

ISSUE 41 – MARCH 2014

# CONTACT

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THE AUSTRALIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

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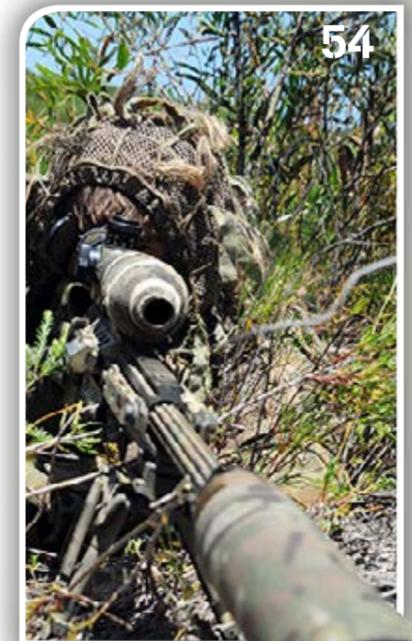
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**CONTACT**  
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**SASR SNIPER  
CONCENTRATION**

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enquiries should be addressed to the editor.

Welcome to issue #41 of CONTACT Air Land & Sea – the first electronic-only issue.

We recognise that going electronic only is a major change/ disappointment for some of our readers – no more receiving a printed magazine in the mail or thumbing through it before you buy it at your local newsagent.

But for us, there's very little change as far as production is concerned. The magazine is still put together in the same way on the same software. Stories and photos still come from the same sources. Editing, subediting and triple checking happen as they always have – and I'll take this opportunity to thank my proofreader/business manager/ wife, Rosie, for all her hard work and essential support.

There is one massive difference, however, which you will not notice unless I tell you – and, of course, I will. The size of our audience has exploded. So far it's like a hand-grenade-sized explosion, but we fully anticipate it will escalate.

When we first printed this magazine and sold it in shops, we could always rely on a steady audience of somewhere around 4000 readers (fluctuating slightly depending on our choice of cover image).

Over the past two years, however, we have experienced the same spiralling decline in print sales that every other media outlet is reporting – to a point well below where it was economically viable to keep printing it.

But, since going electronic only (and since joining forces with good people like The Military Shop in Fyshwick and Military Photography on Facebook) our electronic audience has already soared well past the 6000 mark.

Now we just have to keep the quality up and the magazines coming and wait for this thing to 'go viral'!

So please tell all your friends – CONTACT (and COMBAT Camera) are both FREE via [www.combatcamera.com.au](http://www.combatcamera.com.au)

Sincerely,

Brian Hartigan  
Managing Editor

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## INCOMING

### MISSED

I really am sorry to see the mag go out of print. I now regret how often I thought of writing in, yet never did. Aside from one article in issue 27, my contribution was getting in front of the unit each quarter, holding the latest issue, and telling them to buy it. I'm sure I'm not the only one who is thinking 'what if' after all your attempts asking for material each issue.

**Michael W by email**

Michael, thank you for your kind sentiments and your support. But, while we are not printing CONTACT in hardcopy anymore, as you can see, CONTACT is very much still with us - and we are still very keen to receive boots-on-the-ground content from our fans. Please send contributions (or just touch base to get a feel for requirements first) to [editor@militarycontact.com](mailto:editor@militarycontact.com)

### WE WANT PRINT

I am an RSL sub branch welfare officer. Your printed magazine makes it easier to point out articles of interest to my sub branch and other ex-service community members, so I hope I'll still be able to buy, collect and pass around the paper copies.

**Regards Phil A, by email**

Unfortunately not, Phil. December 2013 was the last one printed. From now on CONTACT and COMBAT are only available by FREE subscription via [www.combatcamera.com.au](http://www.combatcamera.com.au)

### SNAPSHOTS

I've been reading CONTACT for ages now, so it's good to be able to access this magazine via the internet as well. Your photos and information I have always found are up-to-date and presented in a manner which always makes reading a pleasure.

**Bryan E, via email**

Just a note to say that the magazines are excellent, some quality material included. I'll pass the word to friends and colleagues to subscribe too.

**David O'D, via email**

The military world is an awesome visual place that mere mortals like myself need to see to believe!

**Garry C, via email**

Loved the last issue, love the mag. The move to Flash? Not so!

**Brad R, sent from iPad**

I enjoyed reading your magazine. Very interesting. I am ex Army with active service, hence the enjoyment. I have been following *Military Photography* for a while now I have encouraged a few friends to do the same both civvy and ex military. Keep up the good work you guys are doing.

**Brendon A, via email**

I only found CONTACT a few weeks ago, as I was looking for a defence magazine to keep me up to date. I'm hopefully joining either RAAF or Army late this year. So far I love both magazines. Interesting and honest content.

**David T, via email**

I think that CONTACT is a fantastic magazine. It's a good and easy read, and I like how it has cadet news and ADF/NZDF news in it also. It is by far one of my favourite magazines as it is very informative and has certainly expanded my knowledge. I am a person who hates technology and I don't like reading texts on electronic devices, but for CONTACT I will make an exception.

**Hamish McC, via email**

*Thanks everyone for your great feedback - Ed*

### TARGETS UP!

This page is a great outlet for fans to vent or to praise. Please, let us know what you think of our magazines so we can deliver more of what you want. Or feel free to write about any other military-related subject. Thank you in anticipation - Ed

The Editor reserves the right to abbreviate and otherwise edit letters for any reason, including to make them fit.

# Bushmaster at sea

HMAS Childers, an Armidale-class patrol boat, fires her remotely operated Typhoon Mk 25 stabilised gun mount, featuring a 25mm marine Bushmaster, while underway in the Indian Ocean. HMAS Childers was enroute to the Indian Navy-hosted exercise Milan 2014 around the Andaman Islands in early February, and the International Maritime Seminar on Maritime Cooperation for Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Operations. The Australian patrol boat also visited Bangladesh and Burma during her voyage.





# HEADS UP

## OPENS POATE CENTRE IN ACT

Soldier On opened 'The Poate Centre' in Canberra on 27 February.

The Poate Centre is the newest addition to the Soldier On Reintegration and Recovery Network, and the first of its kind in the ACT.

Named after Private Robert Poate, a Canberra-born soldier killed in action in 2012, the new centre will deliver support services and community activities designed to aid in the rehabilitation of serving and ex-serving Defence personnel affected by their service.

Robert Poate's parents, Hugh and Janny; Assistant Minister for Defence Stuart Roberts; and, Soldier On Patron-in-Chief Corporal Mark Donaldson VC were among those who attended.

Learn more about the great work Soldier On does at [soldieron.org.au](http://soldieron.org.au)



Four Rolls-Royce AE 2100 engines on a RAAF C-130J.

## BILLION \$ ENGINE DEAL

Rolls-Royce has signed a long-term agreement worth up to US\$1 billion to deliver approximately 600 engines to power future C-130J Super Hercules aircraft.

The agreement with Lockheed Martin secures the Rolls-Royce AE 2100 as the engine of choice for all variants of the C-130J to 2025.

AE 2100 engines power all C-130Js, while the Rolls-Royce T56 powers the legacy C-130 fleet.

Globally, the C-130Js have surpassed 1,000,000 flight hours, and Lockheed Martin recently announced its intent to obtain certification from the Federal Aviation Administration for a new civil variant – the LM-100J.

