.

Heading down to Fort Dorset in Wellington, "Great, I'm off to join some silly buggers traipsing about the back of bloody



AATTV NIGHT OPS SCHOOL. FROM COOTES' COLLECTION.

every major South Vietnamese Army formation.

Tasked to work as advisors as opposed to actual training tasks, Scoff quickly learnt to appreciate the Regional Force Vietnamese he worked with.

"A lot's been said about the fighting quality of the Vietnamese – mostly by those who came for 12 months, then pissed off home.

"But, these guys had seen the Japs, the French and now the NVA, Viet Cong and us. They knew it wasn't going to be all over in a year and, when the heroes of ANZAC went home, they'd still be there.

"Too many guys came over to Vietnam full of beans, thinking they would win the war single-handed and go home after 12 months.

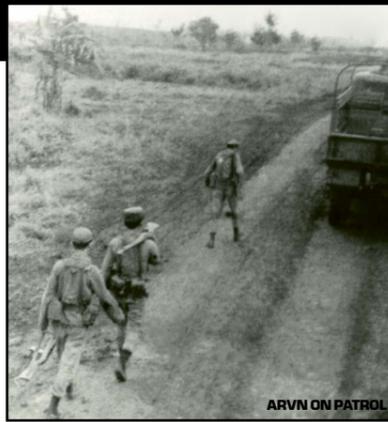
"It takes a lot to get me anti-up, but when some great Kiwi or Aussie hero starts slagging off the Vietnamese, it gets me angry," he says.

The regional- and popular-force units were the poor relations to the ARVN and their equipment and supplies reflected this.

"But they'd take their families into the forts and, if attacked, they fought like lions to protect them."

Even so, not everyone could be relied upon – anyone in the compound could turn out to be an enemy.

Sent down to the Delta region, Scoff and fellow Kiwi WO2 Ian Caskey found themselves posted to the AATTV's Night



Operations Training Team. Based out of the old US 9th Division base at Dong Tam where the 7th ARVN Division was now located, the NOTT's role was to spread the gospel on night operations.

Initially one ARVN officer from each of the 99 districts and 16 provinces, as well as 7th ARVN Division officers, were trained by the team.

"We'd train regional- and popular-force platoon leaders in night patrolling and how to lay night ambushes.

"We'd then go out – one or two advisors with a Viet platoon. It could be pretty hairy at times," he says.

"We'd train the S/NCOs and officers who in turn would go back and train their people, then we'd go up to their locations and patrol with them. Some locs were safe, others not. If we were in an area considered unsafe, we would usually overnight at the nearest US Special Forces compound.

"We wore ARVN lieutenants rank on our collar and a Night Operations Training Team owl on our chest."

Posted to MATT3 [Mobile Advisory Training Teams – US special forces equivalent to AATTV] after his Delta sojourn, Scoff arrived at Fire Support Base Horseshoe in October 1971, just as the Australian Task Force was departing.

"I was with a provincial reaction battalion and we'd patrol the Long Hais hills. Y'know every time we went out, we'd average five killed, usually from mines or ambushes."

At the end of his tour, Scoff flew out of Vung Tau aboard an RNZAF Bristol Freighter.

"I sat in the nose of the aircraft all the way back to Singapore. On arrival, we were asked by some base wallah, "Who the bloody hell are you fellas? Where have you come from? We don't have troops in Vietnam!"

The cold reception didn't end there, however. Arriving back at Whenuapai, expecting to be paid, he was told by a pay clerk there was no record of him. Arriving home, his wife asked what he was doing there – no one had informed her he was coming home. And, to make matters



worse, while out for a run the next day he was summonsed to see Camp Cautley's housing officer – "What the hell are you doing? You're supposed to be in Waiouru. Your house has been allocated and everything!"

What a welcome home!

Thirty years after enlisting, Warrant Officer John 'Scoff' Cootes finished his stint in the army in 1987, after postings as RSM (Regimental Sergeant Major) Hopuhopu Camp at Ngaruawahia, Fort Dorset in Wellington, and RSM of 4 O South Battalion in Dunedin.

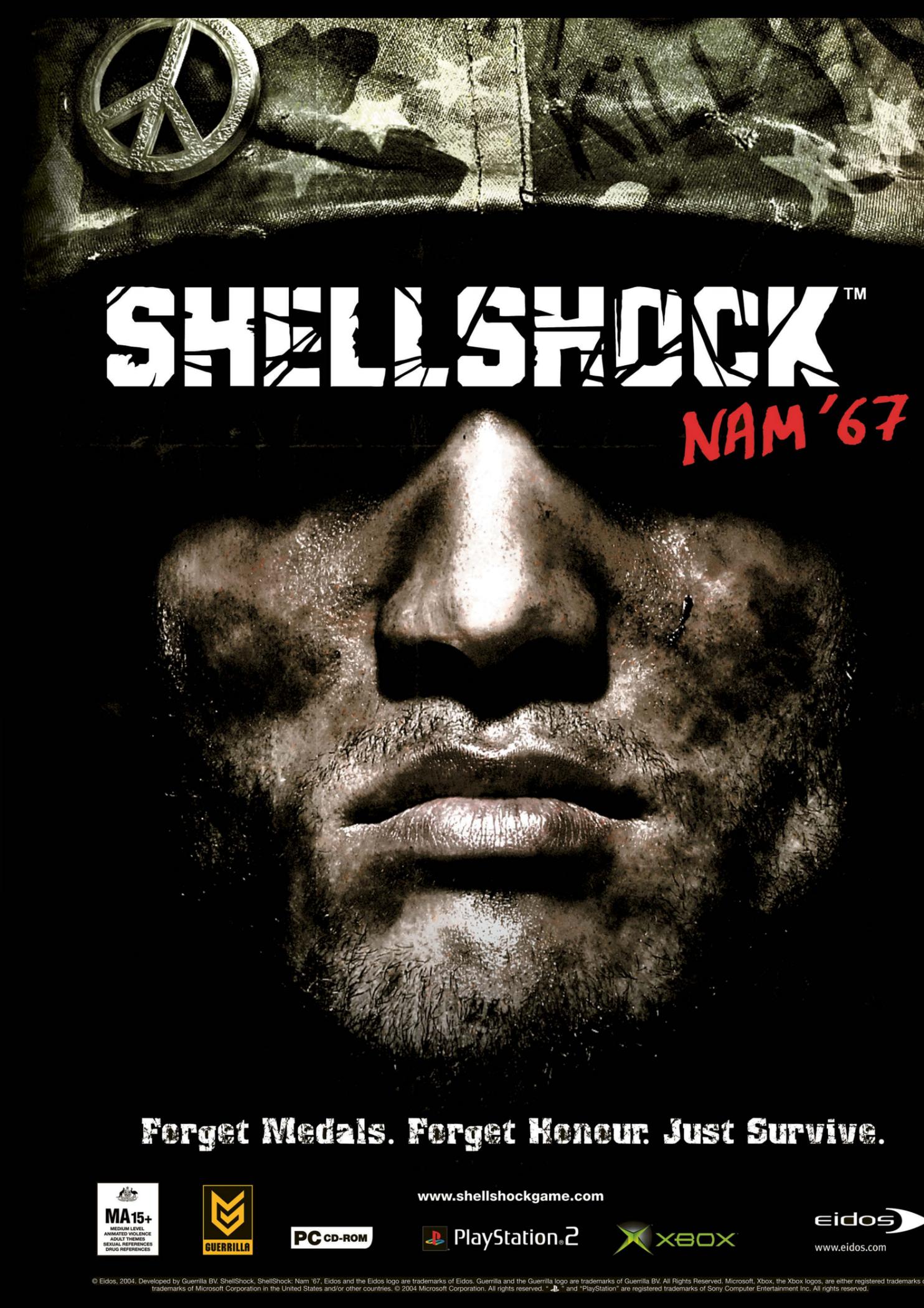
"Yeah, not bad for a boy from the brewery. Who knows, if I'd stayed in the Army long enough for tea, where else we'd have ended up, eh?"



RAAF 9 SQN IROQUOIS DISEMBARKS SOUTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS. PHOTO RAAF.
BELOW: AATTV NIGHT OPS TRAINING TEAM LOGO. AWM FOD 71 0557 VN.



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MUSCLING UP

BY IAN BOSTOCK

Navy's ANZAC-class frigates are slowly but surely transforming into leading-edge multi-purpose surface combatants.

When the capability requirement for the new ANZAC-class frigates was signed off back in the late 1980s, the goal was to introduce a fleet of cost-effective mid-size warships to undertake some of the lesser warfighting roles on the high seas. Back then the ships were described as 'Tier 3' combatants, intended predominantly for the range of missions encapsulated under the light-patrol frigate banner.

Fifteen or so years on, and with the last of the eight ships (HMAS Perth) due to be delivered to the RAN in June 2006, the ANZACs are taking on a somewhat bigger and broader silhouette these days. In layman's terms, one might say the class has beefed up a bit.

In capability speak, it would be more accurate to suggest that the ANZACs are the subject of various upgrades, retrofits and technology-insertion programs that will see them leave the role of 'light-patrol

frigate' well and truly behind. By about 2010, the ANZACs will still look pretty much the way they were conceived, but their offensive and defensive capabilities will be far and away superior to that of the original version.

While the platform itself remains unchanged, it is the ability of the ships to reach out and strike at enemy shipping, target submarines, provide fire support to forces ashore and defend itself against attack that has transformed the ANZACs from a handy lower-order batsman to a world-class all-rounder capable of single-handedly seizing the initiative against most oppositions.

