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AIR, LAND & SEA

THE AUSTRALIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE



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New
Competition
2 more
prizes

VBS1™ GIVEAWAY



To win a copy of VBS1, tell us in 50 words or less how you think you might benefit from winning this prize. The two most original answers, as judged by the Editor of **CONTACT** will receive one copy of this sought-after prize. TIP for SUCCESS: Humour works well!

Send entries to editor@militarycontact.com Entries close 1 May 2006.
The Editor's decision will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.
The prize pack contains one CD and one DVD but represents a fully upgraded version of the publicly available platform.

Thanks to **Bohemia Interactive**, **CONTACT** has two more specially commissioned full-version copies of this fantastic training platform to give away

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Simply tell us in 50 words or less how a Traser Navigator, self-illuminating watch would help you survive in the bush!

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Send your entries, including name and postal address, to editor@militarycontact.com

Entries close 1 May 2006.

The Editor will choose the winner and his decision will be final – no correspondence will be entered into.

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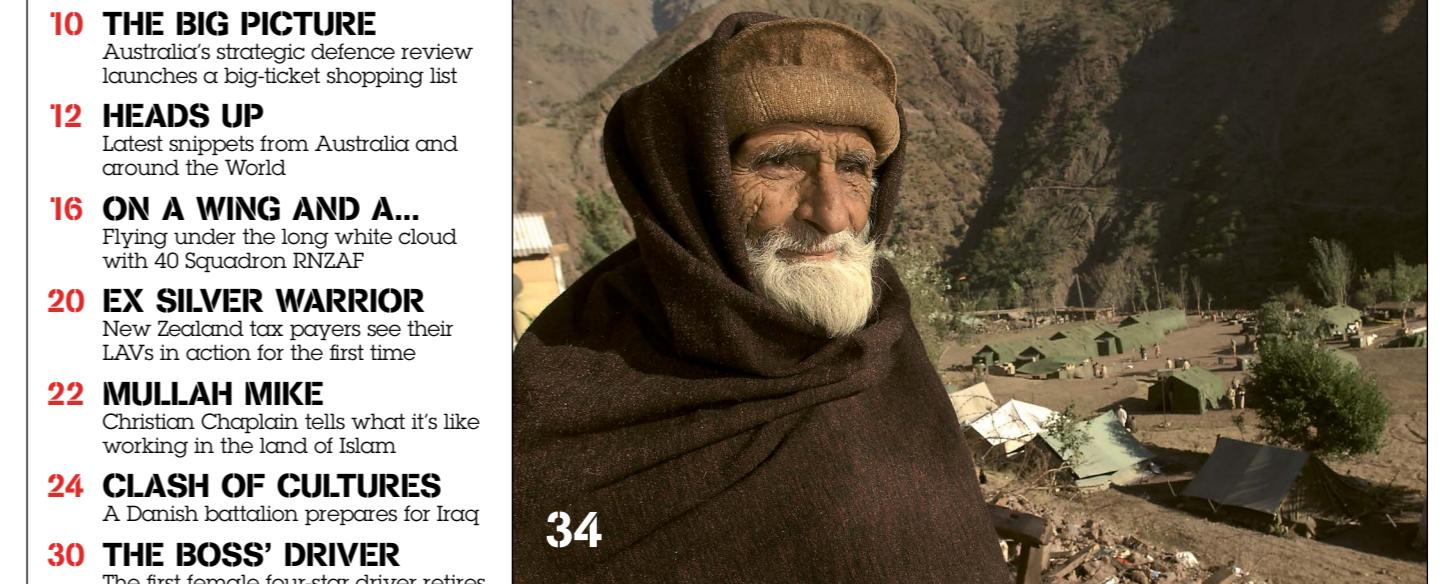
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THE EDITOR'S LETTER



COMPETITION CLOSED

SECOND CHANCE GAME GIVEAWAY

Thanks to Activision, CONTACT has four more copies of *Call of Duty 2* for PC and four copies of *Call of Duty 2: Big Red One* for PS2 to give away. Simply follow the links on our web site www.militarycontact.com for entry details.

The sequel to *Infinity Ward's* 2003 Game of the Year, *Call of Duty 2* delivers an unparalleled portrayal of the cinematic intensity and chaos of battle as seen through the eyes of ordinary soldiers fighting together in epic WWII conflicts.

In *Call of Duty 2: Big Red One*, players experience the adrenaline rush and harsh realities of war as never before, get to know squadmates and fight alongside them through an epic story during the most harrowing moments of WWII. As a part of America's most decorated and heroic fighting unit, The Big Red One, players work together to accomplish a variety of land, sea and air combat missions spanning North Africa, Italy and Nazi-occupied Western Europe.

Competition closes 1 May 2006

Issue 9 – March 2006

CONTACT

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RIGHT: Editor CONTACT Air Land & Sea Brian Hartigan and pilot mate Dave Hayes hang out over Canberra on a difficult and dangerous photo assignment

Welcome to this, the third year of CONTACT Air Land & Sea. The support you show us, through shop sales and through your letters, continues to drive us on to bigger and better things. With two years behind us now, we are confident that the format and content we set out to deliver to you is working well. That's not to say that we are closed to the idea of experimentation or change. So, please, continue to send us your feedback and ideas – by mail or email or any of our web-site based forms, forums or polls – so that we may improve the product you like and make the next two years even bigger and better than the past two.

Speaking of experimentation, starting on page 50 this issue we feature what I suspect was a 'brave' recruiting project – a 7.0ltr blown Land Rover 6x6 called Armygeddon. I say 'brave' because I suspect many narrow-minded critics will berate the Army for wasting tax-payers' money on something so radical – especially if it doesn't work. But, having witnessed the beast in action and seen the attention it drew at Summernats, I fully commend the brains trust behind this venture. As can aside, however, the story and the hype surrounding Armygeddon reminded me that I know of several people out there who own their own equally awesome street machines, dragsters and racers. So, I call on all our rev-head readers to send me photos of your beast, along with all the specs and inside details on your pride and joy, and I'll consider it for publication in a future issue of your favourite military magazine.

In this issue, the smorgasboard of stories is as diverse as ever, but rather than spell them out – you'll see for yourself in a minute – I want, instead, to say a huge thank you to Kiwi Mac for his prolific contributions to CONTACT since issue #3. Kiwi Mac (not his real name) is a journalist and Reservist in New Zealand and has contributed hugely to our efforts here at CONTACT, in a purely voluntary capacity. As stated on page 22, Kiwi Mac will shortly don the uniform of his country and deploy to Afghanistan to do his bit. We have our fingers firmly crossed that he will be allowed to continue his reportage for CONTACT in that theatre and strongly encourage his superiors to recognise the value this man can add to the overall effort. We will watch with interest, which side of the ANZAC alliance will get more or better coverage from this important and active modern theatre – the 'A' side isn't doing too well on this point so far, is it?

It is my sad duty to also inform you that Private Nobber has met an unfortunate end. To be honest, it was economics that was the death of him – but we won't go into that. Before shuffling off, however, Nobber had one last, very funny adventure, aptly and fatefully titled "Nobber gets canned", which you can read on our web site. I sincerely

thank my good mate Jon Garland, author and mentor of our hapless hero, for his contribution and support since the start.




Brian Hartigan
Managing Editor

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



INCOMING

FRIENDLY FIRE...

The CONTACT team should be congratulated on their quality effort with the magazine. Particularly pleasing was the "Silent Stalkers" article.

I attended the 1/95 Basic Sniper course (failing Obs and JD's miserably) and enjoyed reading of the changes to the qualification system, as well as the down-to-earth tone of the piece - 10/10.

The balance between the services' articles also gives the magazine a nice depth. As an ex-ADF member (2/4RAR) I am extremely impressed with the entire product. My subscription was money well spent.

Matt N

I am going to Kapooka in December as a reservist and hopefully I will also be able to take part in Op Anode Rifle Company Butterworth rotation in Malaysia - I have already sent away an application.

I recently discovered that the reserves have a commando unit, so, could you possibly include a fly-on-the-wall look at their daily activities and training?

Houston C

P.S. Keep the Somalia articles coming!

Thanks for continuing to produce a top quality magazine for all those interested in the work of the ADF. It's

a good indicator to the inexperienced digger and/or officer as to the purpose of the sometimes seemingly mundane and irrelevant training we do. I have often pulled out a copy of CONTACT when I get the old question from friends or family, "So, what do you do?"

Chris S

Thanks for bringing out a magazine that I can really get into. I bought the first issue and haven't stopped since. It's easy to pass over other military-type mags, but not CONTACT.

The reason I'm writing, though, is to tell you how good VBS1 is. I bought it some time ago after seeing it in CONTACT, and have been more than impressed. The add-ons give this sim an added quality you can't find elsewhere.

Although I haven't got all the add-ons, I can still set up simulations for reserve training weekends for my unit.

But most impressive about VBS1 is the team behind it. David at BIA is more than helpful with getting you the most out of VBS1. So, congrats to BIA and CONTACT for getting the best out of Aussie know-how.

Dan A

Interesting article on WO JJ Cootes (RNZIR) in the latest CONTACT! My

predecessor in AATTB, Captain Wally Sheppard, commenced the Dong Tam NOAT/NOTT concept in March '70 when I replaced him initially as Senior Advisor to the 1/51st ARVN Bn in I Corps. I then replaced Wally again at Dong Tam Oct-Dec '70 when Wally RTA.

I started a similar school (NOTT only) at Bac Lieu for southern IV Corps along with WOs Ian Caskey and Peter Conway and four or five other WOs.

Nice to see AATTB getting good publicity in your mag, although none of my WOs ever wore ARVN Lt rank or owl insignia on their combat gear on actual ops or ambushes. Persevere.

Bernie McG

I am 15 yrs old and am in the Air Force Cadets, 338 Squadron, Shellharbour. My life's ambition is to join the army and be in the SAS or 4RAR.

I love the magazine. I enjoyed reading about the snipers. I never realised how hard it must be to get in. Now I am considering sniping as my profession in the special forces. I also read an article about clearance divers in a back issue and considered that too.

My favourite part in cadets is going out bush. It's my first year in cadets and already I have more gear than anyone.

David R

SUSTAINED BURST...

Re "Pigs Might Fly". How does one "Stand up" a base, as in your article lauding the Blue Orchids readying RAAF Base Scherger for flying operations during Ex Kakadu 7.

The Macquarie Essential Dictionary defines "stand up" as; "a. to assume a standing position, especially from sitting." "b. Colloquial. To fail to keep an appointment with."

Given the RAAF's legendary tradition of informality and lack of military manner or conduct, one cannot see them rising from a sitting position and standing anywhere.

Using the same reasoning, one can readily imagine them failing to keep an appointment.

I can find no reference to "standing up" in the ADF Publication, Staff Duties Series, ADPF 101, Glossary.

Re "Into Harm's Way, Part Two". Given that your magazine seems to be aimed at barely post-pubescent males and the "gunners" who, one day, are 'guna' think about maybe enquiring to maybe join the ADF; do you consider that it is responsible journalism to include

an article about mercenaries? Your stated aim is "...strive to report as accurately and honestly as possible on the people, activities and equipment of the Australian Defence Force and on the defence forces of other countries." Exactly where does such an all-about-me diatribe from a mercenary fit into your 'mission statement'? Surely this type of 'faction' is better promulgated in the chicken-strangling, wanking soldier-of-fortune publications.

I mean to say, how dare that Iraqi motorist, driving in his own country, attempt to overtake the mercenary convoy. We fixed him though, the towel head. Who does he think he is? Exactly what is the profile of a 'VIED'?

Kevin R

I was tempted to reply to this and not publish it, but, since I get so very few negative letters, I felt I had to, for balance. Everyone is entitled to express an opinion but, to Kevin and others, I want to make it clear, I am quite intolerant of insults, especially in written communications. I apologise to the RAAF especially for airing this tactless diatribe - Ed

ON TARGET...

Our Star letter writer wins a 3ltr Hydrapac worth \$115, from Cool Kit Australia - visit www.coolkit.com.au

I would like to forward my appreciation for the work you have produced. I was more than surprised that my first reading of your mag (issue 8) totally blew away my notions that you were just another mindless pap-induced propaganda leaflet, that is so common these days.

The article that mainly caught my eye, was "Highway to Hell" by Wayne Cooper. I also was one of the 900 unfortunate/fortunate souls to be involved with Op Solace. In fact, for the past few years, I have been reliving that time through the unfortunate condition known as combat-related post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Coops' imagery and wording helped me to remember that there were "good times" too. In fact, I recall, I always appreciated being picked up by Coops and his fellow "bucket" controllers. Like they say, "A third-class ride is better than a first-class walk!" Not to mention that a .30 and .50 cal in support tends to ease your mind.

Thanks Coops for allowing me to ride with you in your toaster oven one more time. You have given this "Gruntasaurus" a second wind, to help me defeat my "psychological enemy".

Email address supplied

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

Subscribe free at www.aussiecombat.com

DEFENCE UPDATE OUTLINES GROWING FORCE

Australia's National Security: Defence Update 2005 was released in December and spells out major changes for the Australia Defence Force and its strategic disposition.

Defence Minister Robert Hill said Defence was better prepared than ever before to respond to any threats, both in Australia and overseas.

"This update outlines how we have shaped the ADF to increase Australia's capacity to meet the heavy demands of recent years, and the measures being taken to ensure the ADF is a force capable of meeting future military challenges," Senator Hill said.

"Defeating the threat of terrorism, countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and supporting regional states in difficulty remain the Government's highest priorities."

New initiatives include:

- > Consider options for heavy airlift
- > Increase the size and capability of the Army
- > Strengthen ADF powers to help civil authorities
- > Increase logistic support through private-sector partners

Senator Hill said the Government would provide the Army with greater mobility, combat weight and network capabilities to be able to conduct a wide range of tasks.

"We will increase the size of the force, increase fire support and flexibility and provide a new force structure based on combined-arms battlegroups," he said.

The Army is being delivered an impressive array of equipment over the next 10 years, including new helicopters, tanks, trucks, weapons systems and combat equipment.

"We can be confident that this update further prepares the ADF to defend Australia and its interests now and in the future."

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING HEAVY AIRLIFT OPTIONS TO SUPPLEMENT THE C130 FLEET. C17 GLOBEMASTER III COULD FIT THE BILL – 13 SAMPLES SEEN HERE FROM A RECORD-BREAKING 17-SHIP SORTIE OVER BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS, VIRGINIA. PIC BY STAFF SERGEANT JACOB N. BAILEY, US AIR FORCE

3RAR MOVES TO MECH

Approximately 1200 personnel from 3RAR and support units will be relocated from Sydney to Adelaide to form a new Mechanised Battlegroup with Sydney's A Field Battery and elements of 1 Combat Engineer Regiment, plus Darwin's 1 Combat Service Support Battalion.

Defence Minister Robert Hill said, the Adelaide Mechanised Battlegroup will be established from 2011 with personnel relocating in that year once the construction of necessary facilities has been completed.

Losing its parachute capability in the change, 3RAR will be equipped with M113 armoured personnel carriers and Bushmaster infantry mobility vehicles, and will be structured identical to 5/7RAR in Darwin.

The Army's parachute capability will be maintained by the 4RAR (Commando).

BUSHMASTER AND ASLV ARE SET TO PLAY AN INCREASING ROLE IN THE HARDENED AND NETWORKED ARMY. PIC ADF

HELLFIRE IS NOW CERTIFIED FOR USE ON THE ARMY'S TIGER HELICOPTER. PIC ADF [PHOTO DIGITALLY ALTERED BY CONTACT – ONE MISSILE SHOT]

HEAVY ARMOUR IS ON THE HORIZON AS LEOPARD IS REPLACED BY ABRAMS. PIC US MARINE CORPS

THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY WILL RELY HEAVILY ON ITS AIR-MOBILITY ASSETS INTO THE FUTURE – BLACK HAWK, CHINOOK AND RECENTLY ORDERED MH90. PIC ADF

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SOME OF THE ARMY'S LAND VEHICLES SCHEDULED FOR REPLACEMENT. PICS ADF

THE RACE IS ON

The first major phase of a \$3 billion investment in Army's fleet of field vehicles is under way with three separate Requests for Tender (RFT) to replace thousands of trucks, four-wheel drives, trailers and modules for high-readiness units.

This first phase of Project Overlander – the largest land project in the Defence Capability Plan – is worth up to \$600 million and includes replacing the existing high-readiness fleet of about 1400 heavy and light vehicles, 1300 trailers and 1200 specialist modules. A subsequent phase will replace the remaining fleet.

Defence Minister Robert Hill said the initial phase would acquire a range of vehicles for units such as 3 Brigade, 5 Aviation Regiment and 10 Force Support Battalion in Townsville and Sydney as well as RAAF units at Amberley.

"Field vehicles and trailers are the backbone of the ADF's land warfighting support, sustainment and deployment capability," he said.

"These vehicles and trailers also serve as platforms and prime movers for weapons systems as well as command, control, communications, computers,



intelligence, reconnaissance, surveillance and electronic warfare capabilities."

The tender for the medium and heavy vehicles and modules was released to a shortlist of nine companies announced in March, with an open tender released for the range of light vehicles and modules.

Each RFT will also require offers be made on whole-of-life support of the fleet – potentially 30 years.

ARMY PUTS EYES IN MID-LEVEL SKIES

Army is to put extra 'eyes in the sky' with a fleet of long-range tactical unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) that will play a crucial intelligence and surveillance role for Australia.



ARMY'S UNMANNED MID-LEVEL RECCE BIRD. PIC IAI

"The I-View has a fully automatic take-off and landing system that dramatically increases operational reliability. Its catapult launcher and unique parafoil landing concept enable it to be deployed and recovered from an uneven area smaller than a football field," Defence Minister Robert Hill said.

"This capability, which includes real-time video, will enable 24-hour surveillance for the protection of Australian forces as well as the identification of enemy targets."

SALUTE TO THE ANZACS

More than 900 performers from Australia, New Zealand and around the globe will raise the roof of Sydney's SuperDome in April at the Anzac International Military Tattoo.

The who's who of the world's massed bands will come together for two performances on Saturday 22 April with one final show on Anzac Day.

This thrilling event promises an unforgettable family experience. The New Zealand Army Band, who stole the show at last year's Edinburgh Military Tattoo in Australia, will be there.

Tickets on sale now.

ADF ENTERS SPACE RACE

Australia's only fully owned and operational satellite has been placed under Defence control until December 2008 and possibly beyond.

Defence will use the satellite for a range of research and experimental activities that could include radio propagation studies.

Launched in 2002, FedSat is a small, low-earth-orbit satellite that carries six payloads performing a variety of research functions.

Defence's management of FedSat will cost around \$1 million over the next two years, which is a relatively

small cost compared to the expected benefits," Defence Minister Robert Hill said.

WTSS KEEPS FATS CONTROLLER

US weapon simulation training specialist FATS Inc has signed an \$8.5 million contract to operate and maintain Weapon Training Simulation Systems (WTSS) and maintain Indirect Fire Forward Observer Trainers (IFOT) for the ADF.

The contract applies to 25 sites throughout Australia for three years. This contract comes on top of a \$2.9 million contract to manufacture and deliver Nulka has created more

new training and simulation solutions for the New Zealand Army Weapons Simulator System (WTS) program.

BAE WINS NULKA SUPPORT

BAE Systems Australia has won an in-service support contract to maintain and support Navy's Nulka anti-ship missile defence system and launch sub-systems.

Nulka protects Australian, American and Canadian warships against modern anti-ship missiles by seducing hostile missiles away from its host ship using a hovering rocket and electronic countermeasures payload. Nulka has created more

AUSSIE CHOOKS FLY IN AFGHANISTAN

Boeing Australia will deliver and support the Israel Aircraft Industries I-View UAV system, to be operated by a new Army regiment from Enoggera in Queensland, and are expected to be in operational service in 2008.

The craft will provide wide-ranging surveillance with advanced retractable-sensor technology and work closely with the Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter in support of operations on the battlefield.

They will also complement the ADF's layered UAV system of short-range miniature Skylark UAVs currently deployed in Iraq, and the high-altitude long-endurance maritime UAV that will be purchased under Project Air 7000.

The craft will provide wide-ranging surveillance with advanced retractable-sensor technology and work closely with the Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter in support of operations on the battlefield.

They were expected to be fully operational by late March and would remain in Afghanistan for the balance of the Special Forces' deployment, scheduled to conclude in September. In the event of an Australian Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) being deployed, however, the aircraft could remain in Afghanistan until November.

The Government has given in-principle agreement to send a PRT to Afghanistan this year, but its exact role and composition has not yet been decided.

MARATHON PIGGYBACK

MV BLUE MARLIN CARRIES THE SEA BASED X-BAND RADAR INTO PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII, AFTER A 24,000KM TRIP FROM CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS, IN JANUARY. THE WORLD'S LARGEST PHASED ARRAY X-BAND RADAR, MOUNTED ON A MOBILE, SEMI-SUBMERSIBLE PLATFORM IS DESIGNED FOR BALLISTIC MISSILE DETECTION AND CAN DISCRIMINATE A HOSTILE WARHEAD FROM DECOYS AND COUNTERMEASURES. THE PLATFORM WILL UNDERGO MINOR MODIFICATIONS, MAINTENANCE AND ROUTINE INSPECTIONS IN PEARL HARBOR BEFORE BEING DEPLOYED OFF THE ALASKAN PENINSULA. PIC PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS RYAN C. MCGINLEY, US NAVY



AEGIS OPEN TO AUSTRALIA

Lockheed Martin Australia and Computer Sciences Corporation's Australian

operation have signed an agreement to implement the Aegis Open Architecture (AOA) solution for Australia's Air Warfare Destroyer (AWD) program.

Australia will be one of the first international customers to receive the AOA solution, touted as the best and most advanced of the Aegis Combat System rollouts.

The open architecture approach will reduce the cost, enhance the capability and allow for much simpler through-life support and upgrade and, essentially,

allows the entire system to be hosted on commercial, off-the-shelf computers.

The key advantage in this new approach will allow the Royal Australian Navy – and other navies – to take full advantage of commercial computing technology and to develop and install software, hardware and other technology upgrades faster and more affordably throughout the life of the Air Warfare Destroyer program.

Lockheed Martin Australia managing director Paul Johnson said that the open architecture approach also facilitated other potential Australian participation in ongoing Aegis development activities.

"This is an effective strategy for meeting emerging warfighting requirements for the Australian Defence Force while continually offering new opportunities for Australian defence industry," he said.



AUSTRALIAN CH-47 CHINOOK HELICOPTERS DEPLOY MISSILE-DECOYING FLARES. PIC ADF

than 400 long-term jobs and is Australia's largest defence export earner generating up to \$40 million a year.