Tom Bell, Rolls-Royce, President Defense, said Lockheed Martin and Rolls-Royce had partnered for decades to produce thousands of the world's leading medium transport aircraft.

"Our new agreement secures that relationship for years to come."

## SECOND AWD KEEL LAID

A traditional keel-laying ceremony for the second Australian air warfare destroyer (AWD) NUSHIP Brisbane was held at Techport, South Australia, on 3 February.

Hobart-class AWDs are based on a Spanish design, built in Australia, fitted with the Aegis Combat System incorporating the state-of-the-art phased-array radar, AN/SPY 1D(V), in combination with the SM-2 missiles to provide advanced air defence system capable of engaging aircraft and missiles at ranges in excess of 150km.

Currently, the construction program is over budget, behind schedule and subject to a high-level independent review that will examine a range of issues.

The review panel will report to government by mid this year.



Chief of Navy Vice Admiral Ray Griggs with apprentices Courtney Bird and Jayden Cairns before laying a coin in the keel of the second AWD. Photo by Corporal David Gibbs.



TWO PHOTOS DIGITALLY AMALGAMATED by CONTACT. Front – RAF BBMF Lancaster – Photo © 2013 John M. Dibbs. Rear – Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum Lancaster (VERA) – Photo by Doug Fisher – Crown Copyright. The last two Lancaster bombers still flying in the world will actually fly together in a series of events in England in August.

## AUSTRALIA NOT LEFT AFGHANISTAN YET

With the end of the ADF mission in Uruzgan, the mission now has a national focus with around 500 personnel providing ongoing training and advisory support to Afghan National Security Forces.

Australia is also maintaining a cadre of embedded personnel at ISAF HQ, ISAF Joint Command and Regional Command – South, the most senior being Brigadier Patrick Kidd as the Deputy Commanding General for Force Development.

Australians also provide support to airfield operations in Kandahar as well as a team advising the Afghan National Army's 205<sup>th</sup> Hero Corps.

Approximately 800 personnel provide support from locations within the broader Middle East Area of Operations, including our maritime commitment.

All up, about 1300 ADF personnel are still deployed on Op Slipper – just 250 fewer than before the drawdown from Uruzgan.



Photo by Able Seaman Jayson Tufrey

## MELBOURNE'S BUST

Royal Australian Navy frigate HMAS Melbourne and Pakistani Naval Ship Alamgir worked together on 12 February to seize and destroy 1951kg of cannabis resin with an estimated street value of AU\$113 million.

PNS Alamgir located a suspect dhow east of Masrah Island, Oman, and tracked it until HMAS Melbourne's boarding party could intercept and board the vessel, finding the cannabis resin in a hidden compartment in the fishing hold.

This was Melbourne's third major drug bust in her final days in the Middle East Area of Operations, having seized and destroyed 543kg of pure heroin and 23.8kg of methamphetamines days earlier, for a total hit to terrorist funds well in excess of \$1 billion.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### EXMOUTH! RADAR

An advanced US space-surveillance telescope is to be installed at the Harold E Holt Naval Communication Facility in Exmouth, Western Australia.

The telescope will complement the already-agreed placement of a C-band space-surveillance radar at Exmouth.

Australia will build required facilities, share

operating costs and operate the telescope on behalf of the US Space Surveillance Network, which is part of the US Strategic Command.

Operations are scheduled to commence in 2016.

### NAVY GREY CHANGE

Chief of Navy Vice Admiral Ray Griggs said the RAN would progressively change the colour of its surface fleet to meet modern

war-fighting and regional environmental conditions.

Since the 1950s, the Royal Australian Navy has traditionally used Storm Grey, which was based on a northern-hemisphere Light Grey developed to deter detection under overcast skies – inappropriate for the predominant sunlit conditions faced in Australian waters.

A new Haze Grey scheme, using new technologies in

polysiloxane paints with near-infrared reflecting pigments (NIRR), will be gradually applied to all Australian surface ships during routine ship-maintenance cycles over coming years.

### JUBA AIR JUMP

A RAAF C-130J Hercules and C-17 Globe Master completed a mission to deliver strategic airlift support to the United

Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) after an outbreak of violence early this year.

The last of 10 flights left Juba on 12 January after delivering about 200 tonnes of equipment and personnel from Brindisi, Italy and Djibouti.

### 2<sup>ND</sup> LHD ARRIVES

Australia's second landing helicopter dock arrived in Melbourne on 7 February,

completing a 10,000 nautical mile piggyback aboard the heavy-lift ship Blue Marlin from Ferrol, Spain.

She is now alongside at Williamstown dockyards where her Australian-built superstructure as well as combat and comms systems will be fitted before delivery to Defence late next year.

At more than 230m long and displacing 28,000

tonnes, NUSHIPs Adelaide and her sister, Canberra, will be the biggest ships ever built for the RAN.

### IRAQ OPS END

Australia's contribution to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) has ended.

Since July 2008, the Australian Defence Force contributed two officers to the UNAMI, under Operation Riverbank.

The final rotation of two officers – Colonel Steve Saddington and Lieutenant Colonel Brian Hawke – completed their deployments and departed Iraq on 25 November 2013.

Colonel Saddington was based in Baghdad, as Senior Military Adviser to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Lieutenant Colonel Hawke served his deployment in Kirkuk as a Military Adviser.

# HEADS UP



The last Aussies leave Tarin Kot, 17 December 2013. US Army photo by Corporal Harold Flynn

## OPS SPLIT – ALLOWANCES CUT

Following Australia's drawdown from Tarin Kot, Defence has redefined operations in the Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO) and changed the allowances paid.

From 1 July 2014, Operation Slipper will be split into three.

Australia's military commitment in Afghanistan will continue to be conducted under Operation Slipper while maritime security operations will be conducted under Operation Manitou, and support elements in neighbouring Gulf States will be conducted under Operation Accordion.

Op Slipper will continue to be

classified as 'warlike' service, while Manitou and Accordion will be classified as 'non-warlike' service.

In line with this, Defence has also reviewed the Field Allowance paid to land-based ADF personnel.

From 1 March, only personnel living and working in 'field-like conditions' will receive Field Allowance, which is paid to compensate for living and working in arduous conditions.

Special Forces personnel and those posted to ships do not receive Field Allowance. Their service-specific allowances will remain unchanged.

## ASLAV SIMULATOR CAPACITY DOUBLED

Thales has delivered nine new Australian Light Armoured Vehicle (ASLAV) crew procedural trainers (CPTs) to Defence.

The delivery follows a previous contract for nine CPTs that were delivered in 2006 and which play a central role in Australia's ASLAV program.



ASLAV CPTs are highly accurate synthetic training devices that provide realistic training and reduce the need to use live ammunition in real vehicles.

Individual CPTs can be linked to provide distributed training up to platoon level in a virtual battlespace.

Since 2006, the first nine CPTs have enabled significant cost savings by delivering more than 55,000 hours of reliable operation.

the Seahawk Romeo represented a big step forward for the RAN.

"The MH-60R is a potent maritime combat helicopter that will primarily be used in the anti-submarine role and will also provide an air-to-surface missile capability," Commander Frost said.