For their size, moderate crew numbers and ownership costs, the RAN will soon have at its disposal, eight ships able to conduct blue-water combat operations far up into Australia's region of interest or further afield, matching it with any frigate our Asian neighbours might care to send in.

The ships will be capable enough for allied commanders to want them on their team for coalition operations, as demonstrated in the Gulf more than once.

Indeed, it was the call for naval gun fire support from British troops ashore on the Al Faw Peninsula, Iraq, in March 2003 that

perhaps brought the ANZACs' capabilities to prominence, with HMAS ANZAC responding with multiple salvos from her Mk 45 Mod 2 127mm deck-mounted gun.

The Mk 45 54-calibre gun is a fully-automatic system able to hit targets at sea or on land at ranges out to 13nm (24km). Capable of firing 16-20 rounds per minute, the below-deck magazines hold 475-500 rounds of 127mm ammunition.

As is, the Mk 45 gun is a useful piece of kit, its projectiles of sufficient size to provide quite reasonable terminal performance on a variety of targets. There were plans several years ago to upgrade the ANZACs' guns with the new 62-calibre Mk 45 Mod 4 system but it is unclear what the status of those plans are today. Suffice to say that given the growing emphasis on expeditionary operations within both Navy and Army, the extra range (60nm) of the Mod 4 gun when firing extended-range munitions is unlikely to go unnoticed by the ADF's capability development folk. The 62-calibre barrel permits more standard 127mm rounds – such as the US Navy's new Cargo projectile and the Improved Conventional Munition – to be fired out to 21nm (37km).

The Mk 45 Mod 4 is already standard on US Navy DDG-51 destroyers, will shortly

enter service on South Korea's KDX-2 destroyers and has been nominated for Australia's new Air Warfare Destroyers, so a retrofit into the ANZACs a few years from now may well be on the cards.

Joining the Mk 45 gun on each ship will be eight canister-launched RGM-84L Harpoon Block II anti-ship missiles (ASM) mounted in front of the bridge. These are currently being installed under Project Sea 1348. The Block II missiles feature inertial/GPS guidance for precision accuracy and an improved ability to strike targets in the littoral – such as ships in port. Maximum range is around 60nm (110km).

Coupled with the Mk 45 gun, the Harpoon capability provides the ANZACs with a potent anti-surface warfare attack suite – the gun for engaging land targets during amphibious operations, while the Harpoons (with their 220kg warhead) go after hostile surface vessels over the horizon or close to the coast.

The decision a few years ago to acquire the longer-range Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile (ESSM) to replace the original spec RIM-7 Sea Sparrow surface-to-air missile will see each ANZAC able to provide itself, and to some extent, ships in relatively close proximity with a protective umbrella against air and ASM attack.



HMAS ANZAC ON PATROL IN THE SOUTHERN OCEAN. PIC RAN



HMAS BALLARAT LETS RIP WITH HER 127MM GUN DURING LIVE-FIRE EXERCISES. PIC RAN

THE MK 25 TYPHOON 25MM NAVAL GUN, SEEN HERE FITTED TO HMAS ARMIDALE, MAY BE PROCURED TO PROVIDE A MEASURE OF LAST-DITCH DEFENCE AGAINST SURFACE-BORNE ASYMMETRIC THREATS. PIC AUSTRAL



Upgraded under Project Sea 1428, each ship will now carry 32 RIM-162 ESSM rounds (instead of eight Sea Sparrows) in quad-packed canisters fired from the Mk 41 vertical launch system. Faster, more manoeuvrable and with a greater range than the Sea Sparrow, the ESSM can reach out to around 27nm (50km). It was declared operational in the RAN in June 2004.

Also coming the ANZACs' way is the new EuroTorp MU 90 Impact lightweight torpedo, which will replace the old Mk 46. The MU 90 Impact is a leading-edge weapon designed to target submarines and surface vessels. Its speed (29-50 knots), range (up to 10,000 metres) and stealth will provide a potent string to the ANZACs' bow. The ships will begin receiving the new torpedoes from early 2006 onwards.

The most recent upgrade for the class is that for an improved ASM defence (ASMD) capability as part of Project Sea 1448, which saw CEA Technologies finally break into the local market in a serious way – the Canberra-based firm selected to supply its active phased array radar system following extensive sea and land trials during 2004.

The new CEA-FAR radar and associated CEA-MOUNT missile illuminator will permit individual vessels to detect targets earlier and engage these at longer ranges and under a wider range of environmental conditions. CEA-MOUNT will provide continuous-wave or interrupted-wave illumination guidance for the ESSM and the ability to engage up to 10 targets simultaneously.

Work is already underway on upgrading the ships' Saab Systems 9LV Mk 3 command and control system to the Mk 3E standard and installing a Sagem Vampir NG infrared search and track system for improved detection of low-flying aircraft and ASM in the cluttered and target-rich littoral. The first ships equipped with the new systems are scheduled to be operational in 2009.

Other possibilities

Acquisition of a very short-range air defence missile system may also get the green light in the short term, although Defence is yet to announce which

THE SH-26(A) SUPER SEASPRITE WILL BE HUGE FORCE MULTIPLIERS FOR THE RAN. PIC RAN



ENTER THE PENGUIN

While it is true that the ships themselves are more able to engage and defend against a wider range of targets and systems, let's not forget the ANZACs' other very sizeable sting in the tail – the SH-26(A) Super Seasprite helicopter. True, the Seasprites are a mile late and have been dogged in controversy for too long, but there is no hiding the fact that, when operational, these aircraft will provide a quantum leap in capability for the RAN.

Designed to extend the eyes and ears of their parent vessels, each ANZAC will be allocated one Seasprite, exploiting the aircraft's capabilities so that it becomes an integral part of the ship's sensory and offensive arsenal.

Armed with the lethal AGM-119 Penguin Mk 2 Mod 7 ASM (each aircraft can carry two Penguins), the Seasprites will be tasked with search and destroy missions against enemy surface ships beyond the reach of the parent ship's own sensors and weapon systems.

With an effective range understood to be at least 35km, the 3m long, 385kg Penguin ASM reaches high subsonic speeds and has a 120kg semi-armour-piercing warhead that would totally destroy a patrol boat or landing craft, sink a frigate or destroyer and go close to crippling larger ships such as tankers, amphibious transports or carriers. Should two or three Penguin-armed Seasprites hook up and launch all their missiles at a single large target simultaneously then that ship is toast, no matter how big or well defended.

The Seasprites will also carry the new MU 90 lightweight torpedo, giving options as to how best to engage enemy shipping or submarines.

Expect to see the first Seasprites entering service on the ANZACs during the second half of 2006, with all 11 aircraft ready for operations a year or so later.

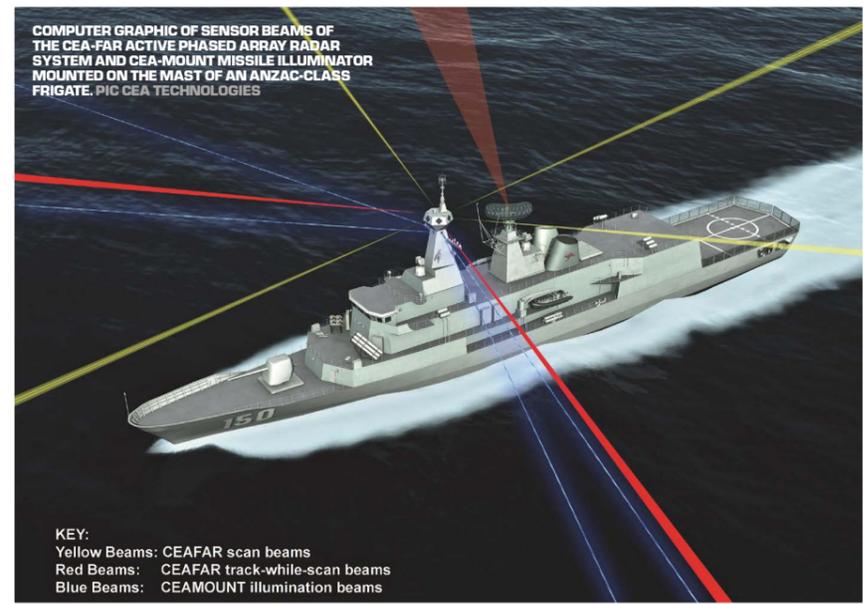
candidate systems it may be evaluating. A scan of suspects that fit this bill, however, might include the likes of the joint US-German RIM-116 Rolling Airframe Missile system.

A quick-reaction fire-and-forget ASM missile, RAM features a 21-round launcher as standard and has minimal deck penetration. The system is currently installed or planned for installation on 78 USN and 30 German Navy ships. A lightweight 11-round launcher better suited for applications where space and weight are at a premium is under development for the USN.

Fitting of the Israeli Mk 25 Typhoon 25mm stabilised lightweight naval gun system is also a possibility over the short to medium term (two to five years). The Mk 25 Typhoon, already being fitted to the new Armidale-class patrol boats, is thought likely to become standard across the RAN as its preferred low-cost, close-range, self-defence weapon, equipping everything from frigates to the new amphibs.

In this case, it could be reasonably assumed that the ANZACs would receive two such weapons – one to port, one to starboard – providing a modest but worthwhile inner layer of lead against asymmetric surface threats.

ALSO COMING THE ANZACs' WAY IS THE NEW EUROTORP MU 90 IMPACT LIGHTWEIGHT TORPEDO, WHICH WILL REPLACE THE OLD MK 46.