IRELAND MARKS UN MILESTONE

Irish Defence Forces marked 50 years as an active member of the United Nations with a ceremony at Dublin's McKee Barracks in December.

Irish soldiers have been involved in 58 UN missions since the country joined the organisation in 1955 with the loss of 85 troops on foreign soil. The updated and improved aircraft, originally built in the 90s, will come on line from 2013 and are expected to stay in service until 2029.

On a recent trial, SeaPC-equipped divers surveyed a reef system in two days, while those using traditional methods took 15 days to complete the same task.

Royal Navy's fleet of Merlin anti-submarine helicopters to improve already impressive capabilities.

Slated improvements will see a 40-fold increase in target tracking capability, improved submarine detection in shallow water and enhanced night operations.

The updated and improved aircraft, originally built in the 90s, will come on line from 2013 and are expected to stay in service until 2029.

Under a Foreign Military Sales contract awarded in July 2003, five systems will be delivered for Collins-class subs and test facilities.

COLLINS GETS BYG-1

Raytheon Company has delivered the AN/BYG-1 tactical command and control system for Australia's sub-sea fleet.

The company will lead installation of the system onboard HMAS Waller, the first Collins-class submarine to be equipped with the first international version of the US Navy's advanced baseline tactical command and control system.

Under a Foreign Military Sales contract awarded in July 2003, five systems will be delivered for Collins-class subs and test facilities.

FIRST DEPLOYMENT FOR BABY CARRIER



USS Ronald Reagan, the US Navy's youngest Nimitz-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, departed San Diego in January on its maiden operational deployment.

The Ronald Reagan Strike Group is comprised of Combat Air Wing CVW-14, Destroyer Squadron 7, the carrier, guided-missile cruiser Lake Champlain, guided-missile destroyers McCampbell and Decatur, fast-combat support ship Rainier and Explosives Ordnance Disposal Unit 11, Detachment 15.

Home to approximately 5500 personnel, the carrier alone costs the Navy about \$2.5 million per day to maintain underway operations (sailor's salaries included) and is one of 12 carriers on the US inventory, with another under construction.

Reagan was commissioned in July 2003, making her the ninth Nimitz-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. The ship is named after the forty-first US president, and carries the motto "Peace through Strength".

USS RONAL REAGAN DEPARTS ON HER MAIDEN OPERATIONAL DEPLOYMENT.
PIC PHOTOGRAPHER'S MATE 2ND CLASS CHRISTOPHER BROWN, US NAVY

STAR TROOPER

US ARMY COLONEL JEFFREY WILLIAMS (PICTURED) AND RUSSIAN COSMONAUT PAVEL VINOGRADOV HAVE BEEN SELECTED AS THE NEXT CREW FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION.

A VETERAN OF ONE SPACE SHUTTLE FLIGHT ALREADY, COLONEL WILLIAMS WILL BE THE FIRST ACTIVE-DUTY SOLDIER EVER ABOARD THE SPACE STATION. HE WILL SERVE AS EXPEDITION 13 FLIGHT ENGINEER AND NASA SCIENCE OFFICER. COLONEL WILLIAMS SPENT TIME PREPARING FOR THE MISSION AT 'STAR CITY', RUSSIA'S SPACE TRAINING BASE EAST OF MOSCOW. THE PAIR ARE SCHEDULED TO BLAST OFF IN A RUSSIAN SOYUZ IN MARCH.

THERE ARE CURRENTLY TWO RETIRED AND FIVE ACTIVE-DUTY US ARMY OFFICERS DETACHED AS ASTRONAUTS WITH NASA.



MARINES GET BIG BIRD FOR CHRISTMAS

US Marine Corps heavy-airlift providers finally got the Christmas present of their dreams following the December announcement of a US\$4.4 billion contract to build a new fleet of giant helicopters.

Fleet Marines should receive the first of 156 marinised Sikorsky CH-53Ks in 2015.

Fleet managers say the service is in desperate need of the new capability following increased reliance on the aging CH-53E Super Stallion in recent years.

"Since the first Gulf War, Marine Corps vertical heavy-lift has been getting further and further away from the original requirement it was developed to meet – a behind-the-lines logistics support aircraft," program manager Colonel Paul Croisetiere said.

"We're wearing out the aircraft because it has been in incredibly high demand since the mid '90s," he said.

Technologies under consideration for the CH-53K, to be developed as a new-build derivative of the E model, will include a glass cockpit, high-efficiency rotor blades, upgraded engines, cargo-handling improvements and survivability enhancements.

On average, current-fleet operations cost approximately \$15,000, and require more than 44 maintenance man-hours, for every hour of flight.



DIGGERS' NEW Diggers

The Australian Army will soon benefit from a \$32.5 million investment in new construction and earth-moving equipment for use on major projects in Australia and overseas.

Defence Minister Robert Hill said the new equipment will replace the current fleet of Army bulldozers and graders introduced in the early 1980s.

Senator Hill said the new equipment will provide the Army's Combat Engineer units with a much-improved capability that could be used in future overseas reconstruction operations, such as in Afghanistan or Iraq.

Hitachi Construction Machinery (Australia) Pty Ltd was selected as the preferred tenderer to supply the equipment and in-service support.

"The new fleet will be made up of 39 medium bulldozers and 40 graders and the first delivery is expected from July this year," Senator Hill said.

"There is a growing need for Defence reconstruction teams on overseas operations and this new equipment could be deployed as part of future Provincial Reconstruction Teams."

"This type of equipment has been in high demand in recent times in support of operations in East Timor and the Solomon Islands, providing disaster relief in Banda Aceh following the tsunami

and providing valuable assistance through development projects in remote aboriginal communities across Australia."

Army's Engineer Units located in Darwin, Townsville, Sydney and Brisbane will receive the new equipment.

"The acquisition of this equipment represents a significant enhancement in the capability of Army's engineers."

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Names for Australia's new amphibious ships and Air Warfare Destroyers have been announced.

At the suggestion of the ADF and with the approval of the Governor General, the two large amphibious ships will be named HMAS Canberra and HMAS Adelade while the Air Warfare Destroyers will be named HMAS Hobart, HMAS Brisbane and HMAS Sydney.

"One of the principal aims of naming ships has been to promote links between the Navy and the community," Senator Robert Hill said.

"Ships of the Royal Australian Navy have previously carried these names and all have received battle honours in conflicts dating from the First World War."

Subject to final acquisition approvals, the two large amphibious ships are expected to enter service with the Royal Australian Navy from 2012 with the three Air Warfare Destroyers expected to come on line from 2013.



SEASPRITE PACKS UNIQUE DOUBLE PUNCH

Royal Australian Navy and Kamman Aerospace pilots have completed weapons separation testing that will see the SH-2G(A) Super Seaspire be the only helicopter certified to carry two Penguin missiles into combat.

Chris Hyder, Kamman's lead test pilot on the project, said the missiles separated smoothly and the data from the instrumented weapon confirmed a successful launch.

"We have worked hard to build up to this test for several months and the team is proud of the results."

The tests were the last to be carried out in the United States and wrap up a five-year program of testing, evaluation and certification of the SH-2Gs at US Navy test facilities. The fourth and final stage of testing for Australian airframes will occur in Australia with live weapons.

RAPTOR READY TO FIGHT



F-22A Raptor has been certified ready for employment with the first squadron of the F15 Eagle replacement now available for combat duty anywhere around the World.

"F-22A certification means our warfighters now have an unprecedented lethal mix of air-to-air and air-to-ground capabilities at their disposal," General Ronald E. Keys, Air Combat Command commander said.

"The F-22A fulfills a long quest to bring fifth-generation capabilities of stealth, supercruise and precision to the warfighter today and 30 years from today."

"Lamentably, I have never been privileged to hold a weapon like this in my hands. But, after reviewing our test results, seeing our operational deployment performance, and talking to the pilots who will go to war with it, I am confident that the F-22A joins the combat force at a far more mature and capable level than any of our previous great aircraft, and will take its rightful place in a long line of US Air Force legends of the air." The first combat-ready Raptors are assigned to the 27th Fighter Squadron, Langley Air Force Base, Virginia.

F22 RAPTOR – OFFICIALLY OPERATIONAL. PIC TECHNICAL SERGEANT BEN BLOKER, US AIR FORCE

ON A WING

It's a pretty slow day at the office when the phone rings. On the other end, a female voice asks if I have any plans for next week? Well, as attractive as the old Macster may be, my calendar is pretty free. So, what's on offer?

AND A DAY OFF

WORDS
KIWI MAC
PICS
KIWI BRUCE

New Zealand Air Force public relations officer Danielle Coe wanted to know if I'd be interested in accompanying a 40 Squadron Herc throwing SAS members out over Auckland, followed by a bit of low-level flying over the Coromandel before heading home over the Waikato via the west coast of the North Island.

"I'm there! You don't have to ask twice," I reply.

Heading up to Auckland's Whenuapai Airbase we were met by RNZAF Squadron Leader Darryn Webb, a senior flying instructor with 40 Squadron.

"Today's mission is to drop Special Forces elements as part of Exercise Tac-Ex and then continue with some low-level tactical flying before doing some practice cargo drops on the west coast and then heading for home," he said.

Squadron Leader Webb explained that low-level tac flying was a core role for the crews of the Kiwi Hercs.

"With the high number of overseas operational deployments, it's something we haven't been able to give as much attention to as we'd like," he said.

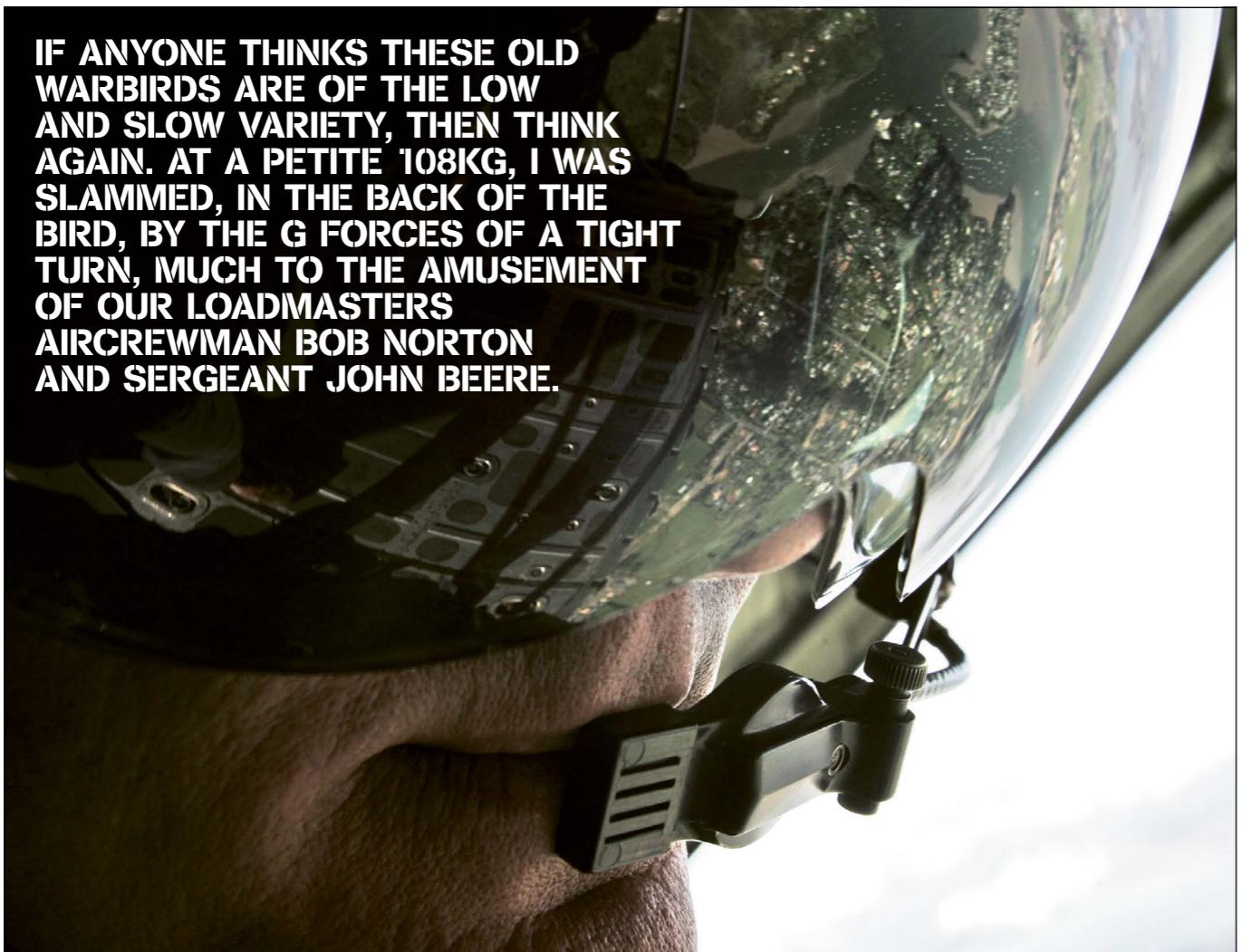
Out on the tarmac we were greeted by old friends of CONTACT, the parachute

instructors of PTSU. As detailed in CONTACT issue 8, PTSU are now training NZSAS members straight on to ram-air chutes as opposed to the old round T10 static-line chutes for their first jump.

OC Squadron Leader Darryn Pritchard and Flight Lieutenant Brent Iggo explain that the Special Forces operators had little forewarning of our coming and requested no face shots. That was no worries for us and pretty soon the two C130s were rolling down the runway and lifting up to jump height in brilliant weather over Auckland Harbor.



IF ANYONE THINKS THESE OLD WARBIRDS ARE OF THE LOW AND SLOW VARIETY, THEN THINK AGAIN. AT A PETITE 108KG, I WAS SLAMMED, IN THE BACK OF THE BIRD, BY THE G FORCES OF A TIGHT TURN, MUCH TO THE AMUSEMENT OF OUR LOADMASTERS AIRCREWMAN BOB NORTON AND SERGEANT JOHN BEERE.



Levelling out over the Whenuapai drop zone, the ramp came down. Those SAS members on their training cycle were first out, followed by free-fall students and then the PJIs.

Once gone, we settled in, sitting on the lowered ramp as the second bird flew just metres above and to our rear.

Looking to my left I could see the Auckland Skytower, its point slightly above us.

It wasn't long before the sightseeing was over, the ramp raised and we were into the real stuff – flying through the valleys of Great Barrier Island and the Coromandel Peninsula.

If anyone thinks these old warbirds are of the low and slow variety, then think again. At a petite 108kg, I was slammed, in the back of the bird, by the G forces of a tight turn, much to the amusement of our loadmasters Aircrewman Bob Norton and Sergeant John Beere.

Watching them work as the aircraft jinked and jived, I realised 'in the rear with the gear' was no place for my delicate constitution, so I headed to the flight deck.

The view as we followed the Waikato River to Lake Karapiro was something to

remember as both aircraft flew in tight formation, swapping the lead and being handled with apparent ease.

Co-pilot Kane Stratford mapped out the route for Squadron Leader Webb while navigator Flying Officer Blair Oldershaw and flight engineer Josef Hargraves kept us on track and the aircraft trimmed.

Pretty soon we were on the homeward

leg and, as we flew over Kaipara, the ramp came down again to allow Bob and John out the back to practice a bombing run.

Down we swooped and, not far off the mark, probably the biggest 'dive bomber' in New Zealand history headed home.

Not a bad day's effort I thought, heading back to the office – what can we get up to tomorrow?



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SILVER WARRIOR

"THE NEW ZEALAND TAXPAYER HAS INVESTED AN AWFUL LOT OF MONEY IN THE NEW LAV AND PINZGAUER VEHICLES AND WE'VE GOT TO SHOW THEM THAT THEIR MONEY WAS WELL SPENT"



Flour and paint bombs fly as thick as the language as New Zealand troops try to keep pro-government and Pohangina Liberation Front supporters apart as the confrontation escalates outside the schoolhouse near the Toa Island settlement of Marton.

WORDS AND PICS KIWI MAC

"Kiwis out, Kiwis out, independence now" the chant goes up as a paint bomb flies, hitting a LAV on the turret.

The Kiwi peacekeepers keep their cool. But, there is little doubt that had the violence escalated, their response may not have been as subdued.

Though the scenario was fictitious, the soldiers of 1 RNZIR know they could face just such a situation at any given moment, with conflict ongoing around the globe.

Linton-based 1 RNZIR participated in Exercise Silver Warrior '05, their first full Battalion Battlegroup exercise since converting from light-infantry role to Cavalry Group following the arrival of the NZ LAVIII in 2003.

And, it appears, the lessons of East Timor are being handed down to the next generation.

The first phase of the exercise, involving 799 regular-force troops and one Territorial (yours truly), took place at Waiouru, a location where four seasons in one day is the norm.

Running from 11–22 November, phase one was a conventional exercise and would be familiar to many readers who served in any army in the 20 years after Vietnam – conventional forces pitted against elusive insurgents, but with plenty of room to manoeuvre, without civilians getting in the way.

Four days notice was all I had and, CONTACT readers will chuckle with the news that nothing's changed – "Don't worry about not having kit, it'll all be issued when you get down there," the voice on the end of the line said before hanging up.

The major elements involved were 1 RNZIR's Battalion HQ, Victor and Whiskey Companies, Support Company, Logistics Company and 161 Battery RNZA, engineers from 2 Engineer Regiment, loggies from 2 Logistics Regiment alongside 2 Sigs Squadron and 2 Health Services Battalion.

Phase two took place on the fictitious island of Toa, which comprised much of the Manawatu, Wanganui and Taranaki

provinces with the battalion headquartered on Ohakea Airbase outside Bulls.

Phase two ran from November 22–26 and was controlled by HQ 2 Land Force, whose job it was to assess whether the Battle Group had reached its directed level of capability.

The scenario pitched the Kiwi peacekeepers alongside those of Australia and other nations trying to stabilise the island where three different separatist groups were all vying for autonomy.

A feature of this exercise, and proof that Defence is moving with the times, was the introduction of simulated media. Make no mistake, on modern ops, mess up and you'll read about it in tomorrow's papers or have your mug on the evening news.

Imagine my surprise – considering my day job and my association with CONTACT – when I was marched into a compulsory media briefing and advised on the dangers of the media and coached on what to say and what not to say!

The message from on high to the troops was very clear; "The New Zealand taxpayer has invested an awful lot of money in the new LAV and Pinzgauer vehicles and we've got to show them that their money was well spent."

A main feature of the exercise was an assault on guerrillas entrenched in the old psychiatric hospital at Lake Alice. Unfortunately, it was one of the world's worst-kept secrets and a group of real media, brought in to film the event, were able to tell the rest of us where, when and how the attack would be carried out. Did someone just say OPSEC?

The LAV undoubtedly gives a level of fire-support and manoeuvrability simply not available to New Zealand infantry five years ago, and the Army was going out of its way to show it off.

The assault duly went in, was a great success and reported as such by a receptive media audience – the LAVs had passed with flying colours.

One 'killed' insurgent, however, had a contrary opinion, suggesting that too much effort had gone in to impressing the media.

"Instead of dismounting and using the mobile armour as a firebase, the LAVs drove them right up to the building, to look good for the camera.

"Down goes the ramp and out rolls a section of infantry – right in front of my gun. I mowed the lot down, a la Saving Private Ryan," he said.

But, at the end of the day, the media and the top brass were impressed, and that's a major win.

Outgoing Commanding Officer 1 RNZIR, Lieutenant Colonel Darryl Tracey said Exercise Silver Warrior was a good test of the battlegroup.

"It's our first full-battalion exercise since the conversion and it's allowed us to shake out a few of the problems and find solutions," he said.

"We've managed to combine the introduction of new vehicles, equipment and tactics quite well and are now in a position to say to Government we are ready to deploy wherever cabinet may decide to send us."

While the battlegroup was going through its paces, New Zealand media announced that overtures had been made by the UK to the New Zealand Government about Kiwi troops becoming part of a Commonwealth force to fill the gap left by an American phased withdrawal from Afghanistan this year.

No one was commenting on this coincidence but Silver Warrior may have proven very timely indeed.





In an ancient and forbidding land on the crossroads of Islam and Buddhism, a Kiwi Army chaplain finds an open mind and a warm welcome among a people who now call him...

MULLAH MIKE

WORDS KIWI MAC
PICS SUPPLIED BY MAJOR MIKE SUBRITZKY

On a six-month tour of duty with New Zealand's Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) based in Bamiyan Province in central Afghanistan, Major Mike Subritzky says there are no problems with him being a Christian in the domain of the Mullahs.

"I have helped out in the community, assisted to run language classes and we, as a group, have worked closely with local leaders on many projects," he says.

"They'd been treated terribly under the Taliban, with several mass executions and widespread oppression. The Shi'ite Hazaras had put up widespread resistance to the Taliban and, because of that, they were quite receptive to our arrival, which has been a big plus for the PRT."

The Hazara are one of the major tribes of Afghanistan and comprise around

20 per cent of the country's population. Historically they have been one of the most oppressed ethnic groups in the country. They have never been able to attend higher education institutions or hold positions of authority in the military or government.

Between 1997 and 1998, thousands of Hazaras were massacred in the provincial capital of Bamiyan and the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif.

But, while the Taliban were able to control the cities, like the Russians before them, they were unable to control the highlands of this ancient and harsh land where Northern Alliance commander Massoud Khalili led a resistance campaign that, with American support, drove the Taliban and Al-Qa'ida out of the province in October 2001.

About 120 Kiwis now serve in the PRT on six-month rotations. In addition, the New Zealand SAS has been active in the country on direct-action missions, with seven operators having been wounded on

operations with Task Force K-Bar and on Operation Anaconda.

Those same rugged highlands that sheltered the Hazara and defeated the Taliban and the Russians before them are part of the Kiwi patrol area where Major Subritzky says keeping in contact with far-flung outposts in the severe northern winter is probably the hardest part of the Kiwi mission.

"The enthusiasm of newly arrived soldiers was quickly tempered with the onset of winter," he says. "When facing temperatures of minus 27 degrees Celsius, our patrolling was limited quite a bit."

"We had to bring back one patrol base because we just couldn't get access to them."

"But as soon as the sun came out, we were back into it."

Home on leave for Christmas with his family, the Christchurch-based, 2/1st Battalion chaplain explained to



CONTACT WILL SOON HAVE ITS OWN CORRESPONDENT ON THE GROUND IN AFGHANISTAN WHEN KIWI MAC DEPLOYS WITH THE PRT IN MAY. WATCH THIS SPACE

CONTACT what an Army chaplain's job was all about.