NUSQN 725 will continue training in the US before returning to Australia to start operations at Nowra, NSW, by late 2014, adding five more aircraft to its fleet in the mean time.

The first two MH-60R Seahawk Romeo maritime combat helicopters were accepted by the Royal Australian Navy at an 'In Service Date' ceremony conducted by NUSQN 725 at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Florida on 24 January.

The first two of 24 airframes on order from Sikorsky and Lockheed Martin, were delivered in early December 2013.

Commanding Officer of NUSQN 725 Commander David Frost says



US Navy MH-60R Seahawk. Copyright 2010 Lockheed Martin Corporation



## SOLDIER ON HELPING OUR WOUNDED WARRIORS



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## NEW CDF VISITS AUSTRALIA

New Zealand Chief of the Defence Force Lieutenant General Tim Keating made Australia his first overseas stop after his appointment at the end of January.

His Australian counterpart General David Hurley, who hosted the visit, said Lieutenant General Keating's decision to visit Australia for his first international trip as Defence Chief demonstrated the enduring strength of the relationship between the Defence Forces.

"I look forward to working with Lieutenant General Keating to grow our program of bilateral engagement through strategic dialogue, joint operations and practical cooperation," General Hurley said.

Lieutenant General Keating said he was pleased to reciprocate after General Hurley went to New Zealand for his first overseas visit as Australian CDF.

Photo by Lauren Larking, ADF Multimedia

## NEW CDF SWORN IN

Major General Timothy James Keating assumed command of the 13,000-strong New Zealand Defence Force during a ceremony at Government House in Wellington on 31 January.

The operationally experienced military commander was promoted to Lieutenant General at the change of command, presided over by Governor-General Lieutenant General Sir Jerry Mateparae.

Lieutenant General Keating is the first officer cadet who completed initial officer training in New Zealand to lead the NZDF.

He has commanded New Zealand contingents in the Sinai and Afghanistan and is a former Commanding Officer of 1<sup>st</sup> New Zealand Special Air Service as well as Chief of Army and Vice Chief of the Defence Forces.

Lieutenant General Keating succeeded Lieutenant General Rhys Jones as the Chief of Defence Force.

The ceremony also included a formal send-off for Lieutenant

General Jones, who is retiring after a distinguished 35-year career, and the appointment of Warrant Officer Class 1 Danniell Broughton as Warrant Officer of the NZDF, its most senior non-commissioned appointment.

Lieutenant General Keating is appointed for three years.



## BROTHERS UNITED ON OPS

After participating in Sydney's International Fleet Review, followed by a final phase of pre-deployment training in Darwin, HMNZS Te Mana began anti-piracy patrols off the coast of Somalia in early December.

A month later, she was involved in an ANZAC rendezvous with a difference when she met HMAS Melbourne in the Arabian Sea.

Three Royal New Zealand Navy sailors serving as a boat's crew on HMAS Melbourne got to spend a day on HMNZS Te Mana, the

nearest thing to home soil they'd set foot on for months.

A flurry of hugs and tears from their RNZN 'family' greeted them.

But, there was an even closer family reunion when Te Mana's Sub-Lieutenant Troy Gorden was reunited with his older brother, Chief Petty Officer Avionics Technician Justin Gorden who is serving in the RAN.

It was the first time the brothers had seen each other for four years.

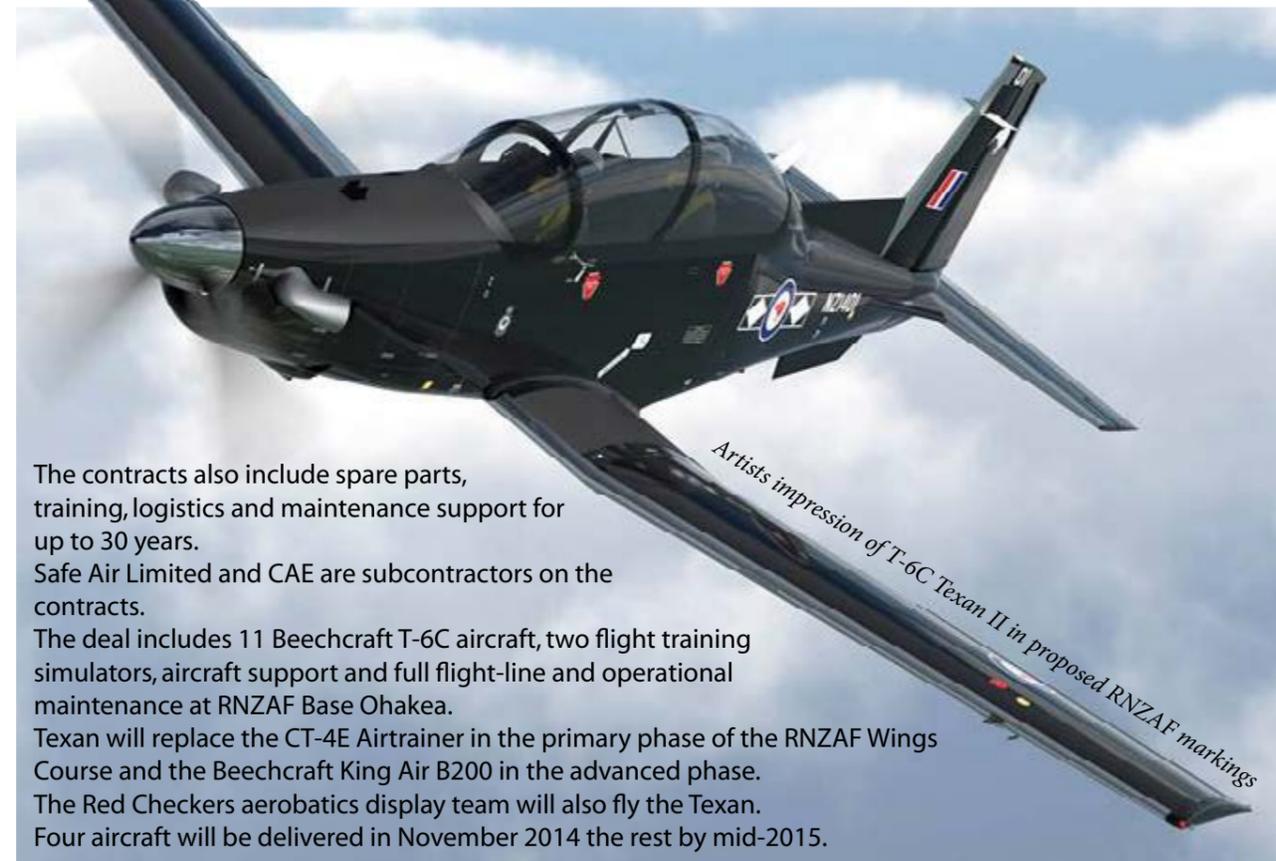
"Justin was the reason I joined the Navy in the first place," Sub-



Lieutenant Gorden said. "After so long not seeing each other it was an amazing chance to see my big brother at sea on a deployment – a classic example of how small this world can be!"

## TEXAN COMING TO NZAF

**Beechcraft signed two contracts in January to provide a comprehensive pilot-training system to the Royal New Zealand Air Force, with 11 of its T-6C Texan II turboprop military training aircraft as the centerpiece.**



The contracts also include spare parts, training, logistics and maintenance support for up to 30 years.