COMPUTER GRAPHIC OF SENSOR BEAMS OF THE CEA-FAR ACTIVE PHASED ARRAY RADAR SYSTEM AND CEA-MOUNT MISSILE ILLUMINATOR MOUNTED ON THE MAST OF AN ANZAC-CLASS FRIGATE. PIC CEA TECHNOLOGIES

KEY:
Yellow Beams: CEA-FAR scan beams
Red Beams: CEA-FAR track-while-scan beams
Blue Beams: CEAMOUNT illumination beams



THE JOINT US-GERMAN RAM SYSTEM MAY BE A CANDIDATE TO FULFIL A SHORT-RANGE SELF-DEFENCE REQUIREMENT ON THE ANZACs. PICS USN



VISIBLE ON HMAS WARRAMUNGA ARE THE TWO FOUR-ROUND CANISTERS FOR THE HARPOON ASM. PIC RAN

HIGHWAY TO HELL.

The heat shimmered off the bitumen as it would from a hotplate. The midday Somali sun bore down with all its 50-degree fury on the road between Mogadishu and Baidoa as we sat in our vehicle control point (VCP) and slowly baked. Between the glare and the sweat channeling grit down from under my helmet into my eyes I could barely observe the goings on before me as I sat miserable in my turret.

WORDS WAYNE COOPER PICS WAYNE COOPER & ADF

The infantry were admirable in their stoicism as they methodically went through the process of inspecting all non-military vehicles that passed down the highway in the most severe heat most of us had ever experienced. But it was no fun inside an APC either, if the ambient temperature outside was 50, then it was at least five to 10 degrees hotter inside an M113 armoured vehicle. Though my definition of unbearable had received a severe revision since we left the comfort of Australia a month before, days like this came close to reaching the new benchmark.

The VCP was established some five kilometres south of the town of Buurhakaba, at a place where a metal truss bridge crossed a slow-moving, trickle of a river. The river had cut a wide fissure through the red earth over the centuries, but even in the monsoon season we did not witness it building any more momentum to more than that of a modest creek. What water did flow down its course turned the wide banks into a quagmire of ochre clay, which only served to impede man and beast from accessing the precious resource.

The bridge was a location we had come to know well as we had spent much of our time there of late. On the main supply route (MSR) between Baidoa and Mogadishu, it was a perfect place to conduct a VCP as it was the only crossing point for a normal wheeled vehicle for kilometres in either direction. If you wanted to get across the river you had to stop and pay the toll – the toll in this case was a thorough inspection of vehicle, cargo and personnel by the Australian Army.

Now, the term 'normal', as it applied to vehicles, had a special significance in Somalia. I used the expression in the previous paragraph to differentiate between off-road and on-road vehicles,

but 'normal' didn't apply to cars, trucks and busses here. The road transport system of Somalia in 1993 more resembled the post-apocalyptic visions of George Miller than any 'normal' highway anywhere in the developed world.

Years of civil war and the ensuing poverty and exile from trade with the rest of the world had meant that access to spare parts and new vehicles was virtually non-existent in Somalia. As a consequence, the population only had scavenged materials and ingenuity to keep their vehicles running. This resulted in some of the most remarkable engineering solutions any of us had ever witnessed.

As I sweltered in my turret this particular day, waiting impatiently for my picket to end so I could at least get out of the direct sunlight, an incredible vision rolled down the highway toward us. At first I was unable to discern what exactly I was looking at. We had long since become used to seeing cars and trucks so heavily laden with people and goods that they doubled and sometimes tripled their usual size. But this car was peculiar in a different way.

I strained through the heat haze to make sense of the odd shape approaching the VCP. The distortion of the shimmering highway only added to my confusion as I tried to shield my eyes from the Sun's glare. The car had a very unusual configuration that didn't seem to make sense.

As it came closer I could hear it was labouring, like an aircraft engine spluttering and beginning to stall. The vehicle was weaving across the road like a drunken sailor. The apparition had also begun to attract the attention of the infantry who stared down the road, frowning into the glare.

The car struggled into range, its engine alternating between stages of choking and over-revving. As it came more fully into view we could hardly believe our eyes. It appeared to have two men riding in the bonnet-less engine bay, with several others on the roof and three more in the open boot. Our astonishment turned to alarm as it appeared the vehicle was not going to stop.

The VCP was set up so that our APCs formed a chicane that an approaching vehicle would have to slow to walking pace to navigate through. This configuration, and the fact that there were at least six machineguns covering the approach, usually ensured that most road users were happy to comply with our order to stop. Apparently not this time.

The grunt on picket walked calmly out onto road and signalled to the approaching abomination to slow down and stop. The machine gunner on duty with him, lying

controller of a vehicle that didn't intend to stop anyway. But our only defence in this situation was to stop or divert the vehicle before it ploughed into us. If that meant taking out the driver and other occupants, then so be it.

The time to act was upon us. My finger nervously rested on the trigger as the car's engine finally seemed to stop revving. My relief was short lived as it became obvious the vehicle was not slowing enough to avoid a collision with my APC. As the crazed men in the engine bay waved frantically at us to get out of the way, it occurred to us all simultaneously that it was not a matter of would not stop, but could not stop.

Pete quickly selected reverse. The car closed to within twenty metres and was still travelling a good twenty kilometres an hour as the men in the boot bailed out. I told Pete to reverse as the car passed the ground sentry who had wisely decided not

had put us in a position of having to decide whether or not to shoot them.

The unimpressed infantry quickly had the men out of their vehicle and seated nervously in the middle of the road with hands on heads.

After suffering the verbal abuse of the section commander in charge of the VCP, one of the passengers, who was able to speak a little English, did his best to explain what had happened. With the infantry's permission, he rearranged the occupants of the wretched vehicle to demonstrate how it was operated. With bewilderment we observed the mother of all invention.

The car was steered in the usual manner from the driver's seat, but that is where all similarities to normal vehicle operation ended. The two men in the engine bay functioned as the fuel injection system and the clutch. In an incredible act of

with the driver to move down through the gears, and when the car slowed to running pace, the boot-men would jump out and bring the vehicle to a stop, Fred Flintstone style. Simple really.

This system had got the vehicle and its suicidal occupants some 300 kilometres from Mogadishu to the bridge without incident, the driver relying on coordination and his knowledge of the route to plan their stops well in advance. And, as our lecturer in Somali mechanics sheepishly explained, it was actually our fault the incident had occurred in the first place because we had blocked the road and had given no warning of the changed road conditions ahead.

Apparently they were the victims, as they didn't know we were there and the 200 metres of straight road leading up to the VCP was not enough space to stop in the usual manner. I guess they had us there.

After a search of the vehicle turned up

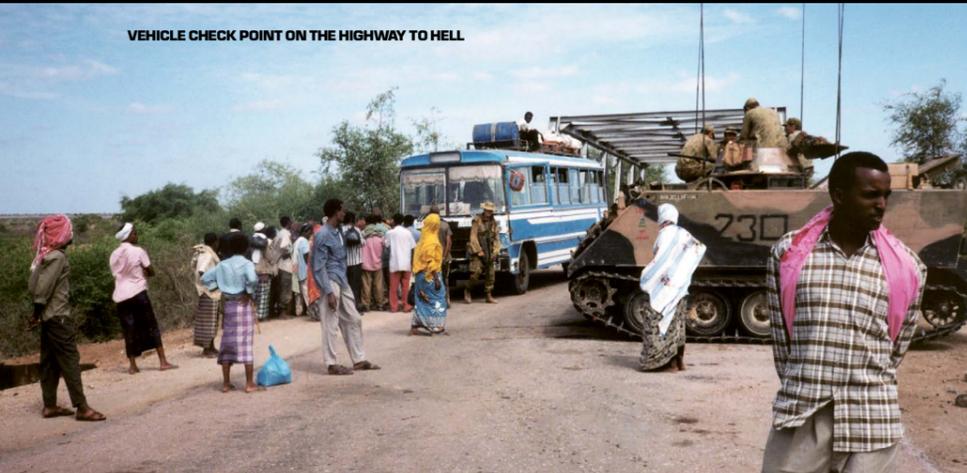
weapon and what it could do to the human body. I had seen countless dead bodies to this point. Most had died of starvation or from disease. Others had been killed in accidents or murdered by machete. These images were disturbing enough, but they did not prepare me fully for what I saw in the back of a decrepit truck one hot afternoon at the bridge.

I was not on picket this particular afternoon. Pete and I were holed up in the back of our mobile oven, futilely attempting to sleep in the impossible heat. We heard a large vehicle pull up at the front of the VCP and the sounds of weeping women and children among yells of otherwise agitated passengers.

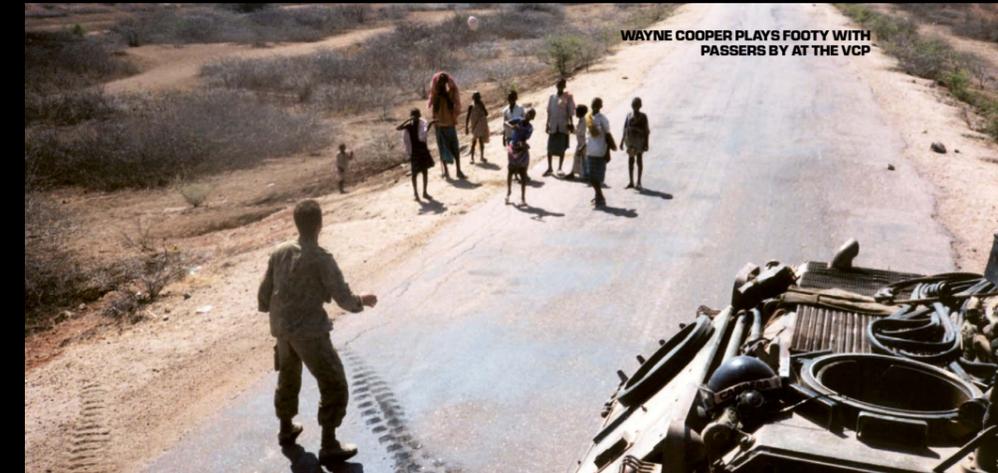
Sensing something unusual was happening, Pete and I both stepped out of our APC to witness the disturbing scene outside. The vehicle was a large truck with a canvas tarpaulin covering the cargo tray.

outside the Australian AO. The driver had decided not to stop and have his vehicle ransacked and his passengers molested by the murderous band, and accelerated through the threat. The bandits replied with a burst from an AK47 at the passing vehicle. We were the first authorities the hapless band had encountered since fleeing the scene of the attack some 30 minutes earlier.