"A chaplain's role is threefold – yes we are there to provide spiritual guidance to the troops in a potentially stressful environment, but we also look after the more immediate welfare of the troops and their morale," he says.

"When it comes time for a deployment, the pressure is on as soon as a soldier's name appears on the list. And it's not just pressure on the individual soldier, but on those who'll be left at home as well."

"Then, in theatre, there's the stress of living in close proximity with 120 other people. You have the obvious stresses of living out of each others pockets that can affect soldiers in different ways."

"But, probably the hardest time is when you've hit the fourth-month mark when there's no more firsts to achieve," Mullah Mike says. "That's when I really earn my crust."



**MAJOR 'MULLAH' MIKE SUBRITZKY
A CHRISTIAN IN THE LAND OF ISLAM**

A CLASH OF CULTURES

A SIMULATED BURNS VICTIM IS AIDED BY A DANISH OFFICER

Denmark, that small northern European monarchy close to the hearts of Australians, is also doing its bit in the interests of rebuilding Iraq. A 500-strong Danish battalion – known as DANBN – is based with British forces at Shaiba Log Base close to Basra as part of the Multinational Division South East, completing six-month rotations. The battalion also includes an embedded platoon of Lithuanian soldiers.

Although the Danish Army is partly a conscript army, conscripts must complete a minimum 10 to 12 months service before volunteering for operations. Technically, all members of the Danish Army serving abroad are volunteers – the conscripts sign up as an extension of their compulsory military service, while fulltime, professional soldiers... well, it's their job!

Danish forces are also serving in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Sudan in larger numbers as well as individually in about 15 other places on observer/monitoring missions.

Before each rotation to Iraq – or on any mission – each newly formed battalion

is drawn together for several months' intensive pre-deployment training. We follow one such battalion – DANBN Team 6 – as it progresses through Exercise Black Sauroman.

The soldiers were greeted with chanting, screaming and a few gunshots as they entered the small hamlet. This time, however, the intent of locals was not hostile. The patrolling soldiers had stumbled upon a wedding procession and everyone was celebrating at full throttle.

This scenario could have gone south very quickly, had the soldiers not kept their cool as gunshots rang out. A quick meeting was established between the leader of the wedding procession and an agreement was made that the locals would pay more attention to their celebratory firing when patrols passed by, to avoid regretful reactions.

This incident was one of many, testing and preparing the Danish battalion for its coming mission in Iraq. It all took place in a geographical setting somewhat different from the real-mission location, but what it lacked in desert heat was supplemented by a rich and detailed exercise setup.

Exercise setup

The last training before deployment to Iraq was split into two parts FTX 1 and FTX 2.

FTX 1 presented the soldiers with basic disciplines regarding Iraq. Strong emphasis was put on brushing up basic soldier skills such as patrolling, search operations, live firing, first aid, incident management and working with an interpreter.

During FTX 1, sub-unit cohesion was a central focus, having each company and detachment work like a well-oiled machine. Inter-unit cooperation was also encouraged.

During FTX 2, a larger setup was played out. While the basics remained the same, specific incidents and their potential flow-on consequences were explored. Emphasis was put on the value of, for example, intel gathered during a patrol that could be put into use during a subsequent weapons-search operation. Various role-players might pass on info during otherwise innocent contacts with the soldiers, thus leading to intel being passed along proper lines of communication within the battalion.

This kind of fluid, tentative gameplay demands a lot of support personnel

– privates, NCOs, officers and civilian role-players – up to 200 people on occasions.

Combat as well as non-combat units all go through this cycle to prepare and equip them to handle various types of scenarios in Iraq. FTX 1 and 2 are constantly revised, based largely on operational experience as well as current tactical conditions.

A large number of the support personnel are veterans of earlier missions in Iraq and they grade the units being trained. This grade is passed on to exercise control staff who assess what is good to go and what needs to be reinforced in follow-up training.

During both exercises, Camp Oksbøl is manned and used in substitute for Camp Danevang in Iraq. Every part of the battalion is tested and trained in primary skills. Main-gate guarding procedures are followed, combat support elements fulfil their tasks, battalion staff go through mission planning and preparation, and the list goes on.

Procedures are run 24-7, the philosophy being that it prepares people for the challenge of carrying out their assignments in an environment as close as possible to that which they may expect in Iraq.

Mission interaction

Individual unit training is incorporated into a larger exercise setup. So, when the mechanised infantry company or reconnaissance squadron goes on a patrol, what they experience will often impact on other battalion units. As it did during an escort for local dignitaries, where a soldier suffered severe heat-stroke (simulated) and had to be casevac'd by helicopter.

During this incident, medics, who were

attached to the escort, commenced treatment – IV drips were laid into his arm, much to the horror of some German tourists passing by at the time who thought this was a real incident and were visibly worried on behalf of the stricken soldier. They were, of course, reassured that it was all "fun and games".

All in all it was a good example of how a simple task could evolve into a multi-layered scenario – a relatively simple escort task suddenly escalating to include lifesaving first-aid, marshalling of a

helicopter, perimeter security around the landing site, coordination with battalion headquarters – and on and on.

Combined operations

During the later stages of the exercise, operations with IPS (Iraqi Police Service) and IA (Iraqi Army) units were also incorporated. This represented a large challenge because of both cultural and tactical differences.

The Danish units traditionally work in a more supportive role while the IA and IPS are the ones actually conducting

various tasks – usually IA running vehicle checkpoints and IPS conducting house searches.

Tactical debriefs from Iraq have shown that these operations are not always easy as there is, at times, a certain animosity between IA and IPS. This tension is also incorporated into the combined ops during training. Platoon commanders and company commanders, apart from conducting a house- and area-search operation, sometimes have to prevent the IA and IPS from getting in each other's faces.

The 'Iraqi Army' arrived in the area around the suspect compound in Kærgård amidst a lot of shouting. They were followed by 'Iraqi Police', tasked to arrest two suspects. The Danish recce squadron followed the course of events from a distance.

Shortly afterwards, the IA had established three checkpoints, shutting down movements in and out of the target area. In parallel, the IPS had surrounded the compound and were making ready to arrest the two suspects. Four Danish military police, acting as advisors to the IPS, made sure they didn't exceed their powers.

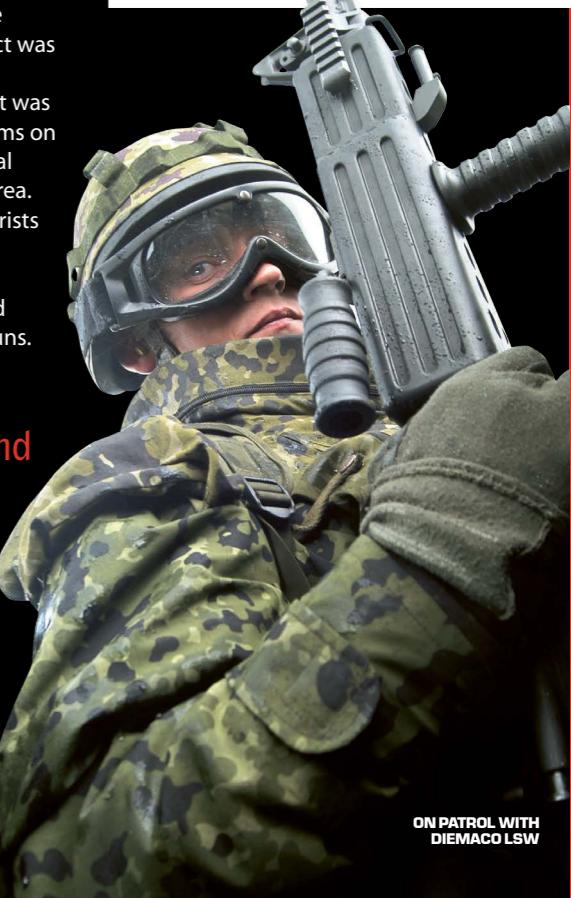
For a while the situation developed as planned, but it soon started to go south, as local residents began to make trouble. This, combined with IPS and IA commanders who didn't get along well, could easily spell trouble.

When the initial unrest had been quelled, IPS, assisted by Danish military police, stormed the house and made their intended arrests. A third suspect was also apprehended.

The operation didn't take long, but was long enough to create traffic problems on both sides of the road barrier – actual civilian roads through the training area. Again, German as well as Danish tourists had been attracted to the sound of a helicopter hanging over the place, gunshots and the general hustle and bustle of oddly dressed men with guns.

Operation Black Sauroman – snatch and search operation

The last two weeks of training ended with the battalion tasked on a mission to conduct both a raid/snatch operation, as well as a house- and area-search op. Both missions were to be executed in Al-Brikby (Brikby – Brick City). The intent of the snatch was to net local hardliners and strongmen who could pose a liability to the subsequent house and area search.



ON PATROL WITH
DIEMACO LSW

All relevant intel from the various patrols and meetings with local people over previous weeks was gathered and pieced together by the battalion S2 in order to create a detailed picture of the area, pinpointing hardliners/anti-coalition elements, pro-coalition contacts and potential trouble spots.

Netting the three hardliners was key to the mission, as it was believed they were capable of marshalling very strong resistance.

The morning in Al Brikby started as any other morning – people in the streets, stall owners hawking anything from machine parts to food and beverages. This quiet morning ended suddenly as the air filled with the sounds of rotor blades and the clanking noises of tracked vehicles. Helicopters punched out of the sky and landed almost on top of the outer settlements. Soldiers rushed the houses of bandits. As the hardliners didn't want to give up easily, CS gas and flash bangs were employed. For a short while, several buildings resounded with shouting, coughing and flash bangs.

While this took place, ground elements had secured all exit points from Al-Brikby, thus securing the target area. As the arrests were made, people started to gather and several followers of the arrested men tried to free their leaders. This, however, was quickly brought down.

During this first phase of the mission, IA elements helped secure check-points and, under the supervision of the military police, the IPS began searching people in the streets and checking IDs.

Intent on resolving the mission with the least discomfort for the local population,



HORRIFIED WOMEN STARE AT WOUNDED RELATIVES



IRaqI POLICE SERVICE PERSONNEL CHALLENGE THE PATIENCE OF MILITARY POLICE



HEATSTROKE COMPLICATES A MISSION

a meeting was initiated between the battalion commander and the main sheik of Al-Brikby, informing the local leaders on why this mission had to be conducted and that is was for the benefit of all parties to rid Al-Brikby of anti-democratic, insurgent elements.

During a short but constructive meeting, an agreement was made that the soldiers would respect local customs and the locals in return would remain calm. To emphasise the accord, the battalion commander and the sheik made a walk around the town holding hands. This demonstration, signifying that the battalion was in Al-Brikby with the good will and blessing of the sheik, helped calm the people and helped the sheik retain the respect of his community.

During such a search mission, property is invariably broken, creating small grievances that the battalion CIMIC (Civilian and Military Cooperation) section took care of, financially compensating for damage done or making other amicable arrangements sufficient for the loss.

Needless to say, people that were found in violation of local Iraqi laws were arrested and handed over to local authorities. During the search op, weapons permits were checked, illegal weapons confiscated and reports written on violators.

The mission progressed peacefully, until suddenly, a large explosion was heard throughout Al-Brikby – a VBIED (vehicle-borne improvised explosive device) had been run into the local IPS station and

detonated. Chaos ensued and horribly burned casualties emerged from the ruins of the police facility. Several local residents, their limbs torn off, were also caught up in the blast. After the initial shock, the site was secured and first aid was administered. The streets echoed to the screams of the wounded. An acrid blanket of smoke billowed skywards, while distraught bystanders milled about trying to find loved ones.

The medics were all but overwhelmed by the volume of wounded needing treatment. Every spare hand was pressed into assisting to the best of their ability. Ambulances – military and civilian – helped evacuate the wounded to both local civilian hospitals and military coalition facilities.

The initial attack wasn't followed by a small arms attack. Nonetheless, the battalion did not fall slack on security. All exit points were enforced and a lockdown on Al-Brikby was quickly put in place until a more detailed overview of the incident had been created.

In the wee hours of the day, the situation had 'normalised'. A combined local security presence was established, allowing the battalion to finish its mission and pull out of Al-Brikby.

Had this been a real incident, even more taskings and missions would have ensued. This though, was the end of months of preparation for the coming mission in Iraq. All members got much-welcomed downtime with their families before deploying.

FOOTNOTE: The above battalion is now back in Denmark – its replacement on post. Its mission did not pass without loss, however. At 12.30pm on 1 October 2005, First Lieutenant Bjarke Olsen Kirkmand (pictured) was killed by an IED while on patrol in the Al-Hartha district of Basra.

The loss of a colleague naturally shook the whole battalion, but good training and a professional desire to finish the job saw his friends and colleagues complete their mission with distinction.



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HMAS PARRAMATTA

AUSSIES IN THE GULF

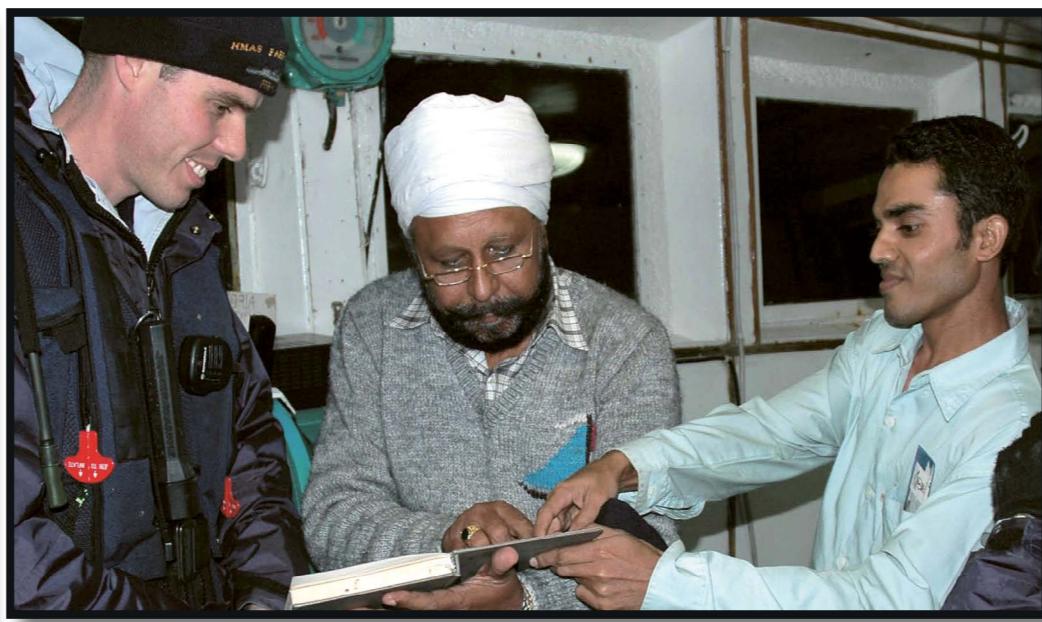
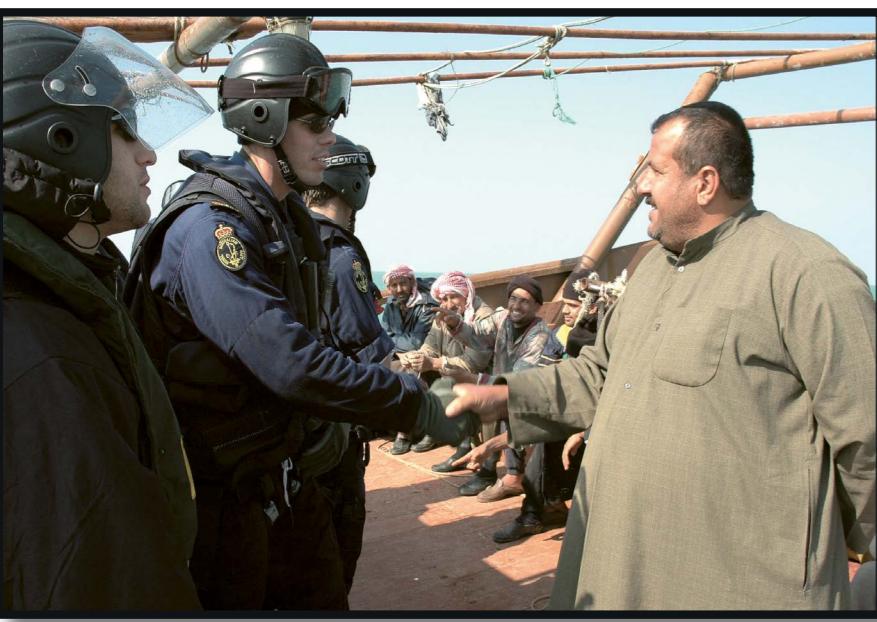
PICS ADF

Commander Jonathan Mead and the 165-strong ship's company of HMAS Parramatta, farewelled family and friends late last year as the ship departed Garden Island, Sydney for duty in the Persian Gulf.

Parramatta took over duties from HMAS Newcastle on a mission to assist in the detection, deterrence and interception of vessels in Iraqi waters suspected of undertaking illegal activity. She also assists in protecting Iraq's offshore assets such as oil platforms, ensuring the country's key economic resources can generate funds to support reconstruction, rehabilitation and security efforts in the country.

Operation Catalyst is the Australian contribution to the Multinational Force currently operating in Iraq with approximately 1320 ADF personnel deployed, under overall command of Brigadier Paul Symon.

Chief of Defence Force Air Chief Marshall Angus Huston visited our forces in the Middle East in January.





THE BOSS' DRIVER

Sergeant Sandra 'Sandy' McInerney OAM was the first female ever appointed driver to the highest-ranking officer in the land – and it didn't happen by accident.

Behind every great man is a great woman and, while there's no doubt Lyn Cosgrove played a very important role in supporting her man, there was another strong, dedicated woman behind Peter Cosgrove. Although 'behind' is more a figure of speech, given that Sergeant Sandy McInerney was usually in front of her boss – and behind the wheel of his car.

Sandy McInerney joined the Army in a time of change. She completed recruit training at Kapooka in 1986, just months after WRAAC (Women's Royal Australian Army Corps) was discontinued as a separate stream. She completed basic driver training at Puckapunyal and was posted to the now disbanded Sydney Transport Unit, doing courier runs, medical/dental runs and picking up food from Moorebank to take to the various messes around Sydney.

During this early part of her career, Sandy was offered a short stint driving the Chief of Staff of the then Headquarters Field Force Command (now Land Command) where her skills were appreciated. So much so, she was temporarily transferred to the headquarters for almost two years before actually being posted there for a further 18 months.

During this time she drove for such up-and-coming commanders as Brigadiers Mike Harris, John Sanderson and Frank Hickling.

Also during this period, Sandy had been allocated on an as-needs basis to drive General John Grey, then Chief of the General Staff (now known as Chief of Army), whenever he visited Sydney. Driving a VIP from one appointment to another naturally affords certain opportunities – if only politely answering the man's questions – to tell the "boss" about one's ambitions, and it was thus that the Chief of the General Staff (CGS)

became aware that Sandy had a desire to be the first female to reach the top in her profession.

And so, when the call eventually came from Canberra, Sandy was ready.

She was, by this time a corporal, but driving the CGS was a sergeant's job. Nonetheless, General Grey was happy with Sandy's capabilities and, more importantly, had already established a strong rapport with her on his various Sydney trips.

She was transferred to Canberra on Higher Duties Allowance, fulfilling her career ambition – to that point.

Sandy was well established as the Chief of Army's driver when Lieutenant General Peter Cosgrove was appointed.

Choosing his staff was his prerogative and, probably in consultation with his predecessor, Sandy was asked to remain as driver to the new Chief of Army.

Eventually, when Peter Cosgrove was promoted and appointed Chief of Defence Force, Sandy McInerney was invited to remain on his staff, thus becoming the first female driver to the very top office in military command – and an honour that she says was probably one of the greatest pats on the back she every received.

So what is it to be a VIP driver? Is it a matter of simply getting behind the wheel of a car and taking the boss where he wants or needs to be?

Obviously, driving is a key element of the job, and as driver to one of the most high-profile officers in Australia, Sandy McInerney was one of the most qualified drivers in the country.

"Before the Olympic Games in Sydney, there were very few people who were, what we call Level 6, which is an anti-terrorist driving qualification," Sandy Says.

"Level 6 is required to drive Her Majesty the Queen. The Governor General's drivers and PM's drivers are all Level 6 too. And it then came down to me as well."

"Level 6 involves the 'Crash and Bang' course, teaching you to disable other vehicles without disabling your own. It's about hitting a vehicle at speed, to move it out of the way without completely wrecking your own car, so you can get the principal out of there as quickly as possible – safely – still alive."

"It was a painful course because you are smashing into other vehicles. You wear neck braces and harnesses, but after a couple of days hitting other cars, it can really hurt!"

"I actually broke my collar bone on that course, from the seat belt repeatedly locking."

But was it fun? "Hell, yeah!" she says with a wicked glint in her eye.

"I've also done bomb search courses – being aware of how, why and what if. Also, what to look for when travelling and always being aware of what people might do and what is happening around you. I was taught all that."

"Constantly being aware of your surroundings, especially after September 11 – who's around you, the interest they might hold – that's a big thing. Especially with Cossie, that was difficult, because everyone was interested in him."

Twice in her career (before Cosgrove), Sandy was forced to put her training into action – both times in Sydney.

"The first incident was a Vietnam veteran on the lead-up to the welcome home parade in 1987. He sprawled himself on the bonnet of the car and pulled out a pistol. He was quite inebriated at the time, so only managed to take out a shop window behind me."

"The second one was during the NSW bicentennial, a year later, when a couple of kids decided to take a pot shot at a nice big green car. I had three police motorcycles as an escort at the time and they were able to get on top of the situation pretty quickly."

"When it happens, the training kicks in and you just get the boss out of there as

Other duties involved official gifts of protocol, for example. If the boss was going overseas, Sandy organised all the gifts he would be required to present.

"When the Cosgroves travelled for three weeks overseas they needed three or four suitcases just full of gifts. With advice from both of them, I went shopping, bought the gifts, registered them, wrapped them and packed them."

"And when reciprocal gifts came back from overseas, I had to register and look after those. Gifts were a big issue."

For Sandy – and all the general's staff – there was no such thing as an "average" week.

"You had to be completely flexible. I was ruled by a man's diary, but I wasn't even married to him. His diary ruled my life."