Safe Air Limited and CAE are subcontractors on the contracts.

The deal includes 11 Beechcraft T-6C aircraft, two flight training simulators, aircraft support and full flight-line and operational maintenance at RNZAF Base Ohakea.

Texan will replace the CT-4E Airtrainer in the primary phase of the RNZAF Wings Course and the Beechcraft King Air B200 in the advanced phase.

The Red Checkers aerobatics display team will also fly the Texan.

Four aircraft will be delivered in November 2014 the rest by mid-2015.

# NZ HEADS UP

## TRI-SERVICE CADETS

Then CDF Lieutenant General Rhys Jones welcomed 123 new officer cadets to the military on their first day of New Zealand's new Joint Officer Induction Course, at RNZAF Base Woodbourne, on 14 January. The new course combines existing elements of training from

each Service, including shooting qualifications, law of armed conflict training, Defence first aid and physical fitness testing. Wing Commander Pete King, CO of the JOIC, said the course would bring together core military training instruction and preparation from each Service into one integrated environment, making training more effective.



## KIWIS ON AUSSIE BOAT



Kiwis in tan coveralls. Photo by Able Seaman Jayson Tufrey, RAN.

Three RNZN sailors on board Australian's HMAS Melbourne were instrumental in intercepting pirates and seizing narcotics off the coast of Somalia, Tanzania and in the Indian Ocean during the ship's latest rotation.

Leading Hydrographic Survey Technician (LHST) Samuel Martin, Able Seaman Combat Specialist (ASCS) Samantha Carter and ASCS Leevi Eaton played vital roles in Melbourne's recent operational successes. The three NZ sailors were employed in a range of roles, but primarily as rigid-hulled inflatable boat (RHIB) crew – LHST Martin as a Coxswain, and Carter and Eaton as Bowman. In this role they were responsible for the safe insertion and extraction of Melbourne's boarding party onto suspicious vessels in an area renowned for narcotics smuggling and piracy. The trio were involved in intercepts, searches and seizure operations on several vessels resulting in the destruction of 543kg of heroin and 1951kgs of hashish.

## NEW TRUCK FLEET ROLLING IN

The New Zealand Defence Force took delivery of the first vehicles of a fleet of new trucks during an official key-handover ceremony on 6 December at Papakura Military Camp. A total of 194 Medium Heavy Operational Vehicles (MHOV) were purchased from Rheinmetall MAN Military Vehicles Australia

(RMMVA) under a contract worth around \$135 million. The vehicles are designed specifically for military operations, can be used in a variety of off-road terrain and are fitted with a mix of integrated cranes and winches to increase flexibility. The handover ceremony was attended by then Chief of Defence Force Lieutenant General Rhys Jones and representatives of RMMVA, as well as NZDF personnel already trained to operate the new vehicles. Wider driver and maintainer training courses were slated to start in February with the fleet expected to be fully introduced into service by 2015. The new fleet of trucks were still undergoing acceptance trials at the time of the handover. The fleet comprises a range of variants in 6-, 9-, 15- and 30-tonne carrying capacities.



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The core modules are as follows:

- Unit 301 Understand the Maritime Security Industry
- Unit 302 Understand Pre Deployment Planning and Procedures
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# Robo Arm



Photo George Glew/MoD

**A British soldier who lost his arm in Afghanistan has become the first person in the UK to receive a mind-controlled robot limb.**

Corporal Andrew Garthwaite demonstrated his revolutionary 'robotic' prosthetic to peers and VIPs in December last year on his last visit to Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre, Headley Court, south of London.

Corporal Garthwaite showed how the mind-controlled prosthetic had transformed his life, empowering him to independently carry out a

wide range of day-to-day tasks including opening doors, gardening and even cooking.

Corporal Garthwaite lost his entire right arm to a rocket-propelled grenade on operations in 2010.

He subsequently volunteered to become the first person in the UK to participate in a revolutionary nerve-transfer surgery known as targeted muscle reinnervation – a procedure to redirect the nerves that originally controlled his missing limb to a new set of muscles that were then trained to control the new arm.

After 18 months of rehabilitation he is now able to control movement of his prosthetic arm using his mind – via the muscles in his chest.

He said the surgery had made a massive improvement to his life.

"I have become a lot more independent and all the normal things I was struggling with have become so much easier," Corporal Garthwaite said.

"Simple tasks like making a coffee and opening jars have made a real difference."

The new arm was funded by the Ministry of Defence.

# Skydive without jumping from a plane!



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# Strategic Partnership

**Contact Publishing Pty Ltd and Military Photography Facebook page have joined forces in a partnership that promises big things for both parties.**

Military Photography, an Australia-based Facebook page started just over 12 months ago, is already one of the world's largest and fastest-growing Facebook communities of its type.

With more than 109,000 (surpassed by the time you read this) military-minded fans, Military Photography can offer **CONTACT Air Land & Sea + COMBAT Camera** magazines exposure to a huge, dynamic and interested audience. In fact, less than a month after the partnership was agreed, more than 1000 new subscribers have come to us thanks to this new relationship.

For our part, Contact Publishing first and foremost offers two very special on-line military magazines by free subscription, one of which you are reading now.

As an admin on Military Photography, I also hope to bring new perspectives and military experience to the Military Photography Facebook page – as well as extra, hopefully interesting content.

Jay and Mark at Military Photography have set themselves an impressive goal to raise \$1,000,000 for our favourite charity, Soldier On, in the future, and we will, of course, also support and encourage that endeavour any way we can.

Mark and Jay are 'ideas men' and it has already been a pleasure and a thrill to work with such a dynamic duo.

**Brian Hartigan**  
Managing Editor  
**CONTACT + COMBAT magazines**

# A long road to leadership

Officer Cadet Mathew Oreshkin,  
Sydney University Regiment, on patrol.

## Words and pics Sergeant John Waddell

During a mid-January heat wave at Singleton range, west of Newcastle, 38 determined men and women from across NSW, South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland undertook a physically demanding and mentally challenging course in their quest to become a part-time general-service officer in the Australian Army Reserve.

This was the third of five training blocks the potential new officers from a range of civilian backgrounds must complete, with Sydney University Regiment running training blocks two, three and four just twice a year. The first training block is the Reserve Recruit Training Course held at Kapooka near Wagga Wagga.

Each block or course then builds on the skills and experience of the previous, leading to the fifth block, conducted at the Royal Military College – Duntroon, where where successful officer cadets are commissioned as officers.

Training blocks not only pass on skills and knowledge, but also confirm candidates have the right attributes, skills and values to become an officer in the Australian Army Reserve. Ultimately, they must demonstrate that they have the leadership, management and operational skills and knowledge required for a junior officer to command a platoon on peacekeeping or stability operations.

During Training Block Three (TB3), the officer cadets undergo training through formal lessons and nine days of field training, where they get to test problem-solving abilities as junior commanders.

The officer cadets were very impressed that Commander Second Division Major General Steve Smith took the time to visit them on TB3.

Officer Cadet Bernhard Budiono from Queensland University Regiment said it was a bit of shock and awe for he and his cohorts when Major General Smith turned up to talk to them.

"His answers to all of our questions were very concise and detailed," Officer Cadet Budiono said.