As we examined the passengers we discovered that by some miracle the unfortunate chap in the back of the crowded truck was the only one to be hit by the murderous burst of fire. All of the blood and gore on the other passengers was from the massive injury suffered by the attack's only casualty. A high-powered round had entered the back of the man's head and exploded his cranium outwards, the only consolation for him was that he never knew what had happened.



VEHICLE CHECK POINT ON THE HIGHWAY TO HELL



WAYNE COOPER PLAYS FOOTY WITH PASSERS BY AT THE VCP

behind his weapon under a hutchie, raised the butt of the Minimi to his shoulder and took up a sight picture on the car. As I roused Pete from his rest and told him to get back in his seat and start up, I traversed the turret and pointed my two machine guns at the car, giving a clear indication that we didn't appreciate its rapid approach.

Our overt signals to desist from their present course of action were answered by yelling and wild hand signals from the occupants of the car. The young infantryman on the road raised his rifle to the shoulder and looked up at me in disbelief. For a few long seconds it seemed the madmen in the car were going to try to run the roadblock.

As the vehicle closed to within 50 metres, I released the bolts on my .50cal and .30cal machineguns, making them ready to fire.

I had run this Catch 22 scenario through my head many times and was well aware of the apparent futility of killing the

WE WERE ANGRY THEY HAD PUT US IN A POSITION OF HAVING TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO SHOOT THEM

to fire. The car passed by mere inches in front of our APC.

The boot-men didn't abandon their vehicle, instead they grabbed hold of the back of the car and strained mightily to bring it to a standstill. The terrified eyes of the men in the engine bay stared down the barrels of the other APC's machineguns. The car finally came to a halt inside the VCP, a few feet in front of 23A. For a few adrenaline soaked moments, we all stared at each other, resisting the urge to burst out laughing in nervous relief.

Our elation at not having to shoot anyone and the subsequent short-term euphoric amusement in the situation was quickly replaced by anger. Anger that these madmen had put their lives in danger, and

coordination, the pedal-less car was actually driven by three people.

Carburetor-man held a jerrycan of petrol in one hand and a tin fashioned into a pourer in the other. As they drove along he would pour fuel into the throat of the carburetor, which was in turn throttled by the driver via a piece of wire through the cavity where the windscreen should have been. To change gears, clutch-man would push the clutch-fork lever with his foot to disengage the drive train while the driver manipulated the gear stick.

As the car was indeed sans pedals, including the brake pedal, the three boot-men served as the brakes. As the vehicle approach a stop, carburetor-man would cut the delivery of fuel, clutch-man would work

no weapons or incriminating evidence, the pit crew from Hell were allowed to push their deathtrap through the VCP and continue their journey inland. As carburetor-man primed the engine, the three boot-men got up a head of steam and, at the appropriate moment, clutch-man let the gearbox engage to bring the engine screaming back to life. The boot-men then piled into their designated crew position as the car accelerated away, all waving manically at astonished Aussies.

The VCP at the Bridge would be the site of many of my most memorable experiences during the 17 weeks of Operation Solace. Some experiences were funny, some sad – but most were disturbing in some way. The gamut of my Somali experience seemed to take place at that bridge and it looms large in my memory even today.

It was the place where I first experienced the shocking power of a high-caliber

As we looked on, people were jumping down from the truck. Most were splattered with blood.

The infantry section commander was trying to make sense of what the distressed driver was yelling at him. While he tried to settle the driver and passengers down, two of his men opened the back of the tarpaulin, their eyes narrowing at the sight inside. One of them gestured to Pete and I. "Check this out," he said grimly.

We peered into the back of the truck at the mess inside. There was the headless body of a man propped up against the side of the tray, his arms looped between the railings, holding his torso upright in a grotesque demonstration of his position at time of death. From the top of his shirt protruded the stump of a neck, with the remnants of the man's head distributed over the inside of the tarpaulin.

It seemed the vehicle had encountered a bandit roadblock several kilometres

Unfortunately for the other victims of this particular crime there was nothing much we could do for them. As there were no other injuries to treat – at least not physical ones – we could do little more than put the remains in a body bag, report the incident through our chain of command and send them on their way to Buurhakaba.

As the attack happened outside our area of operations we couldn't even roll on down the road and see if the bad guys were still there. We had to pass on our best guess for where the attack had taken place and hope that the force operating in the adjacent AO would do something about it. Given that the adjacent AO was governed by Moroccan Army units, elements of which we believed to be almost as corrupt as the bandits themselves, there seemed little chance justice would be done over this matter.

Such was life on the Highway to Hell.

How to ace any fitness test

BY DON STEVENSON

I'll admit that I used to be in that group and, before I figured out what I was doing wrong, I failed a fair number (ok a lot!) of BFAs. The good news is that if I can go from struggling to complete seven chin-ups to being able to do 26, then anyone can!

This article will explain the principles of training for ANY fitness test – from the ADF pre-enlistment tests to the special-forces barrier test.

Background information on fitness tests

First up, let's cover some background information on fitness tests and make a few statements that are bound to draw some fire from traditionalists (lucky I can lift enough to do my chin-ups in a flak jacket).

The basic ADF fitness tests are a poor indicator of combat fitness. I say this because, I don't care how you cut it, the ability to do 100 pushups bears no direct relationship to combat, neither do 100 sit ups or a 2.4km unloaded run. Perhaps in recognition of this the Australian Infantry have taken a huge leap forward in researching a batch of new fitness tests that more realistically test combat fitness (for more details see the April–September '05 issue of Infantry magazine).

The main reason the fitness tests as they stand have been around for so long is because the current tests are easy to administer, easy to practice and provide some sort of measurement.

Most people train for fitness tests by hammering away at their current max reps in push ups, sit ups or run times. While this approach works for beginners, a different approach needs to be used for more advanced trainees.

So now that I've thrown myself into the pit of PT heresy how am I going to extract myself? With results!

Training principles for fitness-test mastery

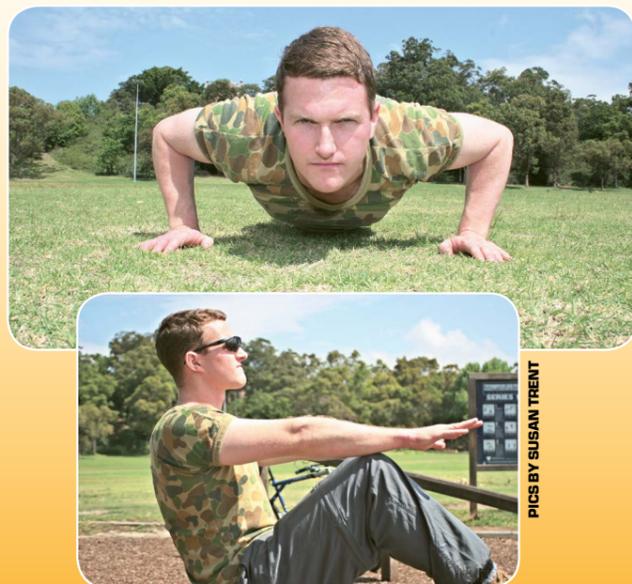
Outlined below are my basic principles for mastering any fitness test. But, since fitness tests don't accurately reflect the demands of combat, don't spend too much time on them.

If you have done a good job of building your combat fitness then you should be able to pass a fitness test at any time under any conditions. To ace the test, you can polish your test skills a couple of months out from test time.

Treat each fitness test as a multi-sport event just like a triathlon. This means you need to practice the test components together and be comfortable with the protocols.

In the six to eight weeks before the test, practice the test components frequently but avoid "training to failure".

Fitness tests require specificity. There is no point trying to improve your pushups by doing bench presses or your run by riding a bike. Once you



PICS BY SUSAN TRENT

Every six months, everyone in the ADF is supposed to pass a basic fitness test. For many people this is no problem, but for a fair number of personnel, there is an element of resignation and dread attached to fitness tests.

understand these principles, we can develop a plan that will prepare you for the fitness test in a very time-efficient manner and let you get on with the important work of becoming combat fit.

Principles into action

Let's have a look at how the principles above translate into a practical training program.

Last issue dealt with some great methods of developing a base of combat fitness. In summary, work on heavy lifting for the posterior chain and core, develop anaerobic endurance and maximal strength.

Then, six to eight weeks before the test, reduce your volume of combat conditioning to a couple of sessions a week and focus on the fitness test elements both individually and together.

I suggest that in the lead up to your test you do a full run-through once every two to three weeks. Apart from these tests, don't continually try and hammer away at full tests, there are more efficient ways to prepare!

Train for running/aerobic tests with a combination of

shorter, faster intervals (six x 400m, 3 x 800m) and longer runs (test distance to 5km).