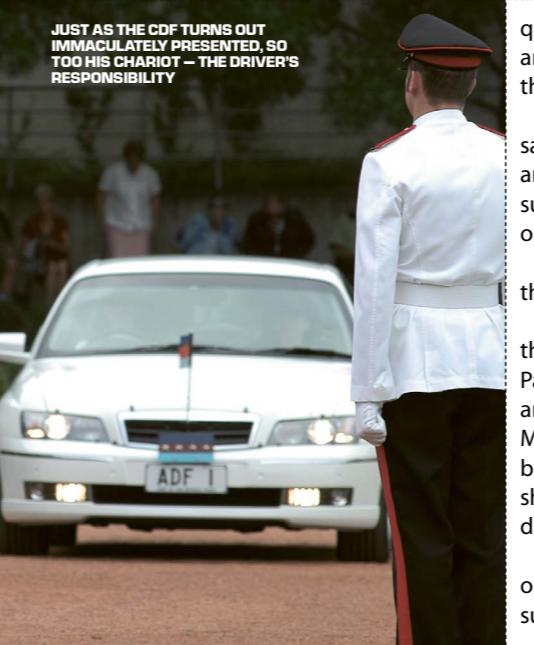
"It was very time consuming. Work always came first. I was single for nine years, and that was a choice I made because work took up everything."

"If he was going overseas for three weeks it was relatively safe for me to take some leave, but even then, his life could change my plans. I was out on a 200-acre property helping with maintenance when September 11 happened, and we were all back at work within 12 hours, with the boss flying back from overseas."

"In 2001, as another example, it was the Army's Centenary, and Cossie was Australian



THE ADF'S TOP DRIVER IN FRIVOLOUS MOOD



JUST AS THE CDF TURNS OUT IMMACULATELY PRESENTED, SO TOO HIS CHARIOT – THE DRIVER'S RESPONSIBILITY

quickly as possible. It's only later, when you are relaxing over a cup of tea or something, that it really hits you."

But it wasn't all driving. Essentially, Sandy says, she worked in an office environment and was part of the boss' team, his staff. As such, she was a spare pair of hands to help out with anything and everything.

"We all worked as a team – the CDF ran the Defence Force and we ran him!"

She was on standby to do anything at the drop of a hat – take briefs to and from Parliament House, drop other people to and from wherever the boss was, ensure Mrs Cosgrove knew what was going on – a big responsibility – and that she was where she was meant to be, at the right time and dressed appropriately for the occasion.

Or it could be the simple things like organising a hair cut for the boss, or supervising the installation of a new TV – because he just didn't have time.

TIPS TO BEING A GOOD VIP DRIVER

- > BE ON TIME
- > BE DISCRETE
- > BE COMPLETELY FLEXIBLE
- > BE ORGANISED
- > KEEP THE CAR CLEAN
- > DON'T EMBARRASS YOURSELF IN PUBLIC
- > USE COMMON SENSE
- > STAY TWO STEPS AHEAD

SANDY THE DRIVER

of the Year as well. There was a time when I was averaging 130 hours per week – but I was the lucky one. I only had to get him from point A to point B – he then had to give a speech.

"He had to work for his supper, so to speak."

Naturally, as with most things military, there are certain protocols to be observed with a general's staff car. Apart from the "ADF 1" number plates which identify the car as the most important vehicle in the known (Australian military) universe, the general also has 'star' plates which are either covered or uncovered, depending on whether he is present or not. When on board, no matter what he's wearing, the general's star plates are uncovered and, whenever so, military members are required to salute the car (actually the general) as if they were meeting him on foot. He, of course, returns the compliment – the driver assisting by calling "to the left, sir," or "to the right, sir" more often than not calling his attention away from important briefing papers.

Although he is also entitled to fly his flag, or pennant, on the front of the car when he is in it, Peter Cosgrove chose not to as a rule, except on ceremonial or official occasions. Unfurling and then securing the flag each time the door opened, was a major logistical incumbrance, especially, for example, if dropping him on a busy city street.

After September 11, Sandy travelled with Peter Cosgrove more than ever before, because of her extra VIP driving qualifications. On many such trips, Sandy went ahead, arriving a day earlier to ensure arrangements were in place. This sometimes caused a stir, and gave Sandy more than a few smiles during her long tenure.

"Yes! People do panic a bit when they see that car. Especially in ADF 1 and driving interstate, I would pull in to a barracks where they were expecting the boss a day later..."

"The general's driver is usually treated very well. I'm probably the best-treated sergeant in the Australian Army. Nobody upsets the general's driver – if they do, they only do it once!"

"But it's not something you abuse. For example, if I go into the Q-store to get him something, then I tell the storemen, 'This is for the boss.' But if I were going into the Q-store to get something for myself, then there's no ifs or buts – I'd tell them straight off. You just don't abuse that position."

"But, people do know who you are and what you do, and they treat you differently because of it. So, I also think it's good to go over afterwards and say, 'Thanks!'



SOUVENIRS OF A LONG CAREER AS MILITARY VIP DRIVER



PROUD PARENTS WITH GOVERNOR GENERAL MICHAEL JEFFERY FOLLOWING SANDY'S PRESENTATION WITH AN OAM

"Cossie was very good at that too. He was a very human person, very easy-going. Which was incredible, because he really did have the weight of the world on his shoulders."

"But he still found time to talk to people. He'd often rock up and plonk himself on someone's desk and say, 'G'day. How are you?'"

"He was very easy going and very easy to approach, which made my life a lot easier."

After 20 years in the Australian Regular Army – 18 as a VIP driver – Sergeant Sandra 'Sandy' McInerney OAM is hanging up her driving gloves.

Reflecting on a career she sums up as 'fun', Sandy says that to work for the Chief of the Defence Force and when he asks you, "What do you think," you knew he was interested in your opinion. That was a real buzz.

"Things that I heard in the car back in 1988, '89, '90 – that in 2006, the Australian soldier will be wearing this and will have that piece of equipment – and now I can see it in my wardrobe or with the boys out in the field. That was insightful."

"You get to see the human side of it and you get to see why things happen the way they do – why the decisions were made."

"And it was fun. The boss and I would crack each other up in the car, and Mrs Cosgrove would sit back in despair and say, 'Don't feed the monkey.'

"I really have enjoyed it, but I've come to the end. I can go no further, and I'm ready now for a new challenge, which, unfortunately, is outside the Army."

Asked to impart one last piece of advice to young soldiers – and, indeed, sailors and airmen and women – Sandy says, "Just stick to it and tell people what you want."

"Brigadier Geoff Carter – who became Major General Carter and who, unfortunately, has passed away since – said to me once, 'Tell everyone what you want to do.' So when General Grey gave me that opportunity, I took it. I'd never met the man before, I was a young private and when he asked me what I wanted to do, I said I want to be the CGS's driver."

"I started off driving a one-star and was fortunate enough to drive a two-star. I was the first female three-star driver and then the first female four-star driver."

"And, while that was a natural progression with all the experience I'd gathered over the years, it all started because I took some good advice and ran with it."

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PAKISTAN ASSIST

HELPING THE HELPLESS IN NATURE'S CRUEL WAKE

WORDS BRIAN HARTIGAN AND FLIGHT LIEUTENANT TREVOR GRANT
PICS ADF



At 0850 local time on 8 October 2005 – less than a year after a tsunami swept away the lives and livelihoods of millions around the Indian Ocean – Mother Nature struck again with cruel and devastating intent. Unleashing an earthquake of rare intensity, she struck at the heart of the politically sensitive and impoverished Kashmir region between Pakistan and India, snuffing out the lives of more than 87,000 men, women and children. Among the dead were vast numbers of the region's medical practitioners. Among the countless buildings and vital basic infrastructure destroyed were up to 6000 hospitals, clinics and other medical facilities – a devastating blow designed to visit longer and lasting misery on the helpless and innocent.

A

s it did in the wake of the tsunami, the global community responded quickly with pledges of financial support and messages of sympathy. Despite criticism of a slow start, physical aid was relatively quick in coming, especially given the remoteness and inaccessibility of the region at the best of times. The Australian Government, on behalf of its deeply concerned citizens, was again both swift and generous in pledging financial and materiel support through AusAID.

Behind the scenes in Defence, preparations and plans were coming together for a more tangible and lasting input to the relief effort. Mustering the finest available equipment and personnel, the Australian Defence Force prepared for

yet another humanitarian aid mission far from Australia's shores.

On 11 November, scarcely a month after the event, and with massive planning and preparation behind them, a 140-member medical, aviation and logistic-support team departed Sydney aboard RAAF assets to commence operations in the devastated town of Dhanni, high in the foothills of the Himalayas. This slightly delayed departure was vital to the long-term success and relevance of the mission, however.

Commander of the Joint Task Force for Operation Pakistan Assist Colonel Andrew Sims says precise and careful planning was vital, more so for this mission than perhaps any other before it.

"I'm being obviously flippant here for a minute but, if the team in Banda Aceh on the tsunami relief effort ran out of tyres for

IT'S MORE THAN 1980 METRES, OR 6500 FEET, UP. IT'S COLD AND WILL SOON BE COVERED IN SNOW. WELCOME TO QAZIABAD IN THE MOUNTAINS OF KASHMIR.



CAPTAIN JONGENEEL CARES FOR A SICK INFANT

their trucks, for example, they could get them relatively quickly from Australia. We simply don't have that kind of backup here," he says.

"The main thing I'm proud of is that we are achieving this mission so far from Australia. We can't just put out our arms and grab stuff if we need it or have forgotten it.

"So, the biggest thing we learnt from all this, was the importance of meticulous planning and a great deal of foresight before we left home."

Operating at an altitude of 3500 feet above sea level in a valley surrounded by 6000 foot, snow-covered mountains may sound picturesque – and indeed it is – but that very same ruggedness is also the mission's most daunting enemy – especially now that winter has set in for the long haul.

Flight Lieutenant Trevor Grant describes the team's reaction to the first snow of winter, which came on New Years Eve to the tent-camp home of the Aussie medical team in Dhanni – dubbed Camp Bradman – high in the mountains of Kashmir.

It was cold, the wind was howling and driving rain had been pounding all day with no sign of easing. The ground was a quagmire.

By 8pm, after a hard, cold day, with the temperature hovering around zero, most people had gone to bed to warm up.

With no warning, the wind and rain subsided and, in almost eerie silence, snowflakes the size of fifty-cent pieces began gently floating from the night sky.

From those still up and moving around the camp came shrill yells, "It's snowing!"

People soon began to emerge from their tents to admire this peaceful assault from Mother Nature. Some of us from sunny Australia had never seen snow. For folk accustomed to sunnier climes or operational experience in deserts and the tropics, the snowflakes were an almost mesmerising sight. Others wasted no time in letting the inner child come to the surface in snowball fights.

Continuing well into the night, the snow showed its other character – as a problem. Snow began weighing heavily on the tents. The fun of snowball fights and reverie about scenic beauty were quickly forgotten as people were roused from warm sleeping

bags to scrape built-up snow from the roofs of sagging tents.

Dawn revealed a spectacular sight – about 30 centimetres of pristine snow surrounding the camp. Members of the team emerged from their cocoons and joined colleagues with cups of tea and coffee to admire the scene.

But, the serenity was soon broken. With the temperature hovering around zero for most of the day, people had duties to perform. Tents had to be reinforced, drainage systems cleared and patients seen. We simply adapted and got on with the mission.

The mission for these Aussies, as requested by the Pakistani Government, is to provide humanitarian aid to the people of Dhanni and surrounds, primarily through the provision of primary health care, in a primitive, frontier environment.

As time passes, the reputation of the Australians in delivering their mission has spread far and wide. Colonel Sims says they have treated patients who have walked up to 35km to reach Camp Bradman, bypassing other aid agencies on the way.

"They do that, not for the fact that we will give them better care, but because of the reputation for friendliness and compassion we have built in the short time we have been here," he says.

In the region worst affected by the October earthquake and its hundreds of aftershocks, there are three main valleys.



The Pakistani Government's plan of action to help the people in these areas called for the evacuation of all people from two of these valleys to areas of population where they could best be taken care of. For the third valley, Neelum, into which the Aussie medical element has deployed, it was decided to care for the population in situ.

It's more than 1980 metres, or 6500 feet, up. It's cold and will soon be covered in snow. Welcome to Qaziabad in the mountains of Kashmir.

Qaziabad is the first location visited by an Australian Defence Force (ADF) medical team flying in by helicopter to set up health-care day clinics in isolated areas of the Neelum Valley, on the Pakistan side of the Kashmir Line Of Control. We call this health care extension program under Operation Pakistan Assist, Operation Longreach.

When we arrive in Qaziabad, the villagers welcome us with beaming smiles and many handshakes. Local children greet us warmly. The spirit of the people here is high despite the earthquake's devastation.

Earthquakes hit this remote area of the mountains hard. Houses were destroyed and lives shattered. Water supplies to the village were cut, leaving the nearest drinkable water a small spring more than a two-hour walk away. The people make do with what little they have been able to salvage from the ruins of their homes. They live in tents

or home-made shelters of canvas and corrugated iron along ridgelines and on the mountainside.

So, life in this little village goes on. Some local children attend the roofless village school. Others study amid the ruins of a mosque. Local shops trade with anybody who needs their wares. When not impeded by snow or further landslides, public transport at last can get through on rough roads.

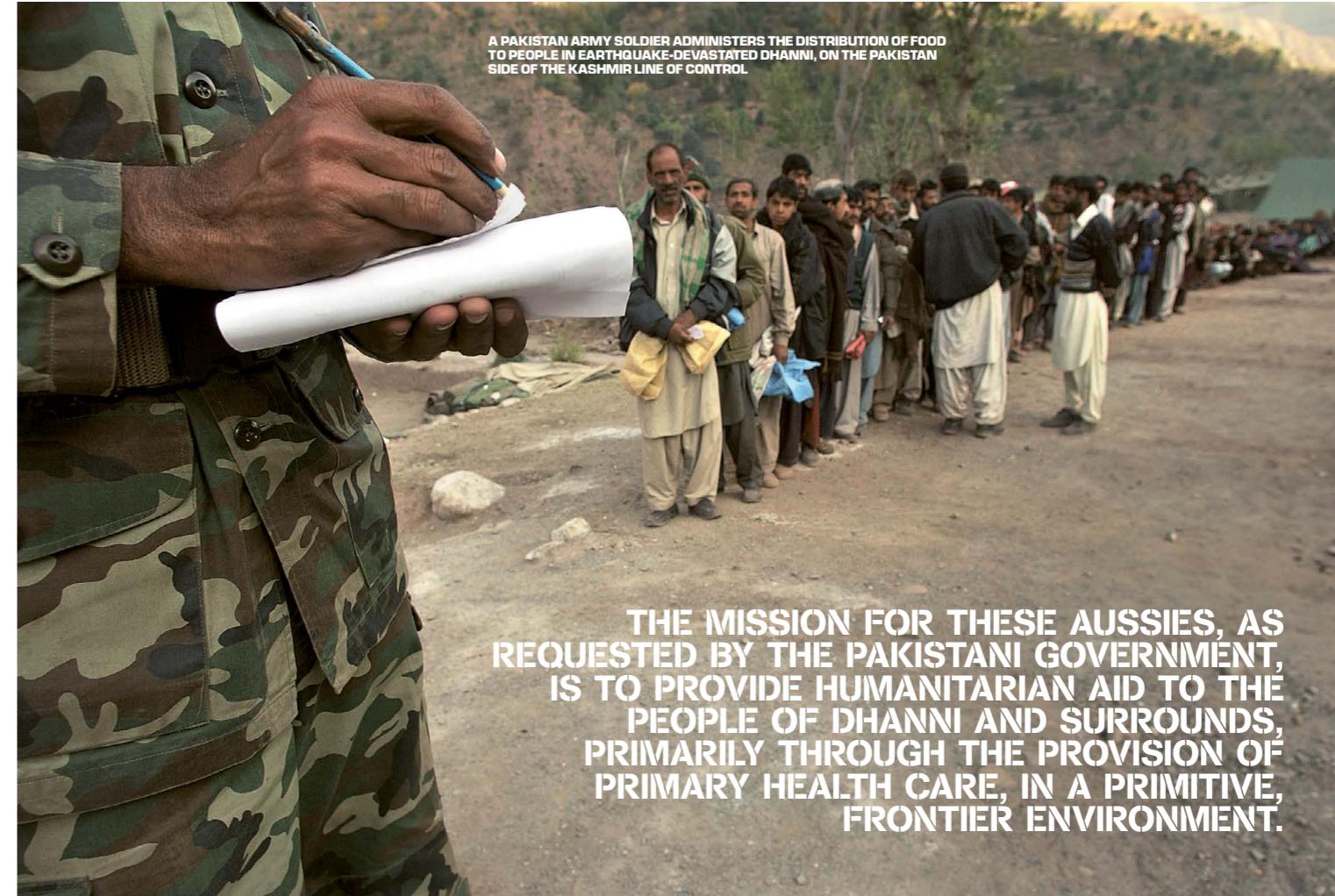
The vital service lacking in Qaziabad is health care. The nearest is the Australian medical facility at Camp Bradman in Dhanni, two-and-a-half hours walk down the mountain.

This is why Operation Longreach is so important – it brings medical attention to villages so remote, in such rugged terrain, that patients may be at unacceptable risk trying to reach nearby Dhanni on foot.

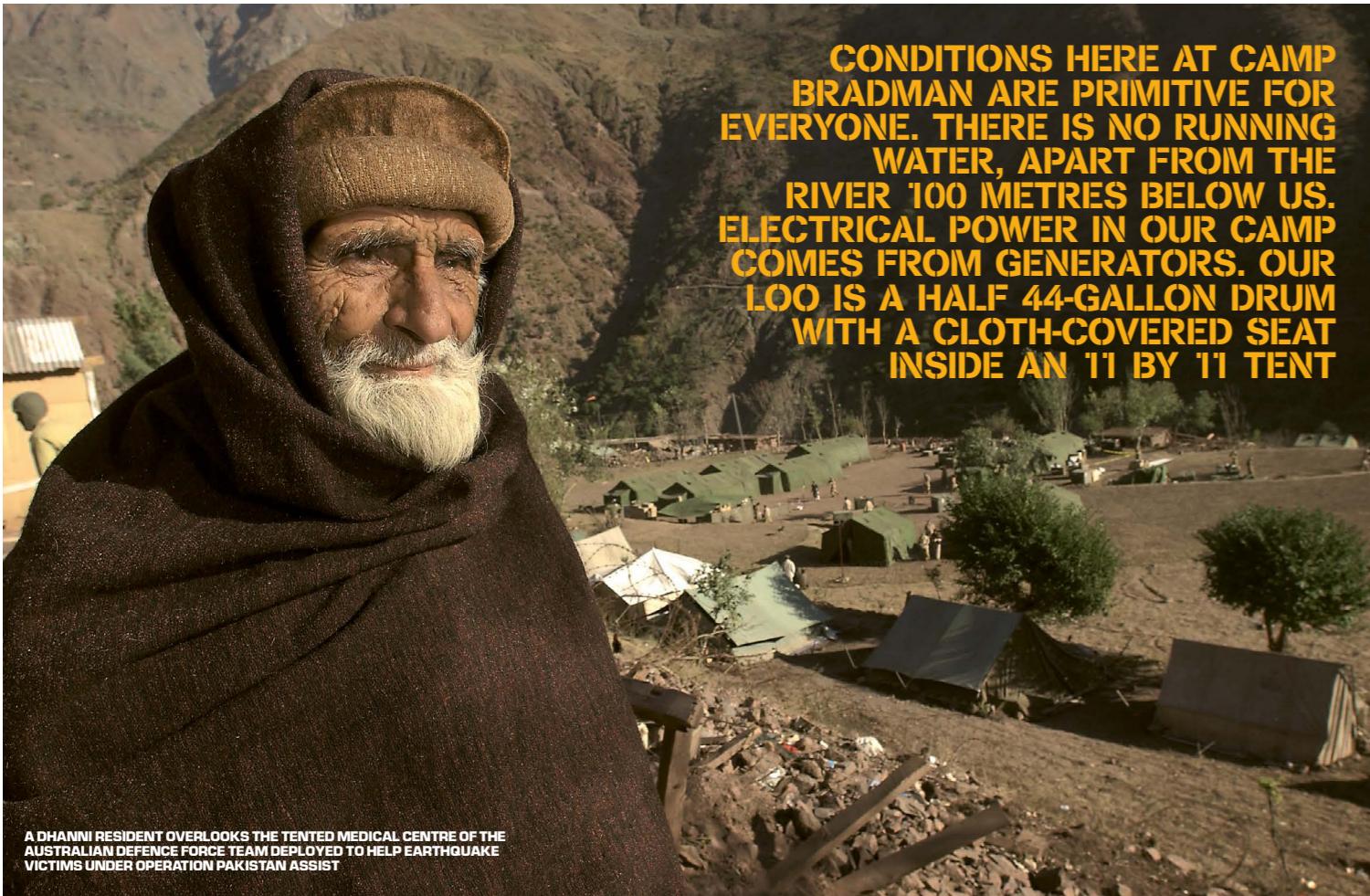
On this first Longreach trip to Qaziabad, four ADF medical personnel treat 42 patients in four hours. They deal with issues ranging from simple inoculations to pneumonia and infectious skin diseases.

By Australian standards, conditions for providing health care are primitive, but the ADF medical team understands the necessity of their work. They are inspired by and are highly motivated to help the local people, who have shown such strength in the face of adversity.

Senior medical officer with the Australian team Lieutenant Colonel Geoff Matthews is



THE MISSION FOR THESE AUSSIES, AS REQUESTED BY THE PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT, IS TO PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN AID TO THE PEOPLE OF DHANNI AND SURROUNDS, PRIMARILY THROUGH THE PROVISION OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE, IN A PRIMITIVE, FRONTIER ENVIRONMENT.



A DHANNI RESIDENT OVERLOOKS THE TENTED MEDICAL CENTRE OF THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE TEAM DEPLOYED TO HELP EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS UNDER OPERATION PAKISTAN ASSIST



LIEUTENANT WALLACE CARES FOR A YOUNG CHILD

an Army Reservist, normally employed as an obstetrician and gynecologist in Adelaide. He says that apart from the obvious and expected orthopedic injuries expected after a traumatic event such as the earthquake, the team is encountering many varied and unusual ailments that are simply outside the scope of Australian experience.

"We have seen very severe medical cases such as thyroid conditions and goitres that we wouldn't see a lot of in Australia," he says. "We also come across a range of skin infections and infestations – with parasites and worms – that we wouldn't see in Australia.

"This is all done in a primary-care setting but without any diagnostic facilities such as pathology labs or X-ray and so on – so we are really getting down to basics.

"We can, of course, transfer patients to local population centres or to other secondary or tertiary health facilities in the area, but these were so badly damaged in the earthquake that I think the system is pretty stretched trying to cope."

He tells of one case where a woman came through the camp in very poor condition. She had been bleeding and, it was estimated, had lost up to 1.5lt of blood. She had a barely discernable pulse and was about to go into cardiac arrest. She required IV fluids and had to be resuscitated. The whole team was involved in the case and the woman was eventually stabilised.