"It was a nice feeling to think that he took the time to engage with us."

Officer Cadet Brittany Szlezak, University of NSW Regiment, said of the course generally that to have so many opportunities to really push herself, in a supportive environment with a lot of professional and experienced staff, had been exceptional.

"I think there aren't too many places where you are pushed constantly and come out the other end with so many new skills," Officer Cadet Szlezak.

"I think the training and skills I have acquired so far are second to none.

"As a social worker where I have to deal with crisis situations and often having to make quick decisions, this training has helped me prepare better for that too."

Senior Instructor for TB3 Major Dave Wilson, from Mobile Training Team RMC, said mother nature threw up some difficulties in running this particular course, with the use of blank ammunition ruled because of fire restrictions.

"While this meant the controlled-aggression and weapon-handling skills of the officer cadets were not tested in the usual manner, it did enable flexibility, decision-making and communication skills to be tested in a more dynamic environment," he said.

"Instructional staff were generally happy with how the officer cadets assimilated and applied their training. By the end of the field phase, they were operating as cohesive teams.

"This field phase culminated with an introduction to platoon-level activities in preparation for their next stage of training, Training Block Four, in six-months time."

Officer cadets are required to balance the complexities faced by Army Reservists, in managing their officer training requirements with their civilian commitments, such as their occupations, tertiary studies and families.

The successful completion of this course is a clear indication of their proven commitment to their future vocation as professional officers in a part-time Army career.



# Care of the wounded dog



Participants are deprived of visual cues to enhance use of other senses as well as encouraging communication between carers.

In an Australian first, military working dog handlers and medics from the Australian Defence Force took part in intensive, hands-on training in Canine Tactical Combat Casualty Care (CTCCC) in Sydney late last year.

The three-day course, which aimed to teach battlefield life-saving techniques for wounded working dogs, was sponsored by Aussie company K9 Hard Case in conjunction with the University of Sydney's College of Veterinary Medicine at Camden, with US company Veterinary Tactical Group (VTG) providing instruction.

A VTG rep said course participants learned the fundamentals of CTCCC and received advanced hands-on training and practice in haemorrhage control, airway and breathing management, prevention and treatment of heat injury and en-route care during MEDEVAC.

A K9 Hard Case rep said the intimate SOCOM background of the presenters and expert K9 veterinary knowledge was second to none and delivered in a safe conducive learning environment to an appropriate audience.

The K9 Hard Case rep (who still likes to keep his name secret) spent 24 years in the ADF, many of which were, "In a Corp that has dogs".

"I know through experience that military working dogs are essential in keeping soldiers safe on the battlefield – and that veterinary care for a wounded dog is often hours or even days away."

## Canine Tactical Combat Casualty Care





A volunteer K9 gets his temperature checked.

"We also know that K9 casualty care has developed well past the basic level of first aid that handlers and medics have.

"For example, coalition forces including the UK have adopted a growing 'care under fire' ethos.

"We found VTG were at the forefront of developing K9 TCCC, so the choice to bring them out to Australia was clear.

"We knew there was a need for this course in Australia. After all, what dog handler - and now medic - wouldn't want the additional skills to save his partner's life?"

In relation to this first CTCCC course in Australia, the K9HC rep said all expectations were well and truly exceeded.

"It was humbling to speak with seasoned soldiers from a diverse range of trades and experiences to gauge their feedback.

"Considering the diverse range of trades and high-level of experience among the people we had on course, I was expecting to get picked up on something!

"But we had nothing but positive feed back all around.

"The key now will be in maintaining the new skills."

Of course, this training is not restricted to military working-dog handlers - law enforcement, other government K9 agencies or even individuals can apply.

"A lot of it comes down to departmental fiscal years and that dirty word 'budgets', but our web site had hits from civilian security, RAAF, CIVPOL and SF - even hits from the US, which we re-routed to VTG USA courses.

"We will even take professional hunters and registered businesses that use K9s in potentially hazardous environments.

"Safety and imparting life-saving skills come first, rather than splitting hairs with political affiliations or arguing the hunting debate and so on."

K9HC and VTG are also assessing the viability of a 'train-the-trainer' course in Australia.

"VTG run this course for a range of agencies in the US so that the newly qualified and experienced K9 TCCC exponents can conduct their own validation, continuation training, force prep and so on."

For more information, visit the K9HC web site at [www.k9hardcase.com](http://www.k9hardcase.com)



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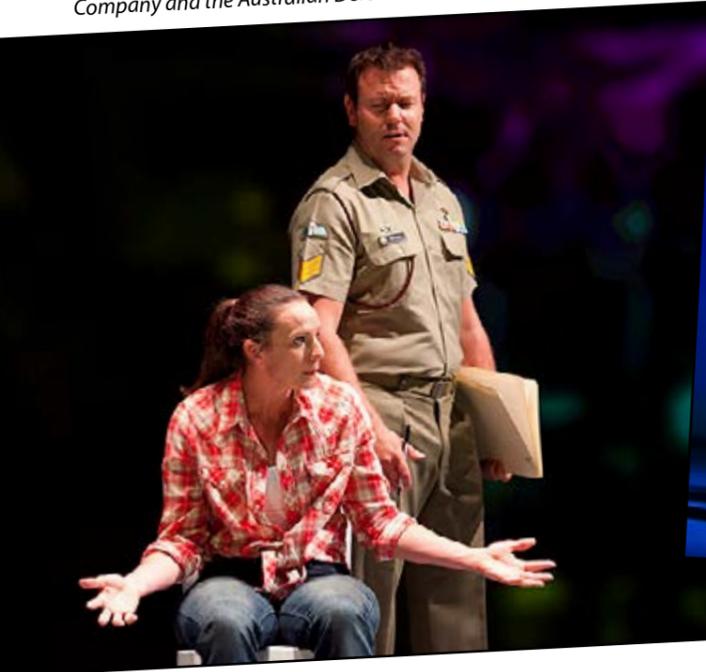
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# THE LONG WAY HOME

Photos © Lisa Tomasetti

Sergeant Sarah Webster and Martin Harper in Sydney Theatre Company and the Australian Defence Force's *The Long Way Home*.



Lance Corporal James Duncan, Private Patrick Hayes and Lance Corporal Gary Wilson in action on stage at the Sydney Theatre Company.

After months of preparation, Australian Defence Force members performed the new play *The Long Way Home* with the Sydney Theatre Company on 8 February.

Among the 1000 attendees at the official opening were Governor General Quentin Bryce and CDF General David Hurley as well as patrons of *The Long Way Home* Corporal Ben Roberts-Smith VC and acclaimed Australian actor Jack Thompson.

*The Long Way Home* reflects soldiers' personal experiences on Defence operations and the challenges they faced on coming home.

Thirteen Army personnel, including 11 who were wounded, injured or became ill in service, performed alongside four professional actors.

During 2013 these brave men and women shared their stories with Australian playwright Daniel Keene, who then wrote the play around their stories.

Now those stories are presented on stage as part of a new program to support their rehabilitation and recovery.

The play is also part of the official Centenary of Anzac program and provides an opportunity to honour the service and sacrifice of all those who have worn our nation's uniform.