Train with specific, frequent and sub-maximal practice of test components such as sit-ups, push-ups and chin-ups.

The last point is where I differ from the common mentality of training until you can't do any more push-ups or chin-ups and then resting for a day or two. The reality is that fitness tests are a skill more than anything else and like any skill the more you practice the better you get.

In order to allow frequent practice you can't train to exhaustion. So here is my simple program for dramatically increasing your test numbers.

Simply test your maximum number of push-ups, sit-ups and chin-ups and write down your numbers. Calculate 50% and 70% of these.

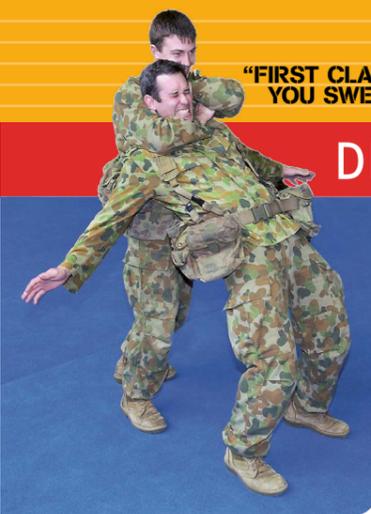
Now, what you are going to do is practice the components of the test three to eight times per day (yes that's right, up to eight times a day) for a single set of 50% or 70% of your max. Alternate days of five to eight sets at 50% of your max and days of three to five sets at 70%.

The overall effect is to drastically increase the volume of work you are doing while avoiding the fatigue that would stop you from repeat training sessions.

Train five days a week with only two exercises daily and rotate your test exercises every two weeks. After two weeks of this type of training retest your maximum and you will probably be surprised at how much you have improved.

The practical application of this is that whenever possible throughout the day you should be squeezing in a quick set of push-ups or chin-ups without breaking a sweat. If you are already in the military no one will give you funny looks, but if you're an office worker – well, do you really care!

To comment on this article (or to flame me to death because you think I'm wrong), please email fitness@octogen.com.au or visit www.octogen.com.au for more information.



"FIRST CLASS TRAINING IS THE BEST FORM OF WELFARE FOR THE TROOPS... THE MORE YOU SWEAT IN TRAINING, THE LESS YOU BLEED IN BATTLE" – IRWIN ROMMEL

DEVELOPING THE WARRIOR MINDSET

BY MAJOR TRAVIS FAURE

The US Army and Marine Corps have implemented comprehensive and progressive combative training programs to enhance personnel's ability to deal with lethal and non-lethal confrontations.

Both these services want their members to experience the physical and emotional demands of hand-to-hand fighting before engaging in combat. Both services value the physical skills developed, the cultural aspects and the knowledge that their trained members have other options to deal with non-lethal situations.

In the past five years there has been a resurgence of this type of training throughout the world's modern militaries. Kinetic-energy weapon systems have changed with the introduction of non-lethal kinetic energy systems. This has placed a greater emphasis on the integration of empty-hand techniques and the weapon system being carried by the soldier.

The USMC Martial Arts Centre of Excellence motto is, 'One Mind, Any Weapon', which simplistically states that it is the behaviour behind the weapon system that remains the same, as the soldier moves from one system to another.

Close-combat training is a cheap and effective tool to develop the one mind any weapon mindset. It also develops more obvious traits of combative fitness, controlled aggression and applicable skills for the modern battlefield that can escalate between operations other than war through to war.

Closer to home, Korean military personnel practise Tae

Kwon Do and Hapkido and must be experienced in these arts for promotion.

The ADF is no different, with its training focussed on lethal aspects through Close Quarter Fighting and non-lethal through Military Self Defence programs.

The ADF has developed strong ties with the US and our regional neighbours enabling us to capitalise on any self-defence developments in military and policing areas. The ADF is forging strong connections with the USMC Martial Arts Centre of Excellence.

These professional links will ensure the exchange of training ideas and lessons learnt. The US military is well resourced for the conduct of this training with specialised schools and fulltime instructors.

The Australian Army has had a continuous unarmed-combat capability since the 1950's. However, this type of training has been taught to soldiers in various forms since WWI. My grandfather served during WWI and one of his stories to me, concerned his preference for the shovel rather than the bayonet because the bayonet often got stuck and was difficult to extract.

The ADF, in particular the Army is forging ahead with the development of comprehensive unarmed combat programs that integrates kinetic-energy weapons with the use of non-lethal and lethal applications.

The Australian Army, unlike its US counterpart, is constrained by available resources, however, this has not stopped it from developing a world-class suite of self-defence courses.

Army courses are short and intense in nature. The non-lethal Military Self Defence course is five days of training and the lethal Close Quarter Fighter course runs for 10 days.

My observation is that if we can foster the development of the combative mindset in

students, then the techniques taught play a secondary role.

Techniques are a perishable skill without continuous training. The mindset, properly developed, can be 'switched on' and is not as perishable. This combative mindset is fundamental to handling close confrontations that are usually furious, taken by surprise and difficult to deal with.

The guiding principals for designing a self-defence course are to have a thorough understanding of the body's physiological and psychology reactions to stress. These reactions have been well documented in Lieutenant Colonel Dave Grossman's books, *On Killing* and *On Combat*, and Bruce Siddle's book, *Sharpening the Warrior's Edge*.

Once you understand how the body responds to a stressful violent encounter you can then develop techniques which are appropriate for the situation.

The military operational environment is often harsh, with members carrying loads consisting of packs, webbing, protective vests, kevlar helmets, stores and weapon systems. The carriage of all this equipment severely reduces mobility and affects the individual's centre of gravity. The daily routine is strenuous and tiring and may result in boredom. Soldiering is demanding and training times are limited to prioritised activities. Self Defence skills are essential, they need to be simple to perform and work under the enormous pressure of close combat.

ADF courses focus on the use of gross motor skills – that is, skills which will work when the individual is suffering from enormous Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) responses. The SNS has evolved over hundreds of thousands of years and has allowed man to evolve into what he is today. It is the natural instinct that prepares an individual for three responses – 1. flight – running away, 2. fight

– an aggressive counter action, and 3. hypervigilance – information overload, panic and freezing.

SNS results from the release of adrenalin into the blood stream. Adrenalin causes many body functions, that are not important, to close down. The heartbeat rises to pump blood to the essential large muscle groups (legs and arms), the eyes dilate to gain more focussed information. All this severely affects an individual's ability to perform complex or fine-motor actions. A gross motor skill is the ability to walk and run. It is gross motor skills that the ADF courses use to develop techniques that work under the pressure of violent encounters. The use of elbows, knees, low kicks and some hand strikes are examples of gross motor skills applicable to an unarmed attack. A simple rule of thumb is that if it cannot be explained within a minute and practised, then it is not a gross-motor skill and one might have to rethink its application within a close combat situation.

In the next article I will discuss the basic concepts and underlining principles of self-defence training within a military environment.





WEEKEND-WARRIOR'S DELIGHT

TERMINATOR 1

Oyama

www.onyerbike.com.au

RRP \$1195 incl GST

Reviewed by Brian Hartigan

A few months ago, this young chap in Brisbane contacted me through a mutual friend and said he wanted to give me a mountain bike for a promotional-prize giveaway. Valued at nearly \$1200, I sure as hell wasn't going to say no. And very glad I didn't.

I took delivery of the bike back in June and have been riding it ever since (so I can give you this honest appraisal) and can report that it's a marvellous machine with very few flaws.

The first big thing to note about this bike, of course, is that it folds in half! And if you think about that, it's a huge advantage. It will fit in the boot of all but the smallest car without having to dangle the front wheel out the back of an open boot lid. Think also of the ease on your mind when you can take it to work, fold it up and stick it under your desk – no more worrying whether a Queen Mary-sized chain will deter the keen bike pilferer.

Some may think that a hinge in the middle of a bike frame is cause for concern. Well I can report having absolutely no concerns or doubts about this central connection. Its construction certainly looks well solid and the quick-release pin that frees the hinge has a positive-lock feature that prevents accidental opening.

The whole bike seems solidly built, from aircraft-grade aluminium, and has all the features you'd expect from a top-range mountain bike – 24-speed gear set, trigger-change shifters, front and rear suspension, disc brakes and chunky, chunky tyres.

My riding history has mainly been limited to door-to-door, home-to-office transportation, but I can honestly say that since acquiring the



Terminator, I have been tempted into more adventurous riding. I've tackled concrete storm-water drains, paddock bashing, bush bashing and even a spot or two of mountain-goat tracking. There's probably proper and cool mountain-bike terms for all this, but I've had heaps of fun and a few ball-bustin' near misses nonetheless. But don't worry, the bike is still in good shape and already delivered to its new home in time for Christmas.

As a reviewer, I wouldn't be completely honest if I didn't pick one (in this case quite minor) fault to balance the ledger a little. I found the gearshift to be counter intuitive. What I mean is, while the left hand changes up gear with the thumb, the right thumb changes down and vice-versa for the index fingers. I found myself going the wrong way on the gear scale in more than one inappropriate situation – which might be a real problem for a serious rider. You do, of course, get used to this little anomaly over time, but it might be something for the manufacturer to look at in the future. Upon investigation, though, I have also discovered that it's a common thing on other such bikes – and there's probably a good reason for it.

All-in-all though, I reckon this bike is a fantastic machine for all grades of mountain bikers, but I suggest will probably be bought in great quantities by the weekend-warrior types who also want something cool to ride to work – and feel secure in the knowledge that their machine is safely folded away under the office desk.