Falling back on his gynaecological expertise, Lieutenant Colonel Matthews diagnosed a retained placenta. Not being equipped for surgical intervention, arrangements were made to evacuate the woman from Camp Bradman. It was dark and the weather had closed in, keeping the Black Hawks on the ground – but this patient couldn't wait. With the aid of a nearby Pakistani military unit, a perilous road move was organised – a military truck on dangerous roads, at night, in a snow storm – to an American MASH unit where surgery was performed and another life saved.

Osteomyelitis – where fractured bones become infected "with puss oozing out, and



PRIVATE MARKUS COLLINS TREATS A LOCAL



CONDITIONS HERE AT CAMP BRADMAN ARE PRIMITIVE FOR EVERYONE. THERE IS NO RUNNING WATER, APART FROM THE RIVER 100 METRES BELOW US. ELECTRICAL POWER IN OUR CAMP COMES FROM GENERATORS. OUR LOO IS A HALF 44-GALLON DRUM WITH A CLOTH-COVERED SEAT INSIDE AN 11 BY 11 TENT



all that" – is another common ailment for the Aussies to deal with.

Lieutenant Colonel Matthews says these are very challenging cases, medically speaking, because back in Australia such patients would be quickly in theatre undergoing very extensive surgical procedures.

The lack of viable tertiary-levels of care is very challenging, but I think our people are adapting.

People are very resourceful and everybody here has very quickly faced up to the challenge and are securing appropriate levels of care for their patients as best they can.

From a personal point of view, one of the biggest challenges is to adapt your normal practice to the local reality and learn to live with the much-reduced capabilities."

He says one of the most valuable lessons medical practitioners can take out of the mission is a new perspective on the medical needs of the 'Third World' as opposed to the 'First World'.

Things like fresh water and sanitation – we are all aware of them in an academic sense, of course, but it's not until you experience treating people who don't have them that you appreciate the importance of these fundamentals and the consequences for the population when infrastructure fails."

Heck, it's cold. The wind howled all night and I didn't get much sleep. At least I

was nice and warm in my sleeping bag. I feel sorry for the locals, who must have been freezing.

Ah well, can't lay here dreaming all day. It's 0630. Time to brave the cold. It must be about minus 6 this morning.

So, it's get dressed as quick as you can and over to the mess tent to join the others for a hot cup of tea and a hunt through the ration-pack box to see what's for breakfast – a tin of diced peaches.

Another cup of tea and then it's a shave and a wash. There's nothing like shaving in cold water at sub-zero temperatures.

Now, over to the Ops tent for the morning brief. And so another day starts at Camp Bradman.

The snow-capped mountain scenery is spectacular, but a closer look shows piles of rubble where villages used to be. Few solid structures remain now. Most people are surviving in tents, perched on the side of the mountains, with no power. They have to trudge miles for food and water.

Conditions here at Camp Bradman are primitive for everyone. There is no running water, apart from the river 100 metres below us. Electrical power in our camp comes from generators. Our loo is a half 44-gallon drum with a cloth-covered seat inside an 11 by 11 tent. Nice view of the mountains though.

As with all the daily chores, everyone here gets an opportunity to be Loo Monitor. That is, we get to drag used drums out of the tent and do a daily burn-off. Not the most

enviable task, but one of the many that must be done.

The medical staff has a queue of about 120 locals this morning, waiting to be seen and treated for a myriad of medical problems from cuts and abrasions through to broken bones, pneumonia and various skin disorders.

Throughout all of this, the Australians get on with their jobs. They don't complain about the cold, or the conditions or even the lack of fresh food. They just get on with it because these people need our support. We are all inspired by the resilience of the local people, their physical and mental toughness, and their efforts to rebuild their lives.

We meet people like the lady who showed up, having walked for two days through the mountains, complaining of headaches and problems eating. Through interpreters, medical staff learnt that when the earthquake hit, her house fell on her. A month later, here she is at Camp Bradman being diagnosed with a broken jaw and depressed skull fracture.

Colonel Sims says working with the Pakistan Army has been a very lucky break, his camp sited side-by-side with a mountain pioneer regiment that has been in this location for about 70 years – though they too took enormous damage when the earthquake hit.

"They assist us on an opportunity basis – you'll find them out there helping to unload helicopters or find our guys out

WE ALSO COME ACROSS A RANGE OF SKIN INFECTIONS AND INFESTATIONS – WITH PARASITES AND WORMS – THAT WE WOULDN'T SEE IN AUSTRALIA.



there helping unload their helicopters, among other tasks.

"We have a tremendous working relationship. They really appreciate whatever help we can give them and we certainly appreciate the skills and local knowledge they can offer us."

With mountain roads treacherous at the best of times, winter rains and snow have now made them all-but impassable, bringing the air assets to the fore as the team's lifeline to the outside world. But here too, weather plays its part, grounding flights on a regular basis.

Again, it's the forethought and prudent planning Colonel Sims spoke about that see the team through the dark days.

We have all seen it on the news and read about it in the papers – Operation Pakistan Assist, our humanitarian aid to the people of the earthquake devastated area in the Himalayan Mountains on the Pakistan side of the Kashmir Line of Control.

News coverage understandably marvels at the work of the Australian Defence Force medical staff at Camp Bradman, at how many people they have seen and how many vaccinations they have given.

But, the most visible roles in such a humanitarian mission tend to overshadow the vital contribution of the backstage crew who enable achievement of mission goals.

Where do the medical team get their supplies? Who keeps the area climate controlled and illuminated for them? Who keeps them in contact with everybody back home? These are among the responsibilities of the men and women of the support element.

Just like any other operation, the support elements are the backstage crew who keep the show going.

Here at Camp Bradman, near the village of Dhanni, we have around 30 support staff providing a range of support functions. They include electricians, cooks, logisticians, communicators, military police and administrators. All do vital work in sustaining the operation.

In Qasim Aviation Base, Rawalpindi [roughly 1000km north, north east from Karachi and the coast], where the Black Hawk helicopter element is based, we have another 20 personnel working in support of the operation while assisting Task Force Eagle and the contingent deployed from 5 Aviation Regiment.

They are all dedicated and efficient at what they do. They work extremely hard, at all hours of the day and night, maintaining equipment, organising re-supply, ensuring security and making sure that everything runs smoothly. These are difficult tasks at the best of times.

Like the medical people, they all take it in their stride and do the best job they can because they have pride in the knowledge



THESE PEOPLE HAVE A LONG ROAD AHEAD OF THEM. BUT THEY ARE VERY ROBUST PEOPLE, VERY DETERMINED PEOPLE, AND I HAVE NO DOUBT THEY WILL GET THROUGH THIS.

that they are helping to make this operation a success.

Colonel Sims is a commander with great enthusiasm and obviously holds his charges in high esteem.

"Our guys are doing tremendous work over here. They came here with great energy and enthusiasm, determined to do a good job. And, I can tell you, the job they are doing is first class – and they know it too. Morale is super because of it. I've never seen it higher among any other group I've worked with.

"You can really see our soldiers, airmen and airwomen growing as people through this experience. Their parents and families will see a much more mature and a much more grown up group of people when they go home."

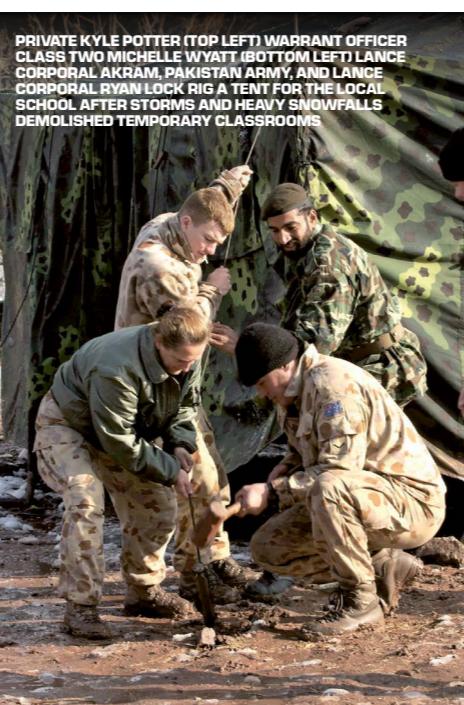
But he is pragmatic when reflecting on the prognosis for the people his mission was deployed to support.

"When we got here it was a highly primitive environment because of the earthquake. Every bit of medical infrastructure was destroyed – practitioners killed and buildings knocked down.

"Our main challenge was to develop the medical situation to where it is today and to make sure that we can maintain a balance between the capability we deliver and that which we can leave behind when we go.

"The last thing we want to do is leave these people in a worse situation than when we found them or leave them with a capability they have no hope of maintaining.

"These people have a long road ahead of them. But they are very robust people, very determined people, and I have no doubt they will get through this."

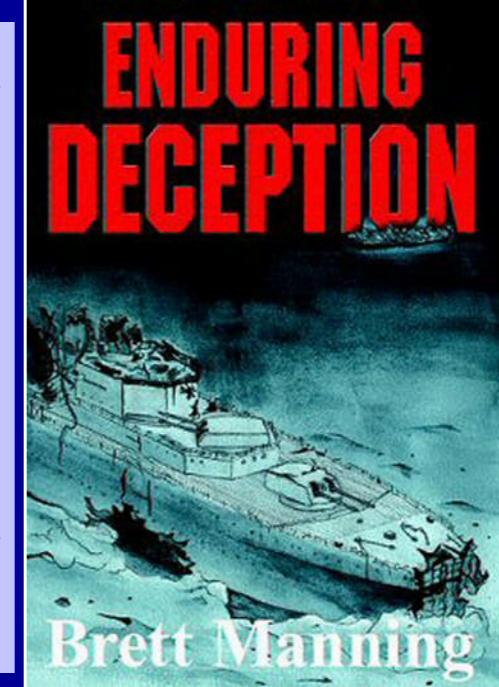


PRIVATE KYLE POTTER (TOP LEFT) WARRANT OFFICER CLASS TWO MICHELLE WYATT (BOTTOM LEFT) LANCE CORPORAL AKRAM, PAKISTAN ARMY, AND LANCE CORPORAL RYAN LOCK RIG A TENT FOR THE LOCAL SCHOOL AFTER STORMS AND HEAVY SNOWFALLS DEMOLISHED TEMPORARY CLASSROOMS

645 AUSTRALIAN SERVICEMEN LOST WITHOUT TRACE!

Incredible but TRUE. On the 19th of November 1941, HMAS Sydney vanished with all hands following an encounter with the German merchant raider, the Kormoran, off the Western Australian coast. 318 German sailors survived the battle and were taken prisoner but not a single Australian body was ever recovered. November will mark the 64th anniversary of this tragic loss that affected so many Australian families and still we are no closer to unravelling Australia's greatest unsolved maritime mystery.

In the first fictionalised account of the loss of HMAS Sydney, Author Brett Manning weaves the folklore that surrounds the Sydney's loss into a compelling tale of action, survival, conspiracy and political intrigue. Manning's fiction novel paints HMAS Sydney as the unwitting victim of international deception on a grand scale.



"Manning revisits a couple of popular 'conspiracy theories' and creates a few of his own to paint a scenario as disturbing as it is enthralling."

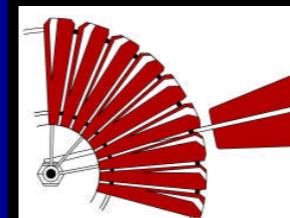
Gary Warner

Geraldton Guardian Newspaper - 16 March 2005

"Manning's descriptive narrative puts the reader's mind on the bridge of several ships, so convincingly that you can all-but feel the salt air and smell the marine diesel..."

Brian Hartigan

Contact: Air, Land & Sea - 3 June 2005



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FUTURE COMBAT SYSTEM



WHAT'S IN IT
FOR AUSTRALIA ?

BY IAN BOSTOCK

When it comes to technological innovation, there is no question that the US military leaves every other defence force for dead. It can deploy faster, reach out further, hit harder and keep fighting longer in the sea, air and land battlespaces than all others.

It is a force nurtured and supplied by a massive and highly skilled local defence industry that covers virtually the entire spectrum of military equipment and systems. Everything from small-arms, artillery, tanks and night-vision gear to fighters, aircraft carriers, radar and combat-data systems can be supplied by US firms, big and small.

As the sharp-end of diplomacy for a globally-focused Washington, it is little wonder then that the US Army, Marines, Navy and Air Force collectively remain the world's most powerful and advanced defence force.

Should then other nations such as Australia, with a much smaller defence force, a local industry a fraction of the size and capability of the US and less taxpayer dollars per capita to fund it all, blindly adopt the same sort of cutting-edge technologies and systems as the US?

The US Army's Future Combat Systems (FCS) program is a classic case in point. Here you have a US\$117 billion (AUS\$157 billion) initiative to maintain the US Army's battlefield dominance well into the next century.

The basic premise of the FCS program is to equip units with a mix of manned and unmanned ground vehicles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) that form a network of overarching systems to enable the 'Future Force to see first, understand first, act first and finish decisively'. It will be a joint and networked (linked by advanced communications) system of systems made up of a multitude of different but intertwined sensors, platforms and command nodes. If it sounds complex, it most assuredly is.

Under this bold plan, the first FCS unit will be fielded in 2008, with a further 32 brigades so equipped by 2014. The FCS will become the core building block of the US Army's Future Force. It is intended that, over time, the relevant elements of the FCS will replace the heavy fighting vehicles (M1 Abrams and M2/M3 Bradley) currently doing the job in Iraq and elsewhere, with a new family of manned and unmanned ground-combat vehicles.

The underlying premise here is to complement, then eventually replace the Abrams and Bradley fleets with smaller and lighter systems able to be loaded into C-130 Hercules, flown to a conflict anywhere in the world and rolled off the ramp ready to fight – all inside 96 hours.

As such, under program design specifications, no individual ground-combat element is to weigh more than 20 tonnes, to ensure C-130 transportability. Predictably, the task of squeezing 60 and 30 tonnes of kit into a 20 tonne box is proving challenging.

The main FCS ground combat vehicle variants, which share a common drivetrain and tracked running gear, are as follows:

- > Mounted Combat System (MCS):
 - Crew of two plus room for an additional two troops;
 - 120mm main gun, .50 cal M2HB and Mk 19 40mm automatic grenade launcher (AGL);
 - 90km/h top speed;
 - 750km road range.
- > Infantry Combat Vehicle (ICV):
 - Carries nine troops;
 - Mk 44 30/40mm automatic cannon;
 - same mobility as MCS.
- > Reconnaissance and Surveillance Vehicle (RSV):
 - Two-man crew plus four recon scouts;
 - .50 cal M2HB or 40mm Mk 19 AGL armament.



DESIGNED TO EVENTUALLY REPLACE THE US ARMY'S M1 ABRAMS TANK FLEET, THE FCS MOUNTED COMBAT VEHICLE WON'T BE ON AUSTRALIA'S SHOPPING LIST ANYTIME SOON. IMAGE US ARMY

THE NON LINE-OF-SIGHT LAUNCH SYSTEM IS AN EXAMPLE WHERE NICHE TECHNOLOGIES FROM THE FCS PROGRAM COULD BE EXPLOITED BY THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY. IMAGE LOCKHEED MARTIN



FCS 120MM MORTAR CARRIER. IF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY WERE TO SEEK A TURRETED 120MM MORTAR CAPABILITY, IT IS LIKELY TO INSTALL IT ON AN ASLAV, BUSHMASTER OR M113AS4 HULL. IMAGE US ARMY



> Non Line-of-Sight Cannon (NLOS-C):

- Tracked self-propelled howitzer with 155mm gun.
- > Non Line-of-Sight Mortar (NLOS-M):

- Turreted 120mm mortar.

No doubt each of these FCS variants will prove very capable in their own right, but how relevant are they to the Australian Army? Given that the Army has only just taken delivery of its full complement of ASLAVs, will (at time of writing) have taken delivery of about 150 out of 300 brand spanking new Bushmasters and is due to field its first squadron of as-new M1A1 Abrams in 2007, the answer is probably, not very. At least not in the next decade or so.

It is hard to see Army acquiring elements of FCS such as those listed anytime soon. The ASLAVs will still be in service in 2020, the Bushmasters to at least 2025 and the M1A1 Abrams to about the same time. Even the soon-to-be upgraded M113 fleet will still be around in 2020 (final delivery of 350 vehicles isn't anticipated until 2010).

Judging by the Army's vision of itself out to 2015-2020 it is clear that these vehicles – coupled with new artillery, UAVs, general service vehicles and so on – will form the nucleus of the combined-arms team concept and deployable battlegroups for at least another 15 years. And they are, by and large, up to the task.

platforms, the NLOS-LS would enable engagement of targets beyond tube-artillery range with a system requiring few crew (the system remains unattended and is fired remotely) and with a small logistics footprint. Waiting until the system (and any others of interest) is first fielded and proven in US service would significantly lower technical risk for Australia, not to mention the purchase price.

The Australian Army, it would appear, already has an eye on the FCS program and a similar but less ambitious program in the UK known as the Future Rapid Effects System (FRES), and has a project (Land 400) set up to provide a pathway to any future acquisitions leveraging off these.

While the stated Land 400 objective is to incrementally replace the Army's current combat and combat support vehicles beginning in 2015-2017, it is likely that that date will be pushed out to the right by at least another five years. Particularly in view of the coming 'bow wave' of funding commitments required for other major ADF kit such as the Joint Strike Fighter, new amphibious ships and Air Warfare Destroyers.

Currently funded to the tune of A\$1-1.5 billion, Land 400 may well migrate into a series of capability upgrades to extend the useful lives of the existing armoured vehicle fleets before it gets a chance to introduce any FCS or FRES-inspired systems.



THE 155MM NON LINE-OF-SIGHT CANNON IS A COMPACT, TRACKED, SELF-PROPELLED HOWITZER. AN NLOS-C DEMONSTRATOR HAS FIRED MORE THAN 1000 ROUNDS IN TESTING. AUSTRALIA WILL INTRODUCE A NEW 155MM ARTILLERY SYSTEM SEVERAL YEARS BEFORE THE NLOS-C ENTERS US SERVICE IN QUANTITY. IMAGE US ARMY

In an army that is so limited in manpower and firepower

THE MISNOMER OF C-130 TRANSPORTABILITY

The fundamental flaw in designing any ground combat vehicle for rapid deployment by medium-size transport aircraft is that external dimensions and weight must be dictated, not by what is needed to achieve the optimal mix of firepower, mobility and protection, but rather, whether it will fit into the C-130 cargo hold.

For the US Army, this works because it does not rely on just one type of armoured fighting vehicle to form the heavy end of its combined-arms teams. For the next 15 years at least and, irrespective of what FCS vehicles are introduced in the meantime, the US Army will still have use of several thousand Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles with which to back up any smaller, late-generation (and less well armoured) FCS ground combat vehicles should the proverbial hit the fan.

The US also operates literally hundreds of C-130s with which to fly in several dozen FCS combat vehicles into an airhead in just a few hours. No other force comes close to matching that capability. The UK and Russia can do a bit of it but are simply not in the same league as the Americans. Indeed, despite a 60-strong C-130 fleet, the UK recently dropped the requirement for its own FRES combat vehicles to fit inside a C-130.

So, for nations with far fewer air transport assets on hand, the key consideration in the air transportability equation is, just how many of those aircraft would actually be available during a conflict to deploy a handful of FCS-like vehicles to a war zone? And is that number sufficient to enable a tactically meaningful and survivable force to be landed in the space of a few hours?

For middle powers such as Australia, the numbers don't work. The RAAF simply does not have enough C-130s to deploy enough ground combat vehicles to make acquisition of a family of C-130-compatible FCS vehicles a worthwhile proposition.

TRADE-FAIR SPLASH IN SYDNEY

WORDS BRIAN HARTIGAN PICS BRIAN HARTIGAN AND ADF

Pacific 2006 – a major trade-only naval and maritime exposition and congress, was held last month, drawing the cream of national and international sea-focused businesses big and small to Sydney's Darling Harbour.



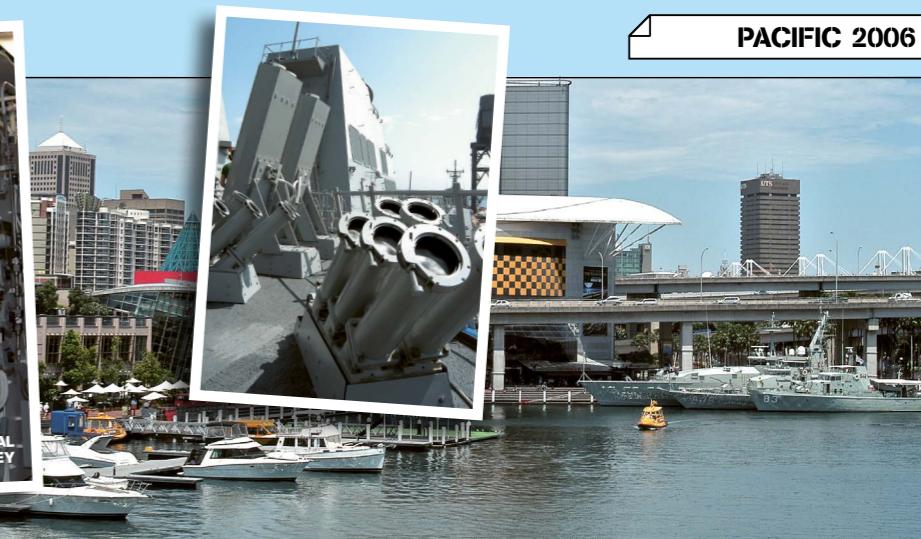
Attended by military, industry, scientific, academic and research delegations from almost 30 countries, the biennial event is as significant to the naval and maritime industries as Avalon is to aviation.

Billed as a naval and general maritime exposition, Pacific 2006 was not-surprisingly dominated by the military side of nautical pursuits. Given Australia's pending announcements on the preferred designs for two major Navy capabilities – Landing Helicopter Dock (LHD) amphibious ships and Air Warfare Destroyers (AWD) – attention on the Royal Australian Navy was high.

Boosting visibility for our Navy, a selection of Australia's smaller naval assets, including one of our newest patrol boats, HMAS Armidale, were berthed in Cockle Bay in the heart of the tourist precinct for the duration of the conference. Over at Garden Island, a sizable armada also drew spectator and media interest, not least because of the presence of the USS Pinckney, an Arleigh Burke class guided missile destroyer.