*The Long Way Home* has begun a nationwide tour, with dates remaining in Wollongong 5-8 March; Townsville 14-15 March; Canberra 19-22 March; Melbourne 27-29 March; Adelaide 1-5 April; and, Perth 11-12 April. Get your tickets from [sydneytheatre.com.au/longwayhometour](http://sydneytheatre.com.au/longwayhometour)

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Stories from the front line



WORLD PREMIERE

# THE LONG WAY HOME

BY DANIEL KEENE

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Photo by Australian Defence Force

# LOVE OF COUNTRY

Words and pics Corporal Nick Wiseman, ARMY newspaper

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, A BOAT APPEARS FROM THE DARKNESS, ALMOST BEACHING ITSELF ON THE SANDS OF A SMALL ISLAND OFF CAPE YORK PENINSULA'S EAST COAST. JUST AS FAST, SIX FIGURES JUMP CLEAR WITH WEAPONS READY, AND DISAPPEAR INTO THE SHADOWS. IN THE MORNING, THE BOAT HAS LONG GONE AND THOSE SIX FIGURES ARE NOWHERE TO BE SEEN.

THEY ARE, HOWEVER, WATCHING AND WAITING.

**They are soldiers of the Regional Force Surveillance Unit, 51 Far North Queensland Regiment (51FNQR).**

Born and raised in far-north Queensland, they are experts at living off the land and are instantly able to tell if something is amiss.

Add to that their highly developed Army skills, and the soldiers of 51FNQR are a formidable force.

OC B Company Major Steven La Rose commanded the patrol and said the mission was to screen the area and identify illegal activities.

"We're looking for things like

foreign fishing vessels that may be working in our waters," he said.

"Also, any smuggling or transfer of contraband, and illegal maritime arrivals transiting through the area."

In his first year in command, Major La Rose said he relied heavily on his soldiers' local knowledge.

"It's been a very steep learning curve for me," he said.

"We have soldiers who have traversed the Cape in tinnies as a civilian activity and are able to provide first-hand knowledge in areas we operate in.

"I'm only here for two years as OC while these guys have lived here their whole lives, so you need to absorb everything they tell you and use that to come up with a plan that is going to work given the assets we have."

This particular patrol included not only soldiers from 51FNQR, but also from other units including 1 Commando Regiment, 20 Surveillance and Target Acquisition Regiment, 1RAR, 2RAR, 2/17 Royal New South Wales Regiment and 8 Combat Services Support Battalion.

With a command post at Captain Billy's Landing, patrols deployed



to nearby islands, setting up ground surveillance radars, image capture-and-transfer equipment and static observation posts.

Major La Rose said there were many challenges in an area that big, that remote and specifically because it was far-north Queensland.

"Crocodiles can pose a problem," he said.

"We had reports of two patrols that had crocodiles in their laying up positions, with one even sunbaking between two of the boats.

"Weather conditions also pose a challenge, with soldiers from other units not always acclimatised to this part of Australia."

Differing from most Army exercises and operational deployments, much of this Operation Resolute patrol was

**Right: Lance Corporal Anthony Pascoe and Corporal Stephen Moran head for shore. Bottom: Standing l-r, Gunner Byron Tworek, Lance Corporal Jimmy Elia, Corporal Chris Torenbeek and Lance Corporal Julohn Wigness. Squatting - Lance Corporal Maitie Banu and Private Antonio Sabatino.**



## OUT ON THE WAVES - AMONG THE CROCODILES

**Soldiers from 51 Far North Queensland Regiment recently completed a maritime patrol totalling more than 400km up and down Cape York - in 4.4m tinnies.**

The six-man patrol, from 51FNQR, was tasked with the mission of observing the coastline and river entries for signs of illegal activities.

Patrol commander Corporal Stephen Moran said patrolling in small boats posed several challenges.

"The salt water and constant pounding of the waves takes it out of you even though you're doing shorter days than others in static observation posts," Corporal Moran said.

"Fortunately we managed to make land at night, which allowed us to rest up."

Patrolman Private Jimmy Pascoe said going on patrol was a great experience.

"It's a good life in the Army," he said.

"I enjoy learning different skills but it can get tiring out there all day in the boats."

The patrol departed Captain Billy's Landing, about 700km north of Cairns, and headed south along the Cape analysing key terrain, which had earlier been identified as possible areas where illegal vessels could land or cache equipment.

It was down there that the patrol discovered another challenge, common in this place - being stalked by a 2.5m crocodile.

"Usually they will move on when boats come into an area making noise," Corporal Moran said.

"This one was adamant and stayed about a metre from our boats.

"Even at low tide he'd find the nearest bit of water and stay nearby."

Patrols are all too familiar with crocodiles

around the cape, and soldiers have learned over the years that leaving them alone and just keeping an eye on them is usually good enough.

After returning to Captain Billy's Landing for a quick stop, debrief and resupply, they returned to the ocean and began the second half of their patrol, this time north.

It was Private Jeffrey Tamate's first tasking after joining the unit and completing his patrolman courses.

"I live on the west side of the Cape near Weipa," Private Tamate said.

"Little things are different on this side of the Cape, like the winds.

"It's a pretty interesting experience.

"I could see myself doing this for a while."

The patrol spent a further 48 hours travelling north, patrolling yet more coastline and river entrances before making their way back to base to enjoy some well-earned rest.



maritime based, with all patrols except one inserted from or operating directly on the ocean.

With a constant flow of bulk carriers, fishing vessels and yachts, patrols were kept busy reporting back to the command post, which then consolidated the sightings and passed the information to their battalion headquarters and then on to Border Protection Command and other government agencies.

Being a domestic operation, soldiers were tasked only to conduct surveillance and report what they found.

"We don't actually get involved with anything going on but gather information to send back to Border Protection Command," Major La Rose said.

"They then have Navy, Customs and police elements they can activate if required.

"We're essentially a sensor for Border Protection Command."



Top: Lance Corporal Jimmy Elia. Above: Private Emily Jackson passes fuel to Lance Corporal Kevin Miller. Below: Lance Corporal Andrew Vela, Private Jeffrey Tamate and Lance Corporal Morris Nonap.



Above: Half a six-man Op Resolute patrol comes to shore in their 4.4m tinny. Right: Corporal Stephen Moran gives a post-patrol brief. Below: Lance Corporal Anthony Pascoe.



# 51<sup>ST</sup> BATTALION

## FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND REGIMENT

51FNQR serves as a Regional Force Surveillance Unit (RFSU), carrying out reconnaissance and surveillance tasks as its primary role. Every operator in the unit is cross-trained in a variety of 'low-visibility' skills such as weapons, survival, sniping, medic, small boat handling, driving, tracking, air ops and so on.

It is the only battalion of the Far North Queensland Regiment, and draws its lineage from an Australian Imperial Force (AIF) battalion, which was raised for service during World War I.

The 51FNQR of today plays an important role in the security of Australia by conducting surveillance patrols in the sparsely populated and remote regions of far-north Queensland.

It is made up of full-time and part-time members with its HQ and a surveillance company located in Cairns.

Other surveillance companies are headquartered at Weipa, Thursday Island and Mount Isa.

Approximately 30 per cent of the battalion's members are indigenous Torres Strait Islanders and mainland aborigines.