Terminator 1 (and two other bikes) are available from www.onyerbike.com.au

Contact Darren Tomkinson on 0415 127 455 or check the web site for purchase and delivery options. Price includes GST, a nifty carry bag and sports cap.



PLAYSTATION PORTABLE (PSP)

Sony Computer Entertainment Australia

www.yourpsp.com.au

RRP \$399.95

Reviewed by Brian Hartigan

It's amazing how fast technology advances. I'm not an old man – but the things I've seen in the computer industry since I was a lad – whew!

And now, PlayStation Portable takes gaming entertainment to a whole new level.

I'm not just saying that to fill space either. I only had my hands on one for a week, but in that short time, I was no less than blown away.

As I've said before on this page, I'm not really a game player, so I won't comment too much on that side of things – though I did have a hoot playing a teaser version of *Blown Away* for far more hours than I should have.

What I will talk about is the machine itself.

Physically, it's a good size in my reckoning – big enough for big hands like mine to navigate around the familiar PlayStation controls, but small enough to be truly portable. And, amazingly, weighing less than 300 grams including the battery, it's certainly not cumbersome.

Speaking of the battery, I had a couple of back-to-back game sessions in excess of two hours each without recharging. Another day, I watched a whole movie, after which my youngest played games for a couple of hours, and still no sign of it quitting.

For me, the most amazing thing about PSP was the picture quality. Gameplay is in the same high-quality 3D graphics you'd expect from a PS2 combined with a good-quality plasma screen (although, obviously, in miniature). The real proof of quality, though, was when watching the movie. The size (4.3 inch screen) makes it a personal experience, but the images were amazing. We still watch a regular flat-screen TV



at home, so I'm not a plasma aficionado, but this experience could be enough to convert me – if it wasn't for the cost.

Which brings me to the price of PSP. At just \$399.95 recommended retail, I think it is surprisingly cheap, not just compared to previous new gadgets when they first hit the market, but excellent value for what you're getting.

And it's not just a game machine either. Movies I've mentioned. You can also listen to music in stereo – saving new songs to a Memory Stick Duo. And you can transfer your standard Memory Stick Duo – if that's what you use in your digital camera – to view images and run slide shows.

It's with this feature I had my biggest disappointment, however. After lots of trial and error, I finally resorted to the

instruction book – I am a bloke after all – and in it I found (in the small print) *it may not be possible to display some images, depending on the size of the image data* and *images edited using a PC may not be viewable*. For me, that pretty much rules out one of the major features that would interest me as a professional photographer looking for a "cool" platform on which to display my portfolio.

This disappointment got me thinking about some of the other features – USB connectivity and wireless LAN in particular. There are plenty of icons and visual indicators on the packaging and the device itself that suggest one PSP can "talk" to other PSPs or connect to a PC. There's even reference to needing an Internet service provider.

Excited I was – reasonably (I thought) assuming that multi-player gaming and web surfing were possible. But, disappointed again. While the instruction book goes through each connection process clearly and in detail, the reasons I might want to connect are never clearly spelt out. I'm making a bold assumption that file transfer to the Memory Stick Duo is about the limit of it. I could be wrong.

Negatives aside, once you figure out what you are actually getting for your money and what you are not getting, my honest assessment is that PSP is genuinely a fantastic platform and reasonably priced.

I know (from their press releases) that Sony are fairly sure of selling PSP in large numbers to a wider demographic than previous systems. What I'm also pretty sure of (from gut reaction) is they will sell in even higher numbers to people looking for a high-quality entertainment system they can take anywhere to while away long, otherwise boring hours – people on overseas deployments or long bush trips perhaps!

SNIPING IN FRANCE 1914-18

By Major H. Hesketh-Pritchard DSO MC

Published by Helion and Company

Reviewed by Wayne Cooper

This title is the first in The Helion Library of the Great War series, which seeks to make the classic, hard-to-find WWI publications accessible again through hardcover reprint. The other book in the series as published so far is *The Advance to Mons 1914: The Experience of a German Infantry Officer*.

Sniping in France 1914-18 is a gem of a book that details the genesis of the scientific approach to British Army sniping as outlined by the man who helped

develop it. Hesketh-Pritchard was a world-renowned hunter and marksman before the war who sought to ply his trade in the trenches of France in defence of the Empire – a job he was very good at.

His account of the development of the theory of sniping in trench warfare is engaging, if not dated. Though being dated in terms of modern warfare does detract from this book's value, as it demonstrates the effective application of improved rifles, ballistics and optical equipment on the first modern battlefield.

While the days of trench warfare may be far behind us, the sniper still plays a pre-eminent role on the battlefield, and this publication reads like a textbook of sniping fundamentals.

Hesketh-Pritchard writes in a very readable manner and the

book is filled with anecdotes of his and other snipers' experiences in the Great War.

For those interested in sniping, or for the WWI generalist, this book is highly recommended.



CONTACT has one copy of *Sniping in France 1914-18* to give away, thanks to www.crusaderbooks.com.au. Tell us in 25 words or less, why you are interested in this subject. Entries to editor@militarycontact.com

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT LINE



Still recovering from serious wounds collected at Gallipoli, Henry Wright corresponds often with his family back in Melbourne, who must surely be worried for their son, one of four brothers who eventually signed up for war in Europe. Recuperating well, Henry's spirits are obviously soaring – though he never gave in to despair at any stage, especially not when writing home...

My dear Mother, Father, Brothers and Sisters,

I am getting along splendidly, and can get about with the aid of a stick. I have had a great week for outings.

SUNDAY – Motor drive to the country and saw the great flying grounds at Hendon; then afternoon tea at a lovely house at Highgate [photo taken on the lawn]; entertained with music; plenty of cigars and cigarettes.

MONDAY – A motor drive to the country, 30 miles of lovely scenery; afternoon tea on the lawn.

TUESDAY – 20 of us were entertained at the Hampstead Golf Club. We had a competition game and I reckon I am hot stuff at golf. We were treated very well – plenty of cigarettes and our tea was good. I thought I would never be able to get up from the table. The ladies sang songs to us. Of course I made eyes at one of the young ladies and we got quite chatty and I was sorry we had to go. I am looking forward to the next invitation to play golf.

WEDNESDAY – Three of us motored out to Watford and had afternoon tea at the big house.

SATURDAY – A lady took five of us in a motor to Richmond, about 18 miles from here. We had a glorious time.

We passed Lord's Cricket ground, over Hammersmith Bridge, through the great Richmond Park, covered with forests of oak, chestnut and silver birch trees and saw hundreds of deer. We had afternoon tea on the banks of the Thames, came back through Bush Park. We were shown Hampton Court Palace, the favourite residence of Queen Victoria. We crossed over Kingston Bridge and had a real good time. The people here are very good to Australians and cannot do enough for us.

If we go for a walk in the afternoon we are stopped by the women and children and given cigarettes and sweets and asked to come for tea.

We have concerts two or three times a week, some of the best singers and artists from theatres entertaining us. The weather here is getting cold, so we are to have more concerts and moving pictures. Corporal Stuckey is here with me. He was wounded the same day as myself. You remember he and Trevillian came to tea one Sunday night before we left Broadmeadows. Tomorrow, Stuckey, two other Australians and myself are invited for a motor ride to the principal parts of London. So tomorrow I will have some news to tell you of our trip.

TUESDAY – I do not know how to tell you what a splendid outing we had today. I will do my best to explain it.

We left here at 2pm and were soon in the crowded but wonderful city of London. We crossed Blackfriars Bridge over the Thames, did Regent Street, Leicester Square [high monument of Ajax defying the lightning], Trafalgar Square, with the splendid monument of Nelson and the Duke of Wellington.

We motored around the historical building, the Tower of London, which dates back hundreds of years. I cannot write how these wonderful buildings impress one at first sight. The German spies are shot here. When I get my furlough I am going to look over this building and I will write you more news of it. We passed over Tower Bridge – a tremendous big bridge. A roadway is lifted

up by hydraulic power to let the steamers pass. We then've crossed the Thames over Westminster Bridge, saw the bronze statue of Boadicea, and the wonderful obelisk of Cleopatra. This huge stone was brought from Egypt in Queen Victoria's time, and was cut out of solid granite about the time the Pyramids were built.

We saw the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben, Scotland Yard, Westminster Abbey, Albert Memorial, St Paul's Cathedral, Buckingham Palace, the wonderful Queen Victoria Memorial, Hyde Park, Rotten Row and dozens of other places of interest. I have not written of the splendour and wonder of it all but when I get out on furlough, I mean to spend most of the time inside these old historical places and will be able to describe them better to you.

While Henry was recovering from his wounds, enjoying English hospitality and afternoon tea on the lawns and motor drives in the country, his Battalion was withdrawn from Gallipoli on 18 December 1915 and sent to France. Henry, now adequately recovered, was returned to active service in April 1916.