MECHANICAL CHIEF BRIAN GIBSON OPERATES ONE OF SEVERAL PROPULSION CONTROL STATIONS ABOARD USS PINCKNEY



Pinckney's presence gave media, selected conference delegates, VIPs and decision makers a timely opportunity to view, first hand, one of the possible platforms that will carry Australia's own Aegis Combat System – the acquisition of which has already been settled upon.

The other major naval acquisition for Australia, which has yet to be tendered – the LHD Amphibious Ships – also generated considerable interest and talk. Not having samples in the region to look at first hand, though, visitors to the exposition were content to pour over large-scale models of the ships that will have such a major impact on Australia's strategic standing in the southern oceans.

With simultaneous landing capacity for at least six helicopters (including Chinook-sized airframes and Tiger armed reconnaissance helicopters), these behemoths (on an Australian scale) will give us the capacity to project a combined-arms force of up to 1000 personnel and up to 150 vehicles, including the Army's new M1A1 Abrams tanks.

The ships, which will replace the in-service Manoora and Kanimbla, will also take on the command and control capacities of those two ships, as well as have comprehensive medical, dental and other support capabilities.

Keynote speaker at the conference, former Chief of Defence Force Admiral Chris Barrie (retired), drew further media attention to the event by suggesting, among other things, that the ADF and the Australian people may need to re-embrace conscription as the only way to ensure sufficient strength in defence of Australia.

"We face serious obstacles in finding the high-quality people we are going to need to send down to the sea in ships and submarines and naval aircraft, way out to 2050," he said – after already pointing out that 2050 was only slightly more distant than the expanse of his own career as a Navy officer.

"I consider that we ought to begin to think how and when we should shift to a

LANDING HELICOPTER DOCK AMBIBHS ARE COMING

Navantia of Spain and French company Armaris have put forward the two short-listed designs for Australia's Landing Helicopter Dock amphibious ships scheduled to enter service around 2012.

Australia will either acquire or build (yet to be decided) two ships to be named HMAS Canberra and HMAS Adelaide. They will replace HMA Ships Kanimbla, Manoora and Tobruk.

Navantia's offering in the \$2 billion amphibious ships project weighs in at approximately 27,000 tonnes while the smaller French ship, displacing roughly 22,000 tonnes, will need modification from current design to incorporate greater troop-carrying capacity to service the desired needs of the ADF.

Design requirements for the project call for each ship to transport up to 1000 personnel, have six helicopter

landing spots capable of simultaneous operations, with hangar space for a larger fleet including troop-lift and armed reconnaissance helicopters. They should also be able to transport up to 150 vehicles including Abrams tanks and other armoured vehicles. Both vessels also incorporate internal docking facilities to allow for transfer of vehicles and stores from ship to shore via landing craft.

Each ship will also be equipped with medical facilities, including two operating theatres and approximately 60 hospital beds.

Introduction of either design will mark a quantum leap in capability and capacity for the ADF. They will be the largest ships ever operated by the Royal Australian Navy, each one weighing more than the combined displacement of all three ships they will replace.



A ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY SAILOR LOOKS OVER ONE POSSIBLE FUTURE COMBAT SHIP FOR THE RAN – LANDING HELICOPTER DOCK – AT PACIFIC 2006

universal national service structure to obtain young people for our armed forces and other critical institutions."

He said that there would be significant implications for training systems, platforms and installed systems if this measure had to be adopted but, he emphasised, we must not let this significant issue creep up on us.

New Defence Minister Brendan Nelson was quick to reject conscription as a realistic option – and he was not alone.

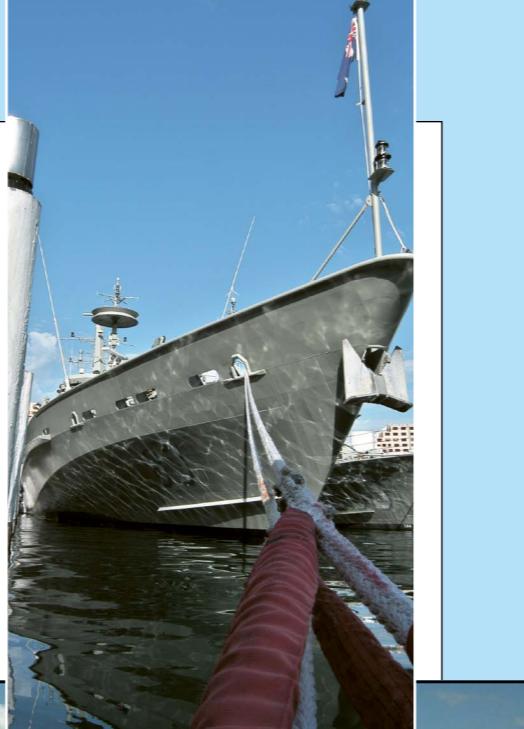
Admiral Barrie also outlined his belief that freedom of the seas was a dying concept.

"I believe there is even greater reason to regulate more closely the activities of

seafarers as we try to deal with piracy, terrorism, direct attack by suicide craft, armed attack parties and mines to say nothing of the prospect of nuclear or WMD attack.

"I expect that by the year 2050 we are likely to have various international procedures and processes for monitoring the use of the seas by any party – there will be no such concept as the free use of the high seas."

Such predictions of increased monitoring and control will, of course, require new concepts, new industries and new technology – no doubt warming the cockles of many hearts in the big business of naval and maritime pursuits.



USS PINCKNEY SLIPS INTO SYDNEY FOR PACIFIC 2006. PIC ABLE SEAMAN PAUL BERRY, RAN

DDG 91 PINCKNEY PULLS IN

USS Pinckney is one of the newest and most potent Aegis-equipped guided missile destroyers in the world.

At the heart of the ship is the Aegis Combat System that is capable of detecting, tracking and engaging multiple targets at once. It can be programmed to allow any level of human control but can also function autonomously in offensive or defensive operations.

She is capable of launching anti-submarine rockets, torpedoes, surface-to-air and land-attack missiles and carries a 5-inch gun as well as an array of other offensive and defensive weapons and systems – including the Australian-invented Nulka hovering-rocket decoy system.

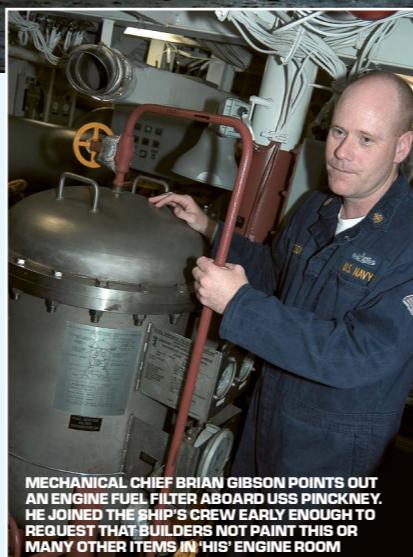
Australia has already signed up to acquire the Aegis system for its future Air Warfare Destroyers and, while the ship design into which it will be fitted has not yet been decided, Pinckney is typical of the type.

The heart of the Aegis system is

the AN/SPY-1(D) phased-array radar coupled with massive computing power. It can detect up to 100 incoming missiles or aircraft, sort them into priority threat order, assign and fire a missile, then guide the missile to target. The radar acts as both a detecting/tracking device and a communication carrier beam, maintaining coms with the outbound missile almost until impact when the missile begins autonomous final tracking to its own target.

Unlike traditional mechanically rotating radars, the AN/SPY radar consists of flat-panel structures mounted at angles on the sides of the ship's superstructure. The phased-array radar emits computer-controlled directed energy that can give 360-degree coverage around the ship and through the vertical, thus creating a dome of detection/tracking that engulfs the ship.

USS Pinckney derives its name from Cook Third Class William Pinckney, winner of a Navy Cross for the courageous rescue of a colleague.



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ARMYGEDDON

The Street Machine Summernats car festival in Canberra was witness to the weirdest sight in its 19th year – a humble Army Land Rover 6x6 blowing the competition away. But, this was no ordinary Land Rover. This beast – christened Armygeddon – sports a very non-Army paint job, plus the mother of all engines – a 7 litre, blown, Chev. Why? To attract rev-heads into the Army, of course.



WORDS AND PICS

BRIAN HARTIGAN

ARMY LAUNCHES FULLY BLOWN RECRUITING DRIVE

The unusual and very effective recruiting drawcard is fully supported by Chief of Army Lieutenant General Peter Leahy who was on hand to launch the vehicle at Summernats, the first of many planned high-octane public appearances.

Lieutenant General Leahy said he hoped Armygeddon would highlight that Defence, and particularly the Army, could offer potential new recruits a diverse and dynamic range of trades and opportunities.

"The Army is a young vibrant organisation and this 'street machine' is typical of the type of project young soldiers would love to be part of," he said.

"This project highlights the wide range of opportunities available outside stereotypical positions. The Army is not just about the infantry or armoured vehicles or state-of-the-art equipment."

"To be successful, the Army needs a wide variety of professionals including medics, engineers, mechanics, plumbers, carpenters and electricians."

General Leahy said the trainees involved in the Armygeddon project had given up a lot of personal time to work on the vehicle, which was a typical display of the Army's values of initiative and teamwork.

"Construction and operation of this vehicle has provided trainees with an opportunity to gain experience in a highly technical project that complements their formal Army training. They can learn a



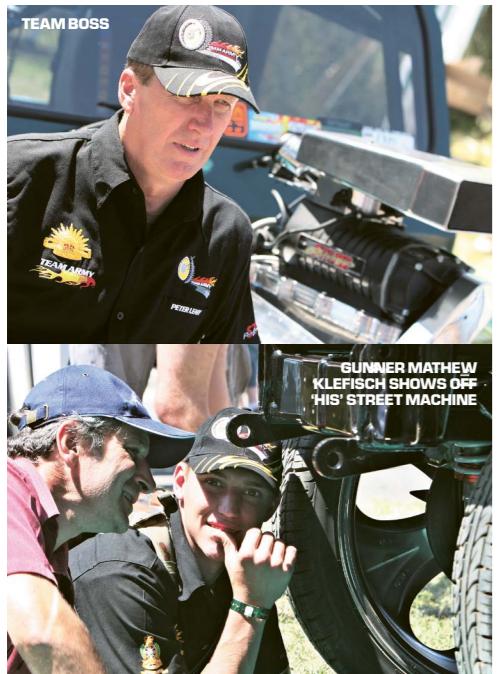
FORMER ARMY APPRENTICE AND SUMMERNATS ORGANISER CHIC HENRY, CHIEF OF ARMY LIEUTENANT GENERAL PETER LEAHY AND PERFORMANCE EXPERT PETER STARR UNLEASHED ARMYGEDDON AT SUMMERNATS

lot from working on a high performance vehicle and from working with leaders in the private sector such as the experts at Starr Performance."

Victoria-based Starr Performance Pty Ltd won the contract to design and modify the standard Army 6x6 Land Rover. Army trade trainees were attached to the company on a rotational basis to give them experience in a high-end engineering workshop and



CRAFTSMAN PATRIK IWANOWSKI MAKES ADJUSTMENTS



to give them a degree of 'ownership' of the street machine.

"We had fun hosting these guys and in return, they got a real opportunity for accelerated learning in their core skill sets," proprietor Peter Starr said.

So what about the truck itself? Well, for all you rev heads out there, the specs are downright awesome. In fact, the engine puts out so much power that Starr Performance was literally unable to fully test it.

"We are still attempting to hold it down on the dyno as the vehicle at full throttle continues to break loose and wheel spin. Initial runs indicate [power] is in excess of 500Kw at the wheels. We lose traction as boost kicks in around 470Kw," according to the company's web site.

"As far as burnouts are concerned – in two-wheel-drive it loses traction without effort, four-wheel (four rears) loses traction with little effort, five-wheel (one brake

operational) difficult to hold. In six-wheel-drive the vehicle launches itself and gives you that brief feeling of being strapped into a fighter jet. The unique design, with the ability to isolate the axles and brakes, gives various burnout options from one to five wheels."

At \$350,000, the Armygeddon project is rated as a "very, very cost effective" recruiting tool by the Chief of Army.

Lieutenant General Leahy said the vehicle generated a great response from the public when the concept demonstrator was showcased at last year's Summernats and an even better response this year.

He thanked Summernats Promoter Chic Henry – himself a former Army apprentice – for his ongoing support of the project.

Armygeddon and the Army street machine team will attend the Clipsal 500 in Adelaide, the Formula 1 Grand Prix in Melbourne, the Bathurst 1000 and a number of other events during 2006.

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Show us your 'Private Parts'

No, I'm not getting crude – I invite all rev-head readers to submit photos and specs of their own street machines, drag cars or racers for possible inclusion in a future issue of CONTACT. Send your submissions to the Editor – contact details on page 7

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THE PALE FEW

WORDS WAYNE COOPER PICS SUPPLIED BY WAYNE COOPER, & ADF

THE PALE FEW

By Wayne Cooper

Through dark streets we came to know;
We walked with Death as friend and foe.
Amongst the slight and ravaged too;
With Anzac debt – the Pale Few.

One thousand green into the mire;
Generations spared test of fire.
To walking dead with hope renew;
The futile quest – the Pale Few.

Life we took and life we gave;
The paradox judgment of the grave.
That terrible charge we would not undo;
A legacy held – the Pale Few.

What justice seeks and honour demand;
Herald no reprieve to barren land.
In dust they dig a grim review;
Prayers not rejoined – the Pale Few.

Hope endowed at once betrayed;
If gift of life is not relayed;
Rend sorrows loss and faith we hew;
Pride's failure cast – the Pale Few

Our witness reward for sins of man;
Of what befalls a reckless land.
But comforts erase what we once knew;
Our last great sin – the Pale Few.

From dark dream we yet awake;
For those we saved we now forsake.
The slight and ravaged lost anew;
Gift brief respite – the Pale Few.

In 1993, a social experiment of unprecedented scale was taking place in Somalia. My comrades and I found ourselves willing participants in what we hoped would not be the last great folly of the 20th Century. The task of successfully rebuilding a nation, of returning its people from the brink of extinction now seems as audacious as it was unlikely. But to the thousand Aussies who had joined the US-led Operation Restore Hope, the reality of its success was irrelevant – it was our great test, the chance to prove our worth as soldiers, to ourselves and the world.

Green, but well trained, we had embarked on the adventure of a lifetime, as had many of our fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers, with the ignorant optimism of the untested. However, unlike the generations before, we were children of the information age and were probably more exposed to the images of war and famine than any generation that had preceded us. In spite of our level of exposure to the horrors of the world – or perhaps because of it – we were anxious to see these things first hand, to get our hands bloodied and dirty.

As individuals I'm sure many of us had our share of personal self-doubt, but as a group we had an unshakeable sense of duty to each other and the singleness of purpose this solidarity brings. Whether you knew the guys you were working with or not, they were your responsibility and you were theirs. The confidence of those you worked with was vital, and sought by everyone.

Perhaps in sustained, high-level combat it's different, but in our little conflict, amongst my mates, to be seen to be cool under pressure was everything. My own doubts about my performance under pressure were eased by confidence in my peers and an overwhelming desire to show no fear or fault in their presence.

To be known as a good operator was high praise. I was very keen to prove myself and, in hindsight, probably too keen. As a result, the first time I found myself close to where the bullets were landing, I inadvertently ended up in a game of chicken in which only two individuals with Y chromosomes would be silly enough to engage.

My APC section had been working with an infantry platoon in Baidoa for a couple of days. Based in an NGO compound in the middle of the city, we were conducting patrols through the streets either independently or in support of the grunts. It was in the first months of Operation Solace when Baidoa was still a wild and unpredictable place.

This particular night the platoon had been conducting dismounted patrols through the town. Earlier in the evening, one of the sections had been engaged by a gunman from a building near the main street. Needless to say, the peads were not impressed and were eagerly seeking the shooter. But in the hours immediately following the contact, the platoon had yet to track down their man.

Playing our part in the search, my section commander Moose Ferriday and 2IC Micky 'P' Holmes were out on the streets in their APCs providing close support to the infantry section on patrol. Rex and I were holed up in a nearby alley, each with a section mounted in our vehicles and ready to react to any further contact. As the night wore on, while one crew stayed on picket the other stood down, all on board attempting to get some kip in the cramped confines of their crew positions.

Between stifled giggles, I tried to tell my tutor that, not only was I the father of two young children but, being in a long-term relationship, I was highly unlikely to ever find myself in such a critical situation.

He laughed as he licked the side of his rollie before flicking it up to his mouth. Snatching my smoke to light his own he told me to shut up and listen.

"This is important mate. You don't want to be hot to trot only to find out your Betty is really a Barry now do you?"

As my companion continued his explanation of the finer points of back-alley gender identification, the section on patrol reported via the Company radio net their intention to RV with Moose and P and return to the patrol base. It seemed the search for the elusive gunman was drawing to an unsuccessful conclusion.

I shifted my weight in the turret hatch and, for the umpteenth time, tried to find

fire was quickly followed by the single shots of Aussie rifles returning the favour.

With the sounds of a contact so close, my heart began to pound in my chest. I looked over at the infantry section commander to gauge his reaction. Should we start up, get ready to roll?

".... or you'll see they have the makeup piled on an inch thick to hide the stubble."

Apparently not.

Dozing infantry sprang to life around us – the nearby gunfire prompting them to slip back inside the M113 and prepare to respond. My driver, Pete, who a moment before had been asleep on the engine grill cover, slid effortlessly into the drivers hole and reappeared in a second with his crewman helmet on, ready to start up and get to it.

The unfazed corporal beside me stayed right where he was, nonchalantly finishing the lesson.

under way to their location. The infantry corporal with me glanced in through the cargo hatch of my vehicle and then over to 23B, which was facing the other direction, 20 or so metres further up the small alley. Happy that his boys were ready to go if required, he turned back to me.

"There was this guy I used to know, when we were in Malaysia. He...."

Another burst of gunfire rang out, but this time was immediately followed by the snap, crack, thump of two ricochetting rounds hitting the wall behind us, a bare metre above our heads.

Comprehension of the near miss took a moment to register.

We both looked at each other, then slowly turned our heads. Through the darkness we could observe two fresh bullet holes, just a few feet apart, in the white wall above us. Even after bouncing off several hard surfaces, the projectiles still

secure you feel. The second thought was to heed what I had been taught and to rapidly descend into my turret while closing the hatch over me until I resembled an armoured oyster.

But I did neither.

Apparently my desire not to have my scalp parted by a vagrant round was overridden by the need to save face in front of my steely companion who had not moved an inch. We both looked at each other again, a disconcerting grin creeping over the corporal's face. Despite the voice in my head screaming at me to get in my turret and stop being bloody stupid, I just smiled manically right back at him.

It took me a few seconds to realise that the gunfire from down the road had stopped. For several weird moments the infantryman and I stared stupidly at each other, barely containing childish outbursts of laughter.

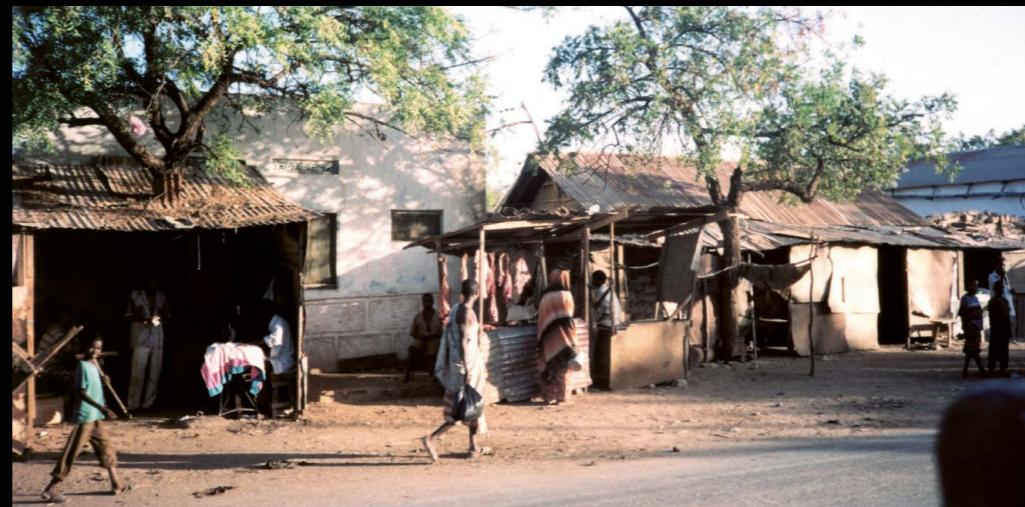
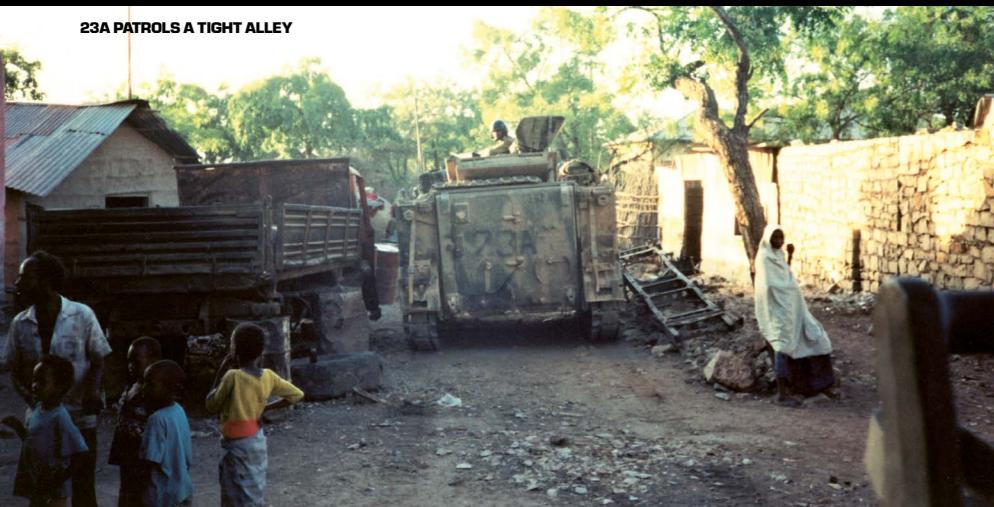
with 23 and 23A, we dropped our infantry who joined the sweat- and adrenalin-soaked section that had been in contact.

Thinking back on it later that morning, I first felt rather foolish. Initially I was embarrassed that I let pride overrule my better judgement. But I began to question whether my desire to be seen as calm under pressure – all be it by someone I barely knew – was really that foolish or pointless? Perhaps not.

What I was able to take from the experience was the knowledge that I could control my fear. Maybe I could never claim that I had thought clearly in that instance, but at least I didn't let fear get the better of me. Pride maybe, but not fear. Surely these were good things to know about one's self?