The battalion's area of responsibility covers a lot of territory; from Cardwell in north Queensland, north to the Torres Strait, inclusive of Cape York and the Gulf Country and west to the Northern Territory border – some 640,000 square kilometres. Its motto is...

**Ducit Amor Patriae –  
The Love of Country Leads Me.**



# ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

## 2RAR WINS CAMBRIAN GOLD

By Lance Corporal Karl Fabreschi

Following our section's victory in the 2013 Dog Cup competition in April last year, we had the privilege of representing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment – 2RAR – and the Australian Army in the 2013 Exercise Cambrian Patrol.

Cambrian Patrol is an extremely arduous patrolling event held in the Brecon Beacons in Wales. The patrol is a competitive 48-hour event with units from all over the UK participating, as well as a large international competition base. Teams this year came from as far as New Zealand, Italy, Norway, Pakistan, Poland and of course ourselves, a section comprised of members from recon and sniper platoons 2RAR, representing Australia.

Competing teams are awarded a gold, silver or bronze medal, or a certificate of attendance on completion of the task, depending on their performance. Recent years have seen 3RAR take away a silver and a bronze, and the 2012 2RAR team also brought home a silver medal. But, the last time an Australian team came away with a gold medal equivalent was 27 years ago, when a 1RAR section stole victory from the local UK teams the very first time they were invited to compete.





The competition kicked off at 0500 from the primary assembly area, where orders were issued and received complete with a detailed mud-model. Knowing a high percentage of points from the event went into this component, no corners were cut and Katzy (Corporal Ben Katz, patrol commander) was able to issue a comprehensive set of patrol orders for the first phase of the patrol.

The first stage of the patrol involved a recon task, where we were required to conduct a CTR [close target reconnaissance] on an enemy campsite, which was situated in a farming homestead in a large open valley. Once getting eyes-on the target area for the first time, we concluded it would be far more tactically sound to conduct a long-range OP [observation post] on the enemy as opposed to a CTR. In this instance the advantage of having every member of our patrol either from a recon or sniper background was immediately evident, as we were able to ascertain minor details such as vehicle rego plates, detailed descriptions of all enemy personnel and develop sketches of the camp layout both panoramic and aerial.

On completion of our time on target for this phase we conducted an 18km foot move to affect marry-up with a friendly forces guide. However before this meeting we were required to have all patrol report documentation prepared, which resulted in the entire patrol conducting an LUP [laying-up point] on a freezing wind-swept hill either writing the report, drawing overlays, or polishing sketches and details of all enemy personal sighted.

After we married up with the guide we were allowed a 2.5-hour respite in a friendly rebel-forces camp, where orders for the next task were issued and disseminated, and the debrief for the recon task was conducted. At this location the lads were also given a lesson by a UKSF [special forces] advisor on how



to filter water and start a fire using improvised means.

At this stage each member of the patrol had approximately 45 minutes sleep, after which we boarded trucks to move to an insertion point for the next stage of the mission. After unhappily watching the comforting red glow of the vehicle taillights disappearing into the 0500 gloom we stepped off for our next leg, a hideous 8km walk which seemingly took us through the heart of Mordor to our next assessed stand, which was the water crossing.

Having rehearsed our drills and tactics for a water obstacle crossing we felt it went relatively smoothly, although the 5m sheer mud-bank slip and slide we had to scale once we exited the water made for humorous viewing, as guys were going head over heels trying to drag our hootchie-wrapped packs up the muck.

Following a quick move to a short halt where we passed the Italian team who appeared equally over-it and were cooking up a gourmet ration-pack meal, we smashed a quick feed of our own and put on our dry yet manky kit.

We then patrolled a further 10km to RV with another friendly rebel-force member who required our assistance in identifying some generic enemy weapon systems and mines left behind in a cache.

With the cache identified and secured, we had another charming stroll through the Welsh forested mountains until we encountered, curiously enough, a camp of French Partisans (their words), who amazingly required their water purified and a camp-fire built. The lads who received the lesson from the UKSF advisor earlier in the patrol expertly instructed the rebels in the optimum purification and fire-starting techniques, and with the Partisans lust for fire appeased, we were able to continue on task to a holding area, before being transported by truck to the Sennybridge training area.

Immediately on entering the training area, we encountered a civilian vehicle blocking the road, which inexplicably required our assistance to move. Lo and behold the second we dismounted the trucks we were ambushed by the resident enemy rebel forces from the field to our flank.

Katzy issued snap quick-attack orders and we executed a rapid flanking assault on the first two enemy personnel, whereby we were immediately engaged by a further enemy

force approximately 100m to the rear of the first element. These insurgents were also rapidly destroyed by our call-sign and, following a quick withdrawal from enemy indirect fire, we re-mounted the vehicles for a short drive to a friendly rebel-force safe house.

At this location it was discovered that enemy personnel were being tortured and we were required to intervene and display the correct procedures for the handling of detainees.

By some amazing twist of fate, simultaneously to us giving the persons under capture handling lessons, a friendly mortar base-plate was running low on ammunition, which of course required our immediate assistance in resupplying them by foot. After we ran 1.8km and dumped the mortar rounds at the feet of the ungrateful friendly rebels, they proceeded to repay us by blowing themselves up while playing with explosives, which was our queue to step in and provide life-saving first aid to the injured personnel, and subsequently move them by foot a further 800m to a helo landing point for a CASEVAC.



**Katzy issued  
snap quick-  
attack orders  
and we  
executed a  
rapid flanking  
assault**



Suffice to say, by this stage of the game, at 2200 on the second night, we were well and truly exhausted. However, we knew the bulk of the tough events were behind us. All that remained was a further stomp to a marry-up point, where we conducted a kit-check of all our equipment under the watchful eye of Cambrian Patrol DS [directing staff], and provided our debrief for the entire mission.

It was noted by the assessing staff at this point the demeanour in which we carried ourselves as a fighting patrol, although we had suffered through the cold and wet and covered approximately 55km of ground by foot, we were able to still continue on further tasking from this point, with all members having an additional 12 hours of rations and water available.

At this stage we had clued on that it was nearly game over, and after some mind-games where we were told we had to complete another mission and patrol a further distance, we were lined up against a wall and told by directing staff that our Exercise Cambrian Patrol was in fact complete.

Upon returning to Sennybridge Barracks and having a short snooze until 0700 we attended breakfast and gorged ourselves on grease-covered fried eggs and bacon at the mess until it was time for the much-anticipated awards ceremony.

Following a heavily over-dramatised announcement that we had won the Gold Medal a collective sigh of relief fell out of the entire team. Equal parts that we had won the gold and that the event was completely over.

Every one of us in the patrol entered the event with the drive and desire to earn the gold. We were confident with our abilities within our respective roles, and felt that the hard work we had put in over the patrol had paid off. There were ample opportunities to take shortcuts, skimp on post-patrol product and reports, and get far more rest than the meagre amount we did. However, the entire section was aiming for the gold medal from start to finish, and the determination and mateship we carried through the task allowed us to accomplish the top prize in what is dubbed...

# ULTIMATE CHALLENGE



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# NORTHERN EXPOSURE

After a two-year break, snipers of the Royal Australian Regiment again participated in the annual Canadian International Sniper Concentration (CISC) in Gagetown, New Brunswick, in 2013. This year's pair was Corporal Michael Oram and myself, Lance Corporal Karl Fabreschi from 2RAR, with WO2 Clint Vecchio the current sniper master at the School of Infantry as coach/manager.