HENRY WRIGHT, FOURTH FROM RIGHT, AND HIS COHORTS ENJOYED A RELATIVELY PRIVILEGED EXISTENCE WHILE CONVALESCING IN ENGLAND DURING THE FIRST GREAT WAR

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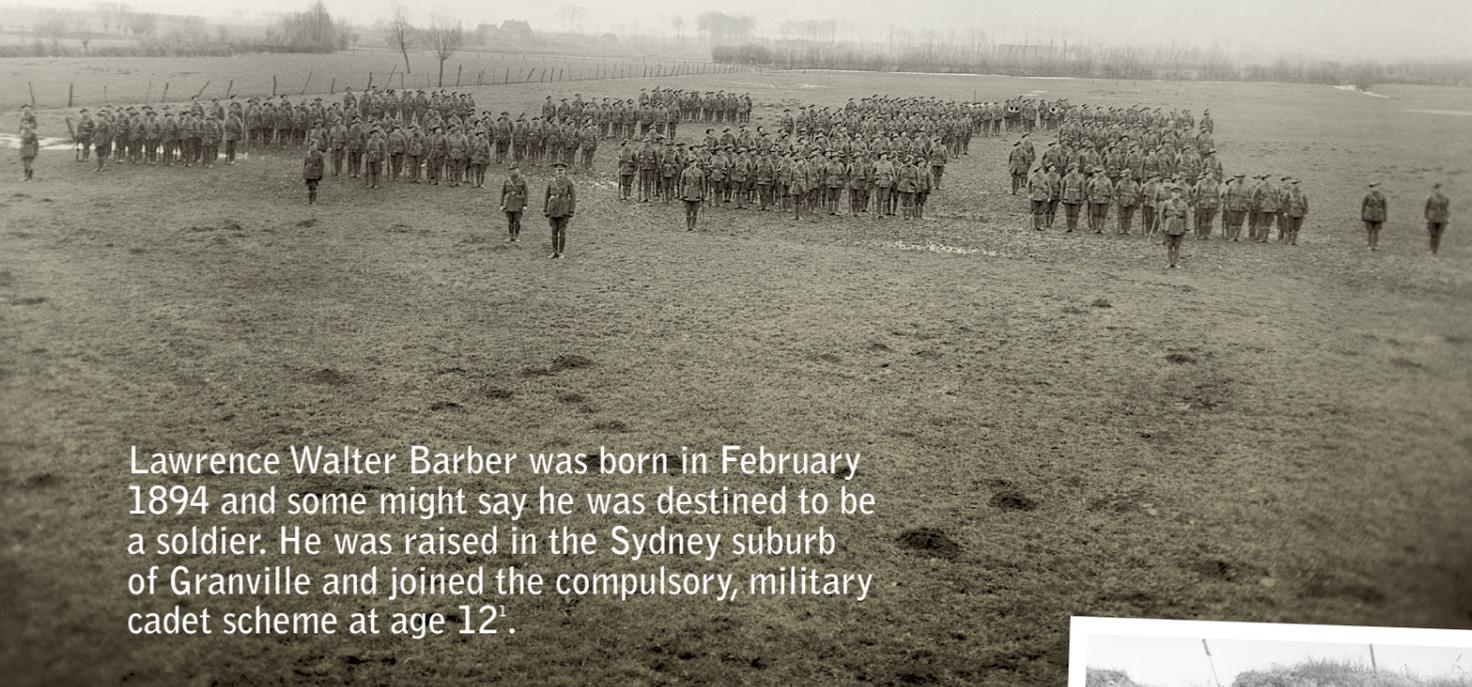


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STAND ALONE

WORDS WO1 DARRYL KELLY PICS AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL



Lawrence Walter Barber was born in February 1894 and some might say he was destined to be a soldier. He was raised in the Sydney suburb of Granville and joined the compulsory, military cadet scheme at age 12¹.

Young Barber so enjoyed the discipline and mateship of military life that, in 1912, he enlisted in the local militia unit, the 20th Battalion. By March 1913, he had attained the rank of sergeant and was promoted to colour sergeant in March 1914. By the time war broke out in September of the same year he had been promoted to Regimental Sergeant Major of the 20th Battalion.

In October 1915, Barber joined the Permanent Instructional Corps as a staff sergeant major, on a salary of three pounds a week.¹ He enlisted in the AIF with the rank of substantive sergeant in March 1917 and was posted to the 36th Battalion.

Barber arrived in France in February 1918 and joined his battalion on the Western Front in the stinking, mud-filled trenches of Messines, where the AIF had been bogged down in a stalemated winter campaign.² The Diggers had three priorities – stay dry, stay warm and stay alive. For all too many Australian soldiers these proved beyond their reach.

On 12 April 1918, the 34th and 36th Battalions were holding the brigade front at Hangard Wood. The battalions' outpost line extended south from the wood, then eastwards around the northern flank of the jutting spur nicknamed '99'. At the southern foot of this spur lay the village of Hangard.

The 165th French Infantry Regiment was positioned to the extreme right flank.³ Opposing the Diggers and their French allies were three crack German regiments, supported by both medium and heavy artillery units.

The post, which lay astride the Australian/French boundary, was commanded by Lieutenant HM Colyer, a 31-year-old school teacher from Sydney – his second-in-command was Sergeant Barber. Each morning, Lieutenant Colyer would visit his French counterpart at the next outpost and discuss the day's activities.

One morning, as Lieutenant Colyer made his way back to his men, the Germans launched a devastating artillery barrage, which caught the officer stranded in the open where he was hit by a 5.9-inch German shell that blew him to pieces.³ Sergeant Barber immediately assumed command of the post.⁴

As the German shells slammed into the Allied position, they showered the Diggers manning the post with red-hot splinters. Suddenly a shell scored a direct hit and, as the smoke cleared, the one lone survivor began to stir. It was Barber.⁴ The blast from the projectile had buried him under a deep layer of dirt, protecting him from the deadly metal fragments.

As he recovered from the impact, he slowly began to dig himself free.⁴

ORDERS ARE ORDERS AND IN TIMES OF WAR SOLDIERS WILL CARRY OUT THOSE ORDERS, EVEN WHEN FACED WITH CERTAIN DEATH.

LEFT: THIS PHOTO OF THE 36TH BATTALION, POSSIBLY INCLUDING SERGEANT LAWRENCE BARBER, WAS TAKEN JUST THREE MONTHS BEFORE THE ACTION AT HANGARD WOOD. PHOTO AWM E01475

BELOW: Gassed Australian soldiers, gathered outside a regimental aid post of the 42nd Battalion, await medical attention. PHOTO AWM E04850

He crawled to a battered Lewis gun nearby and mounted it, ready for action.

When the smoke in the valley cleared, Barber could see the German infantry swarming towards him from two different directions. He sighted the leaders of the first group and fired. In between bursts, he sent up the SOS signal, guiding the French guns to bring down a barrage of artillery fire on the advancing Germans.

Barber's Lewis gun eventually stopped firing as a result of the damage it had sustained but the company commander, Captain Gadd, immediately sent up his reserve gun with orders for Barber to hold his ground and keep firing.⁴

As the enemy split into small groups, the 36th Battalion attacked with a barrage of rifle and machine-gun fire. While they fired with deadly accuracy, further down the line, the Germans of 107 Regiment successfully fought their way into Hangard village, causing the French posts to begin dropping back and exposing the Australians' right flank.

The French asked Barber to provide covering fire for their withdrawal from the village. Barber refused.⁴ "The orders were not to retire except on the command of

the Division," he told them. "You dig in where you are and help us to beat back these Huns. We will give you all the support we can."

Barber ordered his gunner to pour fire into the village, producing a rowdy reaction of much cheering and encouragement from the Australians. In response, the French rallied and advanced, retaking their positions behind the thick undergrowth.

A company of the Royal West Kents moved forward to reinforce both the French and the Australians.⁴

The outcome had been in doubt, but with the arrival of the British troops the situation quickly stabilised. Barber's position had been subjected to a continuous onslaught from the German guns for 12 hours until a savage bombardment by the French artillery was directed on the tiny village. The German infantry withdrew in disarray.⁴

As the line was re-established, B Company, 36th Battalion moved forward. When Captain Gadd reached the beleaguered Lewis gun position, he found Barber slumped against the gun with his face in his hands, totally exhausted. He was the sole survivor.

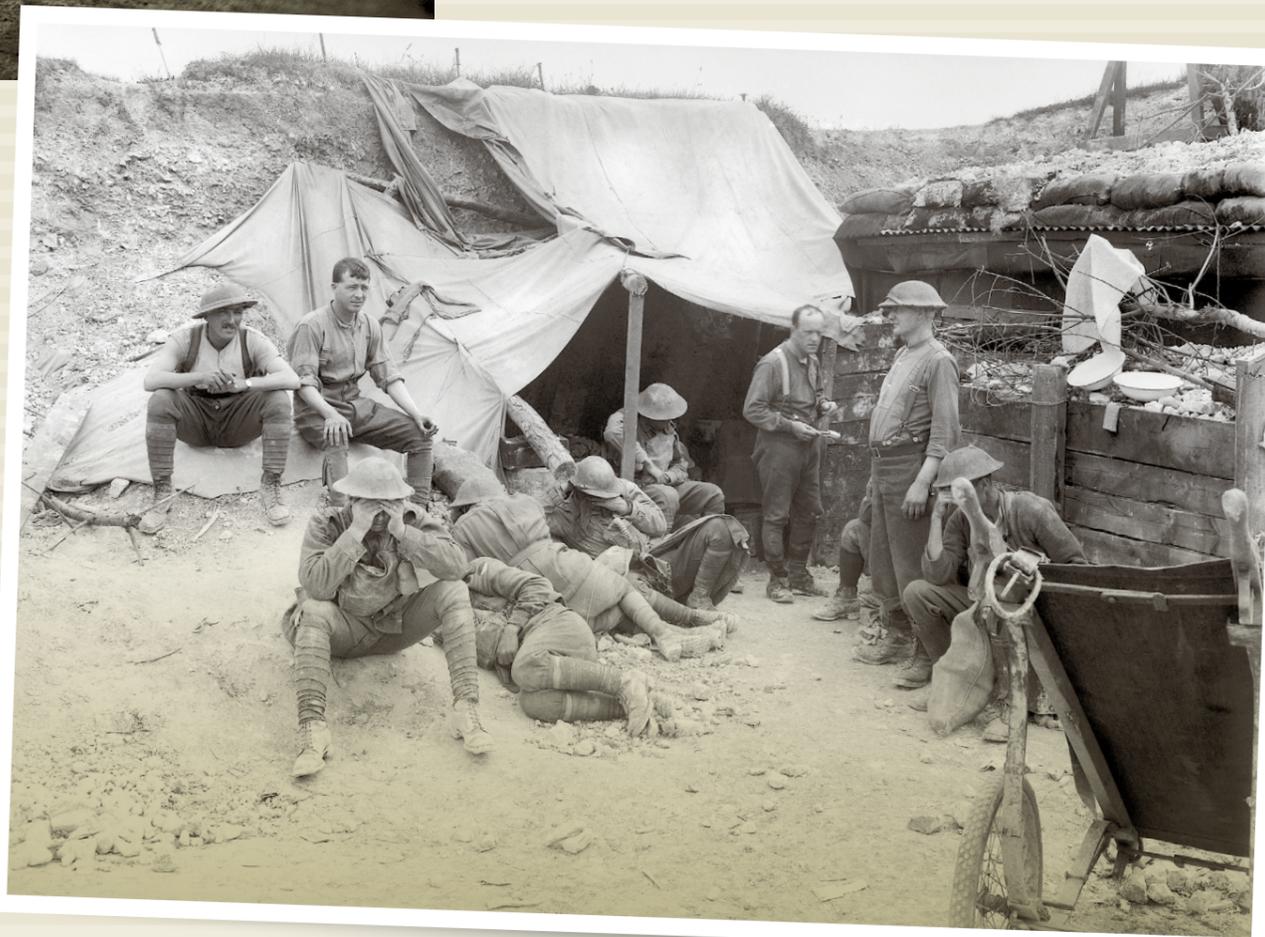
The captain placed his hand on the sergeant's shoulder and accorded him a typical Australian soldier's tribute – "Well done, mate!"