And it was more than just being cool in front of the infantry section commander. It was also about earning the confidence of my driver and all those who rode with me.

23A PATROLS A TIGHT ALLEY



WAYNE COOPER WAITS AS A PATROL GOES THROUGH THE STREETS

In the early hours of the morning I found myself sitting on top of my turret talking to the corporal whose dozing section were arranged in ragged formation all over my vehicle. The seco was an amiable chap who I had worked with several times before. A fare bit older than I was, he regaled me with amusing anecdotes from a misspent youth.

I smoked a cigarette and sat, quietly chuckling, as he explained the intricacies of quickly distinguishing between a female prostitute and a shim. Apparently this was an important lesson for a young fella like me, and he would spare me the embarrassment that had befallen several of his unfortunate comrades.

"Now Coops, you gotta look closely at the face," he explained as he rolled a smoke.

"Don't bother trying to look at their crotch, they can tuck their bits and pieces up so high a bloody gynecologist with a spotlight and a magnifying glass would have trouble telling the difference."

DESPITE MY INCREASING ANXIETY AT THE DRAMA UNFOLDING JUST DOWN THE ROAD, MY EGO KICKED IN...

a comfortable position where the locking lever wouldn't dig into my back. The seco sat beside me on top of the hull and continued with my erudition. Yawning, I took heart in the fact that it would soon be time to rouse Rex and Tino in 23B, along with the snoozing infantry, and return to the patrol-base compound for some decent kip.

"Now, the big giveaway is the neck. You'll either spot an Adam's apple or"

The staccato cry of an automatic weapon split the night. After a few seconds, a contact report burst over the radio. The patrol had been engaged by a gunman from a rooftop on the main street. Several more seconds passed and 100 metres down the road, another burst of automatic

Despite my increasing anxiety at the drama unfolding just down the road, my ego kicked in and I became determined to appear as detached as my companion.

Calmly as I could, I lifted my crewman helmet from the top of the turret and placed it on my lap so I could hear the radio traffic over the din of the gun battle.

"Not that it's ever happened to me of course, Coops, but I know guys who have even ventured south and not been any the wiser until things got beyond the point of no return," he continued.

I tried to come up with a witty reply but, under the circumstances, I was struggling and a forced laugh was the best I could do.

Moose came over the radio informing the section in contact that he and 23A were

had enough inertia to punch deep into the brick and mortar.

I guess we both immediately knew the shots were strays. Our position in the small, moonlit alley, and the close proximity of the surrounding buildings meant we could not fail to see anyone approach or fire at us from a nearby rooftop.

It must be said, the realisation that the shots weren't actually aimed at us was a comforting one. Nevertheless, it did not distract us entirely from the fact that we had both very nearly had our heads blown off. Consequently, I don't think the hair on my neck had ever stood up, my skin crawled, or my backside puckered quite that much before.

My first thought, after barely avoiding filling my pants, was to never again ignore my School of Armour instructors who wisely preached the basic tenants of armoured warfare, one of which is, never sit on the top of your vehicle, no matter how

For some inexplicable reason, this had become a battle of nerves, and neither one of us wanted to be the first to move.

More time passed in silence. The radio blurted another sit-rep from the patrol in contact. I could hear the yells of peads over the rumble of approaching APCs as they manoeuvred down the adjacent street.

Crack, crack, thump, thump. Rounds hit the building across the alleyway and we both flinched despite ourselves. But the spell of stupidity and testosterone was broken. We both subsided into nervous laughter as I slid into my turret and he into the back of the vehicle where we should have been all along.

Minutes later we received the call to attend the section in contact and we started up and rolled out of the alley. I followed up behind 23B, my eyes and all the eyes of the infantry in the back, looking to the rooftops for the elusive gunman, – but he didn't appear. After closing up

I suspect that gaining confidence in myself, along with the trust in those I worked with, were the most important factors in me returning from our little adventure in Africa unscathed, both physically and mentally.

I realise now that the greatest compliment ever paid to me came after another contact in which I was more directly involved. Micky P, a soldier I admired greatly but who almost never took anything seriously, commented casually one day that he was impressed with how calm I sounded over the radio during the contact. Maybe P was serious, maybe he wasn't – it doesn't really matter now. But at the time, it had a great impact on how I perceived myself as a soldier. To me, I had received the benediction of my peers and it made me feel righteous. I was part of a band of brothers – the pale few – fighting for the dark soul of Somalia. Corny or clichéd maybe, it was how I felt nonetheless.

CONTACT

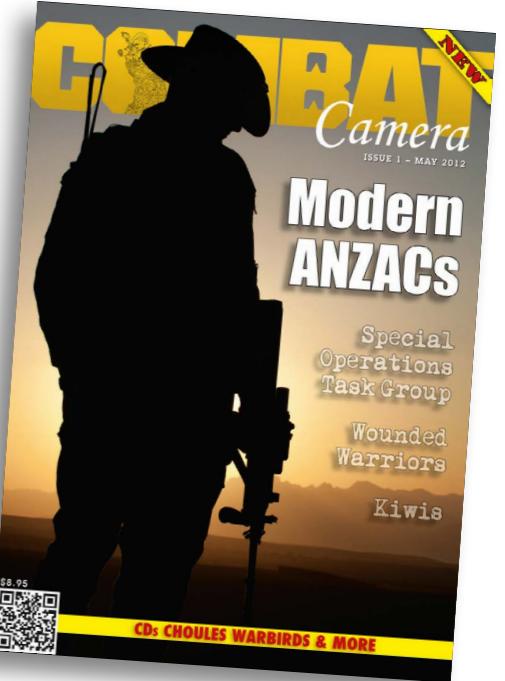
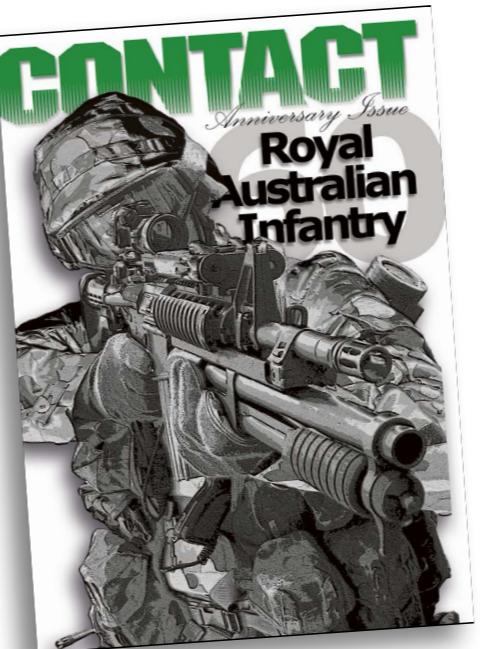
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Kettlebell Training – A workout with balls!

BY DON STEVENSON

Used in Russia by the military and elite athletes for over a hundred years, Kettlebells have only recently been introduced to the modern western world. Now they are the fitness weapon of choice for many SWAT teams, military units and even the US Secret Service.

I described kettlebell training in issue 7, but, as a quick review, kettlebell training uses a weight shaped like a cannonball with a handle on top to perform a variety of ballistic and strength exercises. It is one of the best ways for military personnel to get fit – but you've probably never heard of it until now!

Kettlebell training is often described with buzzwords and technical jargon such as "synaptic facilitation", "hip flexor recruitment" and "core stabilisation", but let's get down to what kettlebell training is really all about.

It's damn hard work

Running can be hard work, pushups can be hard work too, but until you've tried to do 100+ snatches with a heavy kettlebell,



you haven't really experienced how nasty exercise can be. Your lungs are on fire, your forearms scream at you to stop, your legs start to shake uncontrollably and, for a few moments, you think you are about to die... this is when you know you've done something worthwhile for your fitness.

Kettlebells toughen you up, and that's really what military fitness is all about. With kettlebells, you learn to absorb impact and deal with oddly shaped objects under conditions of fatigue. There are no isolation moves in kettlebell training, so your entire body works hard.

Results, results, results

Everything I've just said would be irrelevant if it weren't backed up by results.

Kettlebells deliver improved fitness for everyone from your grandmother to the guy trying out for Special Forces, and the benefits are more relevant to military personnel than to anyone else. Kettlebells improve grip-strength, upper and lower body strength, flexibility, endurance and your ability to work hard, recover quickly and go again.

A number of the key kettlebell exercises are designed to strengthen your core, shoulders and lower back to prevent common military overuse injuries, because you don't want to let your team down when the going gets tough.

With the hundreds of kettlebell exercises available and ways to vary your training, it's unlikely you'll ever become bored with kettlebell training.

Kettlebells give you the flexibility to work on maximal strength, coordination and endurance and once you master the basics you'll find unlimited challenges to work on.

Convenience

Gym training is great and I firmly believe that everyone should be doing a basic program of squats, deadlifts, overhead pressing and the like

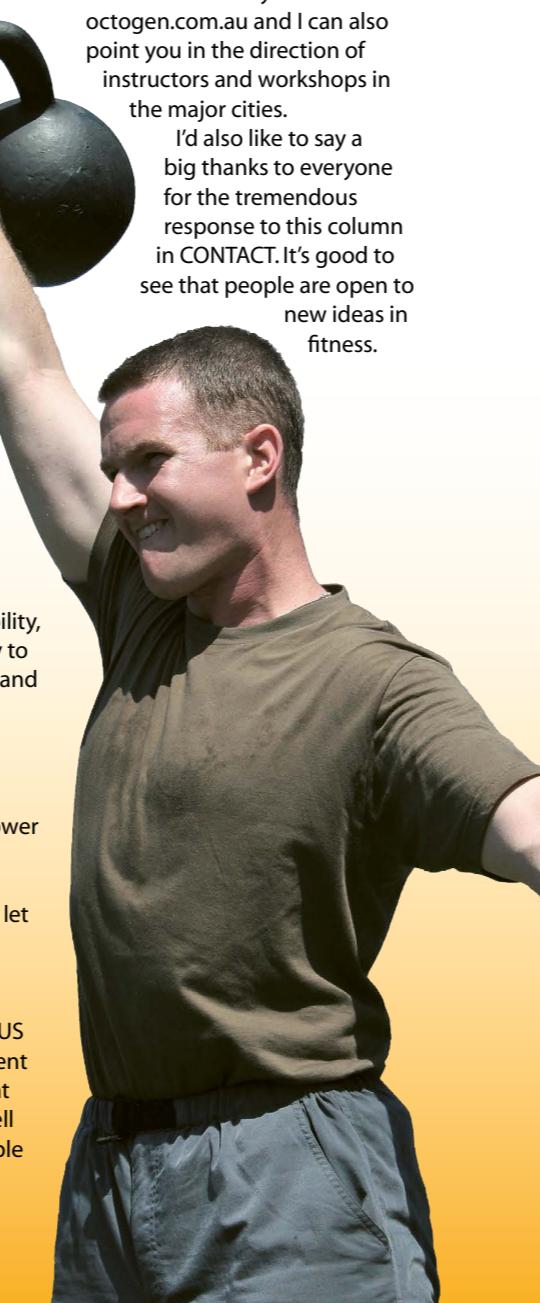
to run faster, hit harder and shoot better under stress. Sound like the sort of results you want out of a fitness program?

More info

Unfortunately I don't have the space here to describe a full kettlebell routine or demonstrate all of the exercises. But in the next issue, I will outline some specific exercises. In the mean time, if you are interested in finding out more about kettlebell training, simply email me at fitness@octogen.com.au and I'll send you a 25-page introductory kettlebell manual with photos and descriptions of all the main exercises, along with some simple conditioning workouts you can try.

If you want to try kettlebell training, there is more information on my website www.octogen.com.au and I can also point you in the direction of instructors and workshops in the major cities.

I'd also like to say a big thanks to everyone for the tremendous response to this column in CONTACT. It's good to see that people are open to new ideas in fitness.



THE FUNDAMENTALS OF MILITARY SELF DEFENCE

Fundamentals are key tenets that do not change over time regardless of the operational environment. Since World War II, military self defence instructors have taught five fundamentals of military unarmed combat. These fundamentals have been adapted from the philosophies of many oriental martial arts and have inspired the development of modern Western military unarmed combat.

Unarmed-combat training is an important subject in a soldier's battle training, for the human body and physical strength are fundamental weapons in any type of conflict.

The periods of physical training that soldiers undertake are designed to prepare them for the rigors of the operational environment. However, it is the ability to harness this physical strength and mental toughness that makes self-defence training important.

Self-defence training relies on a level of physical and mental toughness. The achievement of a high standard of proficiency in unarmed-combat training will promote self confidence, determination and fighting spirit among military personal.

Military members may be able to run fast, have great endurance and cope with sleep deprivation, but it is also essential that they can cope with various physical confrontations. By adhering to these five fundamentals, military personal increase their chance of surviving a close-quarter confrontation.

The five fundamental principles are:

1. Make full use of any available weapon;
2. Attack aggressively by using maximum strength against the enemy's weakest point;
3. Maintain your balance while destroying an opponent's;
4. Use your opponent's momentum to your advantage; and,
5. Learn techniques precisely and accurately, before attaining speed, through constant practice.

Make full use of any available weapon

Military members must adhere to civilian and military laws. A physical confrontation with an assailant is a risky affair at best and should be chosen when no other option is available.

Military members carry field equipment that can be used and turned into effective weapons. The operational environment will also have available many objects that can be used as effective weapons.

Attack aggressively by using maximum strength against the enemy's weakest point

This is a military strategy that is employed by all commanders at all levels and equally applies to

close-quarter combat. Attacking an opponent's weakest points will render the confrontation over much quicker than blindly attacking any point.

Maintain your balance while destroying an opponent's

This is about keeping one step ahead of your opponent and not falling victim to his attack. The aim is to maintain your physical and mental balance while disrupting your opponent's and exposing weakness in his attack, and then capitalising on this situation.

Use your opponent's momentum to your advantage

In every confrontation, energy is being transferred. The ability to use your opponent's energy either to stop his attack or to retaliate with, will result in less energy being used by you. This is critical for military members who need to conserve their energy because they may be sleep deprived, carrying heavy loads and don't know how many opponents they are likely to face.

Learn techniques precisely and accurately, before attaining speed through constant practice

Military self defence techniques are physical skills that need constant practice. Members who train a minimum of one hour a week on techniques will remember these techniques instinctively and will be able to call upon their training when they need it most.

As military members, we need to be physically fit to cope with the burdens of modern operational environments. Physical-fitness training builds up our levels of strength and endurance.

Unarmed-combat training allows us to turn these gains in strength and endurance into functional usefulness. A strong, well-trained person will beat a person who is strong but lacking in technique, or a person who has the technique but is lacking the strength.

The assumption must be made that our future opponents will be a highly trained and determined foe who will use every level of cunning to impair their will.

Military members train to be physically fit and, while this is a worthy pursuit, it needs to be coupled with self-defence training to truly maximize the gains obtained.

BY MAJOR TRAVIS FAURE



PICS MAJOR TRAVIS FAURE

REVIEWS

GAME REVIEW

GAME REVIEW



GHOST RECON 2: SUMMIT STRIKE

www.ghostrecon.com/uk/ghostrecon2ss

Ubisoft

Reviewed by Sapper Gameboy

The Ghost Recon franchise has been a long-time favourite of military gamers with its accurate portrayal of weapon systems and believable plots. This latest iteration is an expansion pack to the highly successful *Ghost Recon 2*. Like previous XBox expansion packs however it does not require the parent game in order to play. *Summit Strike* thrusts the player back into the role of leading the Ghosts, a USSF team, on a demanding operation in Kazakhstan in the near future.



Game play and controls are the same as *GR2* although Ubisoft have relented and provide an option to move from the standard third-person view to the more familiar first-person HUD image.

Summit Strike, as the name suggests, adds several above-the-snow-line maps to the game and introduces a new range of weaponry to the *Ghost Recon* game world.

The highlight of these new features is undoubtedly the

chance to use, virtually at least, the recently procured SCAR (Special-forces Combat Assault Rifle) in both the light (5.56mm) and heavy (7.62mm) form. The SCAR, produced by FN, was selected by US SOCOM in 2004 to replace the venerable M4 Carbine as the standard weapon for its operators and was scheduled to enter service earlier this year.

Another weapon to grace the game that is also currently coming into service within US SOCOM is the FN Mk48 MOD 0 machine gun. Essentially a 7.62mm version of the Minimi, the Mk48 is a replacement weapon for the MAG 58 family in US SOCOM service.

Summit Strike retains full multiplayer functionality and is well represented on XBox Live servers. New content has also been recently released for download through the Live service.

Given *Summit Strike*'s low cost (as an expansion pack game it is less than \$50) and demanding missions, it is great value for those new to the *Ghost Recon* series or veterans of the virtual 'stans who are anxiously awaiting the next instalment, *Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter*.

Score: 4.5/5



CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE

www.callofduty.com

Activision

Reviewed by Sapper Gameboy

The WW2 first-person shooter genre has to be one of the most difficult areas in which to design and produce games these days given the dearth of quality titles currently on the market. To stand out, the game must offer a unique experience and play well. Unfortunately for Activision, their last effort *Call of Duty: Finest Hour* did not live up to the second aspect very well and discerning gamers quickly went elsewhere in Europe's virtual battleground for their experience. Thankfully, the latest release in the series,

Call of Duty 2: Big Red One, can wipe those bad memories away and help reclaim the fight for Activision.

Big Red One is focused on the US 1st Infantry Division's fight through WW2. It takes players from the heat of Africa through to the blizzards of central Europe in a fast-paced and highly demanding series of battles. Like previous titles in the series, *Big Red One* is not just about surviving as an infantry soldier, but a blend of

grunt-work, vehicle and even aircraft action – at one stage the player ends up as turret gunner in a B24 Liberator.

While the *Call of Duty* series has never proclaimed to be as realistic as some of the games from other publishers, it does manage to get the balance of fun and realism about perfect.

The game can be played through without too much frustration and just the right amount of teeth-clenching difficulty, all the while allowing

the gamer to become fully immersed in the environment – the sound effects in this game on a surround-sound system have to be heard to be believed.

Big Red One includes a swathe of multi-play options and full Live functionality for XBox gamers.

The PC and new XBox 360 version will be released as simply *Call of Duty 2*.

Score: 4/5

BOOK REVIEW

DESIGNATED TARGETS - WORLD WAR 2.2

By John Birmingham; Pan Macmillan Australia

Reviewed by Wayne Cooper

In *Designated Targets – World War 2.2* John Birmingham returns to 1942 for the second in the Axis of Time series he began so well with *Weapons of Choice – World War 2.1*. In the first book, we traveled back to the war-torn Pacific with a UN naval battle group, circa 2021. Following a failed experiment in quantum mechanics, the group found themselves unceremoniously dragged through a wormhole and dumped into the middle of the battle for Midway, with disastrous results for the Allies.

The ensuing chaos of the transition and the alteration of history made for one of the best action-packed reads of 2004. From the driver's seats of F22 Raptors, M1A5 Abrams and tri-hulled stealth destroyers, Birmingham led us on a rollicking ride through World War 2. Along the way we ran into some of the key players of the war, from Churchill to Himmler, Curtin and MacArthur.

Designated Targets continues the ride as 1940's conservatism runs headlong in 21st Century liberalism. The ramifications of the transition are being felt in every theatre of the war, as the miraculous weapons from the future wreak havoc on both sides of the conflict. The historical certainties that were brought through the wormhole are being erased and a new dark future awaits us.

Birmingham rushes on with the same reckless abandon that made the first book in the series such fun. Clashes of technology, sexuality and ideology abound as super warriors from the near future clash with the legendary warhorses from the past.

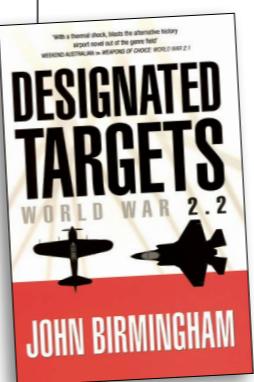
He also asks some interesting moral questions along the way. If you were an enterprising lawyer and had the names of every unsigned superstar from 1942 to 2020, from Presley to Prince, what would you do with that information?

The novel does suffer a little from the 'middle of the trilogy' syndrome as the author tries to carry the plotlines along while leaving the big punches for the finale. That said there are enough new twists and turns to keep the reader more than sufficiently engaged and eagerly awaiting the conclusion of the series.

I enjoy the way Birmingham writes his characters, both real and imagined. And though they might be a little underdeveloped at times (and to be fair there are a hell of a lot of different plots and characters to keep moving) this is an action novel, and the characters say what we might say if we were in their place.

If you want fully-formed character development and historical accuracy, read Tolstoy. If you want to have a bloody good time with steely eyed missile men from the future dealing out death and destruction while messing with the fabric of space and time, then read Birmingham.

A great book to take bush or to enjoy anywhere, *Designated Targets – World War 2.2* comes highly recommended.



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www.traser.com.au

Reviewed by Phil Boyd

What's in a name?

Traser makes watches that are aimed at the military and law enforcement markets, and as such, their watches are essentially rugged, functional and reliable.

The Swiss-made quartz watch supplied for review – or 'Watch, Wrist, General Purpose' in military-speak – certainly embodies these characteristics. The body of the watch is stainless steel, and includes some well-designed shoulders that protect the winding crown, generally the weak point in any watch. The winding crown itself screws firmly into the body of the watch when not in use, making a fully water- and dust-proof seal.

The carbon-fiber bezel takes some force to rotate, and locks into place with a definite 'click' that makes me believe it's going to stay exactly where I put it.

With this, as in most quality watches, the "glass" is made from sapphire crystal (optional upgrade at \$45), second only in hardness to diamond. This guarantees a scratch-free watch face even after years of use and abuse.

The design of this watch clearly focuses on function rather than aesthetics – you're left with the distinct impression that this is a tool, not a fashion accessory. In keeping with this, the face is plain black and white, with unnecessary clutter omitted.

This watch came on a plain nylon NATO strap. Personally, I would have to admit, I'd be inclined to do some shopping for one of the metal straps that Traser offer as an option. Not that the nylon strap is bad. In fact, for people wearing the watch where it's likely to get banged around a lot, it's probably a better option than metal or leather. The advantage is that accidental breaking of one strap pin won't result in the watch coming off your wrist.

It's in low light, however, that the Traser really shines. The unique feature of Traser watches is that the hands, face and bezel all feature an active illumination system, powered by low levels of radiation. Unlike traditional phosphorous watch hands, which require 'charging' by exposure to light, the Traser emits a consistent light level, and will continue to do so for at least 10 years. This comes from the radio-active element tritium, housed in laser-cut pockets – tritium and laser = Traser.

I really like this feature of the watch – regardless of how long it had been in the dark, its hands still had a bright green glow about them – easy to read, no matter what the environment, including underwater at night.