As a result of his actions at Hangard Wood, Sergeant Lawrence Barber was awarded the Military Medal in recognition of his devotion to duty and conspicuous bravery.⁵

The war against the German offensive had exacted a heavy toll on the 9th Brigade. The number of reinforcements from Australia was dwindling and the decision was made to disband one of the brigade's battalions to strengthen the other two. The 36th was selected and by 30 April 1918, its members had been relocated to other battalions.

Sergeant Barber continued to serve until August 1918 when he was severely gassed. The deadly vapour ruptured one of his lungs and necessitated the warrior sergeant's repatriation to Australia.¹

Barber never recovered from the chronic and debilitating effects of the gas and he required frequent periods of hospitalisation until his death on 9 September 1934.



¹ National Archives of Australia: B2455, WW1 Service Records, 3275 Sergeant LW Barber MM

² History Notes 36th Battalion AIF, undated, author unknown

³ Bean, CEW, The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918, Volume V, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1936

⁴ AWM 1DRL/0428, Australian Red Cross Society, Missing and Wounded Enquiry Bureau

⁵ AWM 28, Recommendation Files for Honours and Awards, AIF, 1914–1918 War

NOBBER DIGS IN

WORDS JONATHAN GARLAND ILLUSTRATION GREG@TWIST

The incident occurred during the field phase of Nobber's Sub 1 for Corporal course.

His exposure to life in the field was, to date, rather limited. In fact, the dozen or so days he spent out of the barracks on that course, more than doubled the bush time he had acquired to that point. Not that he found the experience all that rewarding – for someone as pathologically averse to exercise as our hero, spending days at a time digging holes in the ground was not at the top of his list of favoured activities. Based on observation of soldiers in his unit, Nobber had always thought hard-lying allowance was named for the process of coming up with a creative reason why you should receive it.

Nevertheless, after swinging an entrenching tool for long enough to make his muscles scream, Nobber's pit was first in the section, with the exception of the gun pit, to complete a sleeping bay to overhead-protection stage.

The digger sharing the pit with him was much wiser in the ways of fieldcraft than he. Glancing at the sky, the digger suggested Nobber sleep in the pit to 'experience the feeling'. Nobber agreed readily. New experiences came all too seldom and he was too exhausted to argue, anyway.

Private Nobber moved his sleeping bag into the bay, removed his boots and socks and fell into oblivion.

The sound of torrential rain woke him sometime in the early hours of the morning. He experienced a brief flash of sympathy for the unfortunate saps stuck out in the open on such a night before rolling over to go back to sleep.

As he rolled over, water hit his face. Nobber slowly realised he was soaked from head to foot and had been less than five minutes away from drowning in his sleep. It seems the significant amount of rainwater flowing down the hill was reaching the low mound of dirt above his

sleeping bay and pooling there before soaking through the loosened soil and sheeting down the wall to his left. The lower floor of the pit proper, fed by a miniature Niagara from the uphill side, was already a half-metre underwater, with his socks floating somewhere in the darkness like the iceberg that sank the Titanic.

In a blackly furious and extremely non-tactical manner, Nobber set about retrieving his sodden gear and setting up his hutchie in the midst of a mid-winter thunderstorm.

It was some 20, very cold, extremely wet, shin-bruising, invective-filled minutes later that he crawled into a lopsided structure that somewhat resembled the Sydney Opera House.

As he settled, shivering, into his sodden sleeping bag with water dripping onto his face from the wet clothes on the improvised clothesline above, and his socks still missing overboard, he made the error of thinking that at least the worst was over.

A hand on his foot was his first warning of company. Startled,

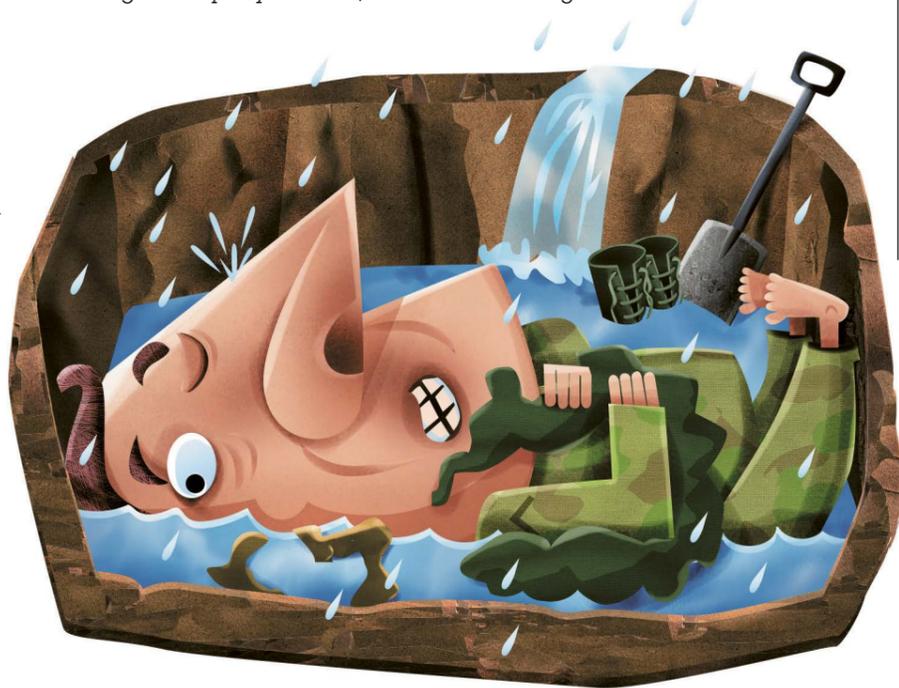
he sat bolt upright, catching his head on a hastily-foraged shelter support stick and collapsed the opera house around him. He struggled out from under the pile of wet clothes and plastic to the news that it was his turn to man the gun.

Nobber launched into a loud, expletive-laden discourse on the extreme unlikelihood of seeing any movement to the front of the position, other than the possibility of animals marching two by two. His companion listened patiently until he ran out of steam.

"So... you know where the pit is, right?" he said, vanishing into the rain.

Nobber lost it completely, kicked at the mound of dirt behind the pit, slipped and fell into the hole and, with inevitability and majesty, slid over the Niagara into the icy waters below.

This is how the instructors came to find a fuming lump of slowly solidifying mud and vegetation stuck to the gun at reveille next morning.



ARM YOUR FEET.

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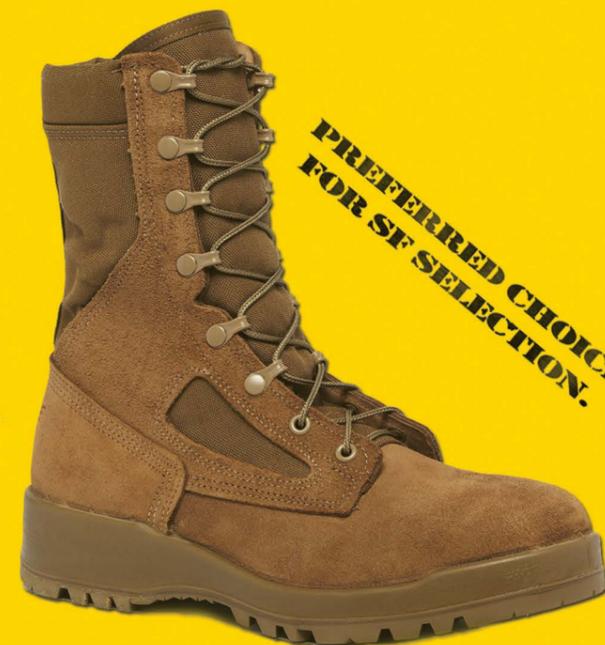
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