In summary: the key word for this watch is functionality. No unnecessary features or concessions to fashion, just the time, date and a rotating bezel. The constantly glowing hands make the time legible in any light conditions and operate all the time – you don't need to push a button to read the time at night.

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT LINE

Henry's recuperation in England, from serious wounds collected at Gallipoli, is almost at an end. He continues to show a brave face, especially when writing home...

I will send you postcards of London and the principal buildings when I get out. I cannot draw any money while in hospital. I do not mind being here for we are treated like toffs.

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

Well, my dear Mother and Father, I know you must be having a most anxious time, wondering how we are all getting on and dread each day to hear bad news; but the danger is not so great as you imagine, and if you could see us at our work in the trenches and under fire, and how lightly we take it all, I am sure you would not worry so much.

I, and my brothers, I am sure, are always thinking of you at home. I can see you now, dear Mother, sitting down doing crochet work and Dad on the sofa reading the paper. How lonely the old house must seem; but cheer up, we will some day all return again. We are doing work for our country that you must be proud of. You have given four sons and this is a very big thing out of our family.

There are no records to indicate if Henry caught up with Charles, his fourth brother to join up. Charlie was a member of the 21st Battalion and had arrived in June 1916 but it's quite possible they met, as the brothers were in the same combat area.

In those days, getting shot was an occupational hazard and the Wright brothers were attracting their fair share of lead.



Henry is wounded again, this time in the right arm and left leg, and suffers from shell-shock in or near Pozieres on 2 July 1916. This time, he is sent to the Northumberland War Hospital to recover.

Not to be out done by his brother, Charlie is shot in the right leg in an attack on Mouquet Farm, also near Pozieres. He took seven months to recover only to be shot again in April 1917. This time it was the right arm, head and back.

The Army decided enough was enough and sent Charlie home, medically unfit, in August 1918.

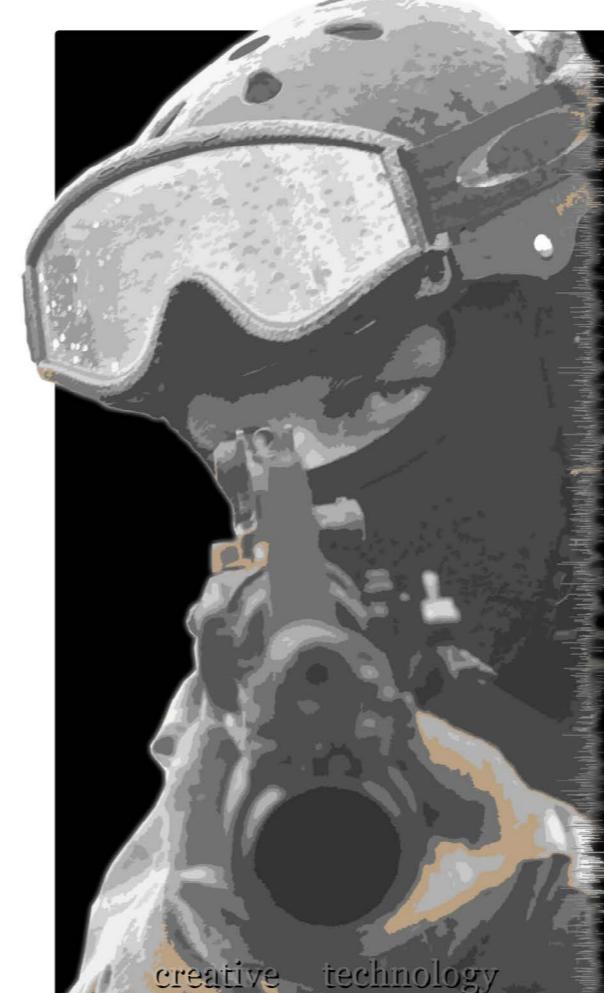
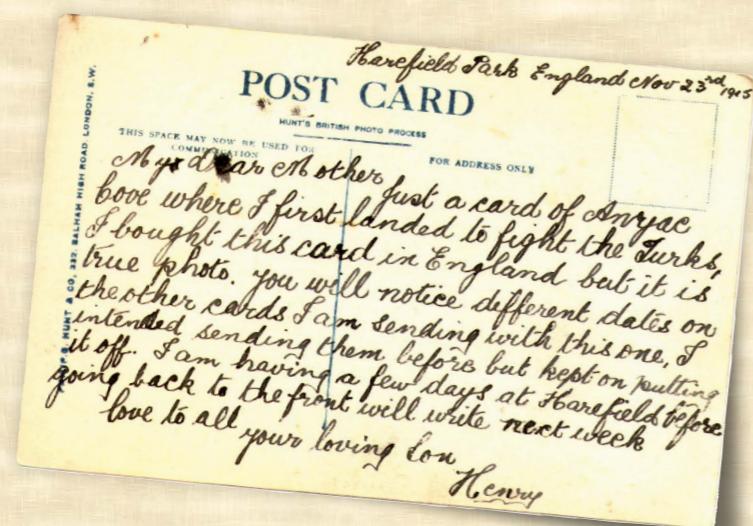
Henry remained in England as his wounds were taking a long time to heal. He was eventually fit enough to be transferred from hospital to the School of Musketry in Tidworth, on 2 February 1917, where he was given light cleaning duties.

It was from here Henry writes his inner-most thoughts about the war, his nostalgia for home and about his life in general.

School of Musketry, Bhurtpore Barracks, Tidworth, England. October 6th 1916.

*Dear Les and Gordon,
I think it is about time I wrote you a few lines for no doubt you want to know a little news of this side of the world. It always appeals to anyone who has not travelled that they would like to see different parts of the world, but take my dinkum tip and stick to the dear old home for there is absolutely no place like it. Mind you, I am not sorry I came away because to hang back would be like a cowards game, but to leave home just to roam about is a very foolish idea. I know when I was your age I was always wanting to roam the world. I know perfectly well now that ones home sweet home is paradise.*

To be continued...



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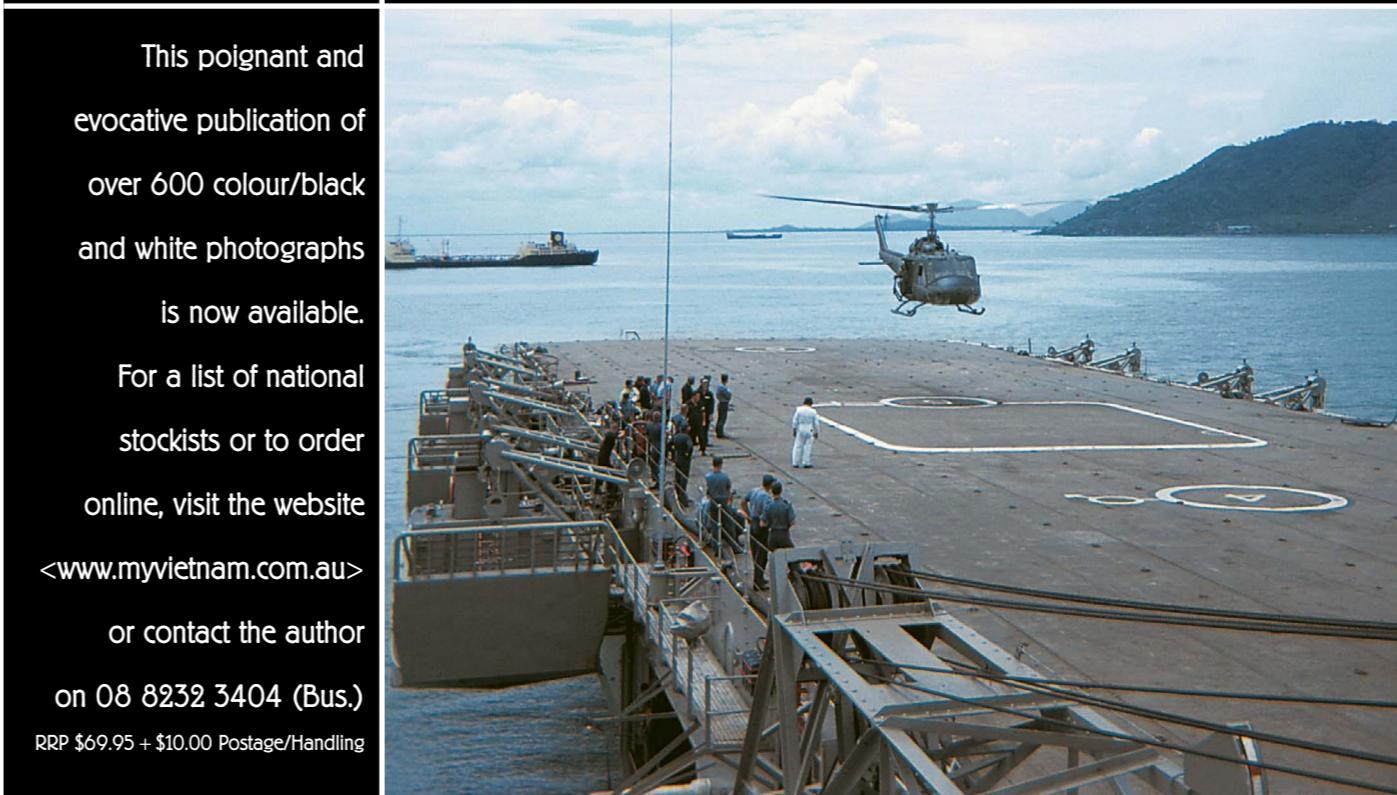
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MAJOR PERCY BLACK, DSO, DCM

'...THE BRAVEST AND COOLEST OF ALL THE BRAVE MEN I KNOW.'

When Australians were called upon to fight for King and Empire, men from all walks of life – professionals, tradesmen, clerks and labourers – queued at enlistment depots. One such volunteer was a prospector fresh from the West Australian goldfields.

Despite having had no prior military training, this man rose from a raw recruit to a company commander of the veteran 16th Battalion in less than 12 months. His reputation became legendary among the ANZACs and history records him as one of the AIF's most famous fighting leaders.

On 13 September 1914, Percy Charles Herbert Black, a 34-year-old Victorian, enlisted in the AIF in Western Australia where he had been prospecting for gold.

He commenced his military career at the Blackboy Hill Camp near Perth as a member of the machine-gun section of the 16th Battalion.¹ It was here that he met his future wartime comrade, Private Harry Murray. Lieutenant Colonel Murray VC, CMG, DSO, DCM, CdeG and five-times Mentioned in Despatches, Australia's most decorated soldier, was described by war historian CEW Bean as 'the most distinguished fighting officer in the AIF'. Black and Murray served together on the same Maxim machine-gun.

Within days of commencing training, Black had mastered many of the skills required of a machine-gunner, including being able to strip the gun in twelve and a half seconds (the standard was 45 seconds). His instructor,

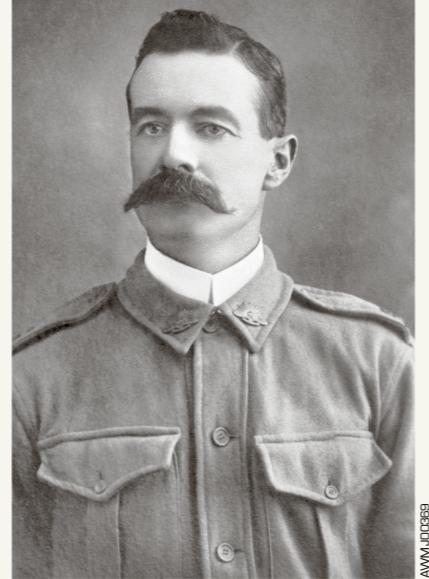
a veteran sergeant major of the Instructional Corps, claimed that Black was the best gunner he had ever come across.²

Black, now a lance corporal, underwent his baptism of fire on the craggy terrain of the Gallipoli Peninsula in late April 1915. His gun was positioned at the head of Monash Gully – an area of ground strategically vital to both the Allies and the enemy. If it fell to the Turks they would be on the beach at ANZAC Cove in minutes, an horrendous reception committee for the Australian and New Zealand troops who were being landed there.

The gully post could be fired upon, not only from each flank, but from the enemy-held heights to the front. Black stood his ground despite the fact he was bleeding profusely from wounds to his ear and hand and that his bullet-ridden gun casing resembled a colander. At one point, his gun was rushed by some 50 Turks. As the enemy soldiers advanced over an open patch of ground, Percy waited until they were at a range of about 25 metres, then opened fire.

In one savage hail of bullets he killed them all. He was mentioned in corps despatches for his actions – performed at a critical time when the ANZAC line was seriously in danger of being overrun.³

In early May, the Turks launched a fierce counterattack. Their aim was to push the ANZAC infidels into the sea. Turkish firepower bombarded the Australian lines with the gun crews bearing the brunt of the incoming barrage. As one loading number



MAJOR PERCY BLACK, DSO, DCM

AWM ID 00369

after another was killed or injured, Black moved in to replace them – continually calling for more ammunition. Suddenly Percy realised that he was on his own. He was surrounded by Diggers who were either dead or too badly wounded to continue the fight.

As the Turks sensed victory would soon be theirs and advanced to encircle the beleaguered post, Black began swinging his gun in even wider arcs to check the enemy's movements. This David and Goliath battle lasted for more than four hours.

With his ammunition expended and Turkish bodies stacked like firewood in front of his post, an exhausted Black relaxed against the sandbags – he had survived and overcome what to most men would have been insurmountable odds.²

For his actions, Lance Corporal Percy Black was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. News of Black's feat quickly spread among the Diggers on the peninsula. There was no doubt among the Allied troops that Black and his gun had prevented the Turkish advance down Monash Gully – a move that would have spelt disaster for the ANZACs.³

His mate, Harry Murray, later stated that Percy Black had the superstitions of a

Highlander. One night at Gallipoli as the pair chatted over a hot brew, Black stated, 'Harry, you and I will come through this. I cannot see either of us lying dead on the Turks' parapet.'⁴

Black received a field commission and was promoted to second lieutenant on 7 May 1915. By December 1915, as the ANZACs planned their evacuation from the Gallipoli Peninsula, Black had been promoted to temporary captain, commanding B Company, 16 Battalion – a promotion that came as no surprise to the Diggers under his command who greatly respected his inspirational style of leadership.⁴

Following a few months' sojourn in the desert training camps in Egypt, the ANZACs were deployed to the Western Front to face a new enemy, the German Army. Black, now promoted to major, was initially sent to the 'nursery' sector near Armentieres before the 16th was deployed to fight in the trenches at Pozieres.⁵

Many a Digger said, 'If there was a hell on earth, then Pozieres was it.' The Australian sector occupied an area a little less than two kilometres square. The Germans had their corps artillery – 1000 guns in all – ready and waiting to pound the Australians into the ground, which they did relentlessly for more than a month.

Soon after the 16th's first attack at Pozieres, in which they had taken and secured a German trench, the battalion was subjected to a fearsome barrage. An incoming 5.9 inch shell landed so close to Black that he was buried up to his neck in earth and rubble. As his men frantically moved to dig him out, Black calmly declared 'I can feel a terrible pain in my right shin.' He felt sure that his leg was broken, but was relieved to find the cause of his discomfort was a strip of hot, metal shell-casing pressing against the skin of his lower leg. Black's dauntless manner of leadership against incredible odds served only to bolster his illustrious reputation.

At Mouquet Farm, Black was badly wounded by a gunshot to the neck.⁴ He was evacuated to a field hospital, but the severity of the wound required specialist treatment in London.⁶ His heroism and action under fire had not gone unnoticed as now was evident in the ribbons he proudly wore on his left breast – the Distinguished Service Order (DSO), the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) and the French Croix de Guerre (CdeG).³

While on day leave from the hospital, Percy and a mate went sightseeing in London. As they crossed Piccadilly Circus, dodging the double-decker buses as they went, Percy said to his friend, 'I'll be glad to get back to the battalion, mate. A man's not safe here.'

It was now 1917 and Percy was back with the 16th at the front, preparing to go into action as part of a force deployed to



WHEELER, CHARLES. THE DEATH OF MAJOR BLACK 1923. OIL ON CANVAS (LINEN) 129 X 236.8CM

AWM ART 03558

attack the seemingly impenetrable fortress known as the Hindenburg Line, at a place called Bullecourt. The plan seemed simple enough – to take the line by surprise using only infantry troops and their new 'secret' weapon, the tank.

The commanders protested vehemently. To proceed on such a mission without the protection of artillery wasn't just a suicide mission, it was nothing short of cold-blooded murder. But the orders stood.⁷

The fortifications established by the Germans to protect their line were daunting – row upon row of lethal barbed wire entanglements supported by heavy logs and guarded by a series of concrete block-houses shielding machine-gun emplacements, positioned to cover any breach in the wire.

A couple of days before the scheduled attack, Percy sat in a dugout with his good mate, Harry Murray. As they spoke, Black said, 'Harry, this may be my last fight, but I'll have that bloody German trench before they get me!'

Murray knew Black well enough to believe that his superstitious friend was deadly earnest.⁴

As the troops waited in the frosty predawn darkness, Black patrolled the lines, reassuring the Diggers with small talk about families, football scores back home – even a simple request of, 'Have you got a match, mate?' served to relieve the tension. Reassurance from arguably one of the most famous fighting leaders of the AIF stirred the troops to believe there was nothing they could not conquer.

On 11 April 1917, Black led part of the attack on the German lines at Bullecourt.

The Australians had no artillery support and the tanks that were supposed to breach the wire broke down or became bogged in the muddy, snow-covered ground. Black urged his men into action with a 'Come on boys, bugger the tanks!' as they charged towards the wire. Inspired by Black's lead, the men ferociously fought their way into the German trenches and in doing so

became the first Allied soldiers to break through the Hindenburg Line.⁸

But their success came at a price. When they searched for Major Black to share their accomplishment, they found him dead on the wire. Sadly, it was Black's friend, Colonel Murray, who saw him hanging from the barbed entanglement.

As predicted, when the battle was over and the cost was counted, the battalion was found to have suffered horrific casualties, losing more than three quarters of its men.

Major Percy Charles Herbert Black, DSO, DCM – declared by his famous friend, Harry Murray, to be 'the bravest and coolest of all the brave men I know' – now lies somewhere beneath the surface of a French field in an unknown grave.¹ His remains may be lost forever, but his name lives for evermore on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial. This memorial was erected as the Australian National Memorial to commemorate all Australian soldiers who fought in France and Belgium during the First World War. It is also a memorial to the missing, and lists the names of 10,982 Australians whose bodies were not recovered or could not be identified.



PERCY BLACK, SEATED BEHIND THE VICKERS MAXIM .303 MACHINEGUN ON THE LEFT, WITH RECRUITS TO MACHINEGUN SECTION, 16 BATTALION, AT BLACKBOY HILL CAMP, WA.

AWM P0465.001

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CLOSED

Posted subject: Is OH&S killing Cadets?

Author: Jakub Posted: Sun Dec 11, 2005 9:50 pm	I joined cadets in 2001 and it was a lot of fun. Sadly this was not to last and it would be one of the reasons I left cadets earlier than I could have. By the end of 2002 things changed. No more bush time, no more weapons training and our shooting went from about 8 or 10 live shoots a year to about 3 on the WTSS range. I in no way blame my unit or Cadets in general – I know what they stand for and what they want to do but couldn't because of things like OH&S. I haven't been in cadets for over a year now but my friends say it got even worse. I joined cadets for fun, to test myself and to experience, at least in a little way, the military way of life – but by the end it became as my Sgt said, "boy scouts with cams" and that's not what I joined for.
Author: Jase Posted: Fri Dec 16, 2005 12:59 pm	I applied to become a cadet in Canberra, but was told there were too many cadets already. A few months later when stricter OH&S standards came in, units had to start a massive recruitment drive, with the extremely high drop-out rate occurring. I had a mate in the cadets who loved it and was the person I least thought would leave, but he reckoned it became too much like extra schoolwork on top of what he was already doing.
Author: Col_the_Gunner Posted: Sun Dec 18, 2005 9:48 pm	I was in the Army cadets for two years, finishing as a corporal the week before I enlisted into the Army Reserve (only a couple of months ago). I liked the sound of all the stuff the senior fellas were talking about, but nothing we did, locally or on annual camps, came close. The "Boy Scouts in cams" quip was one I heard (and used) often, although these days, if you believe the ads, the Boy Scouts do more hard-core stuff than the cadets – often prompting the remark, "Boy Scouts in cams – I wish!" I attended a 7 Bde Open Day and a 1 Fd Regt try-before-you-buy weekend, and did more cool stuff in those three days as a civvy, than I did in cadets. Don't get me wrong, though, I think Cadets is a great organisation, and I enjoyed my time there. It instills national pride – and the feeling of being in uniform in the ANZAC Day parade is one that isn't easily topped. But, with a little common sense, Cadets can be made great again.
Author: Jase Posted: Sun Dec 25, 2005 10:09 am	I've finally found another opinion on this topic - I was talking to my uncle, who's a brigadier at Training Command. He told me that when Cadets was placed under Chief of Army responsibility it was his job to investigate OH&S standards. He said that what they found was appalling – cadets were doing things that even full-time soldiers weren't being made to do. They found a NSW unit that was getting cadets to do water skills and activities without proper life vests or supervision, and without teaching them the appropriate drills (i.e. capsizing drills).

Posted subject: Are today's recruiting campaigns working?

Author: Lore Posted: Sat Dec 24, 2005 11:48 am	Yes I believe they're working, in some respect. Seems to be that if you show an interest then you're able to get a lot of information, help etc very easily which aids in keeping you interested. The ad campaigns were also quite good – I've still got one from a magazine stuck in my head that quoted an F-18 Pilot saying, "The office may be cramped, but the view is spectacular".
Author: Jakub Posted: Sat Dec 24, 2005 12:14 pm	When I was doing all the business to get into the reserves, all the websites and information guides really did help, however, that isn't advertising as such. I think that advertising is a bit same-old same-old now. I'd love to see some pamphlets in the mail saying my local base has an open day or a 2-day bush trip kind of thing. Advertising doesn't do the Defence Force much justice – you have to go out and see what they do to really get into it, I think.
Author: Clarkey Posted: Mon Dec 26, 2005 10:02 am	It is good for those who are doing their research and already have the idea in their head, but probably not for those who haven't previously thought of joining up. There isn't really much out there to make somebody think, "Oh yeah, that looks fun".

Should the enlistment age for Defence be raised to 18 years?

Yes 26.23% (64)

No 73.77% (180)

Total Votes: 244

Should women be allowed to serve in front-line units? (please register and post a comment)

Yes 37.30% (47)

No 62.70% (79)

Total Votes: 126