## Canadian International Sniper Concentration

The last time RAR sniper pairs participated in this event was 2011, with a pair from 1RAR and 3RAR both reporting favourable experiences.

CISC aims to gather the wealth of knowledge and experiences from sniper cells around the world in one place, with international teams this year hailing from the Netherlands, Sweden, Ireland, UK, New Zealand and France. While the majority of teams were Canadian-battalion pairs, there was also a large presence of tactical law-enforcement teams who had travelled from the farthest reaches of Canada to participate and throw their hat in the ring too.

CISC revolves around seven days of competitive events that aim to cover the full spectrum of sniper engagements including unknown distance, snags and moving targets out to 700m, stalking, multi-threat, communication and pistol shooting.

Words by Australia's Corporal Karl Fabreschi  
Photos by Canada's Corporal Roger Simard

While there is a yearly debate as to whether CISC is a competition or a concentration, it aims to achieve both. Any shooting based around a series of competitive scored events are of course going to bring out the best performances from people. However, it is not set up to be so ruthlessly competitive that people are unwilling to share information or throw out the odd pro tip for young players.

The week kicked off with an introduction from directing staff and the Commandant of the Canadian School of Infantry. This was where the first culture shock occurred as we discovered that every address or safety brief was stated twice – first in English followed by French.

Introductions were followed by a vendors' display with

manufacturers such as Colt, Heckler & Koch (H&K) and Beretta among the many big names in the industry that had come to spruik their wares to the eagerly awaiting soldiers.

With formalities out of the way, all that remained was a solid week of shooting.

Most mornings kicked-off with the comical rock show that was 64 snipers attempting to sign-out the gratuitous amount of weapons, optics and equipment required for the day's event from a shoe-box-sized armoury. This was followed by a drive to the range on school buses that provided a sight-seeing tour of the Canadian training area and included the odd sighting of black bears.

With the pool of competitors being so large, a shooting

serial that would take as little as 15 minutes meant the vast majority of time spent at the range was used waiting for said event. This, however, allowed the primary aim of the CISC to occur – the sharing of information between snipers.

There was much to be learned sitting in the waiting area listening to guys in the trade from around the world, be they police or military, discussing weapons or tactics, comparing courses or generally just talking shop. We also discovered that all the shoots were conducted in helmet and body-armour, a contrast to the mostly rural training and shooting we conduct at home, using yowie suit and stalking kit.

There was a massive array of weapons and equipment brought in from across the



Australia's Corporal Michael Oram on a 'stress shoot'.

A Canadian sniper on the Groningen UO Village obstacle course.



globe to be admired. The Canadians favour a C14 bolt-action Timberwolf in .338 calibre as their primary weapon, with a McMillan TAC-50 as their anti-material long-range weapon. The H&K 417 we use as our secondary weapon was also in use by the Dutch and French, with the Kiwis and UK team using a similar system in the LMT 7.62mm DMR. The Blaser Tactical 2 we use as our primary weapon was a big hit, with other teams admiring the straight-pull bolt system that allows rapid follow-up shots.

It was pleasantly surprising to see we were ahead of the curve in terms of some of the weapon systems we have available to us in the RAR

sniper cells. Our vast suite of weaponry (only all available while operationally deployed) being the SR-98, SR-25, AW-50F, Blaser and H&K 417, truly lets us choose the appropriate tool for the job at hand and puts us ahead of most nations in terms of variety of weapon systems.

However an area we were left behind in was optics, with every single team bar ourselves issued a Leupold MK4 Mil-dot spotting scope, while we are still issued no-reticule Nikons while we patiently await the arrival of the excellent Leupold system in battalions.

While we pulled away good results in the snags and movers serial, and the night multi-threat shoot,

Corporal Karl Fabreschi is tested on a 'stress shoot'.



we were unable to seal a ranking position in the overall competition, with the local lads cementing their respect in the international community with a pair from our Canadian sister regiment, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, taking first place. Second and third were also snatched up by local teams with the Kiwis ranking a very respectable fourth.

The standard of competition and shooters at the event demonstrated to us that this is certainly not a competition you can rock-up and 'cuff', as many of the local teams had been training heavily all summer and most of the shooters, be they local or international, were on their third visit to the CISC.

While having the same pair repeat the CISC year after year no doubt gives a

competitive edge, it is also important to note that this experience should be shared throughout the battalions to give a good level of experience across the RAR. In a perfect world it would be ideal to have a pair from each battalion compete every year in either the CISC or the American sniper competition. Alternatives would be to have the trip based on merit, with the top-ranking Australian pair at the annual SASR Sniper Concentration or AASAM going on to Canada.

Despite the relatively low amount of shooting conducted, which is understandably part and parcel when attempting to have 64 snipers rotate through events in a relatively short time-frame, we saw the CISC as an extremely positive experience overall, and is

definitely something the ADF should strive to have RAR snipers attend annually.

Given the current draw-down from Afghanistan, and other operational deployments all but dried up, the coming years will see a decline in the number of snipers with operational experience, especially ones who have had the opportunity to achieve kinetic results. CISC will allow the pool of international experience to be drawn from and potentially provide fresh TTPs to absorb or draw inspiration from.

In an age when it will be difficult to work with our allies in an operational capacity, it is impossible to overlook the value of collaborations such as CISC for the professional development of snipers in the RAR.



# Concentration



**S**trong winds caused heartache as snipers from Socomd [Special Operations Command] and Forcomd [Forces Command] battled 65km/hr gusts during the SASR Sniper Concentration in Perth from 11 to 22 November last year.

More than 20 competitors took part in the event at Campbell Barracks, Bindoon and Lancelin Training Area in Perth.

The activity was designed to share skills learnt from operations, particularly in Afghanistan, where a sniper's expertise is heavily drawn on, in most part, due to the terrain.

It covered all tactical aspects of sniper training with competitors shooting weapons such as the 7.62mm SR25, the 7.62m HK 417, the 7.62mm SR98, the Blaser Tactical .338 and the mighty Barrett M82A2 .50cal sniper rifles.

Competitors were challenged at all levels, including night shooting using thermal scopes and other night-vision equipment, firing on moving targets, long-range observation exercises, live-fire stalks and urban firing.

Each event was devised by the SASR Sniper Cell and reflected operational scenarios.

Settings pitted snipers from the battalions of the Royal Australian Regiment, Special Air Service Regiment and 2 Commando Regiment against one another.

This year's event was highly competitive with the scores kept tight. At times the first six pairs were within reach of one another.

It was obvious from the strong competition that the snipers had trained hard for the event.

The winning pair, from SASR, was the most consistent throughout the competition and within the top five through all 18 scored activities.

Number one shooter in the winning pair used a Sig Sauer Blaser Tactical 7.62mm bolt-action sniper rifle and his second used a Knights Armament SR25 semi-auto bolt action.

With 1234 points on the board, the SASR pair were just 17 points ahead of 2 Cdo Regt who had 2RAR hot on their tails, just four points off.

SASR's Tpr D said it was a tough fortnight of intense rivalry.

"They were at a very high standard, as the scores show – but

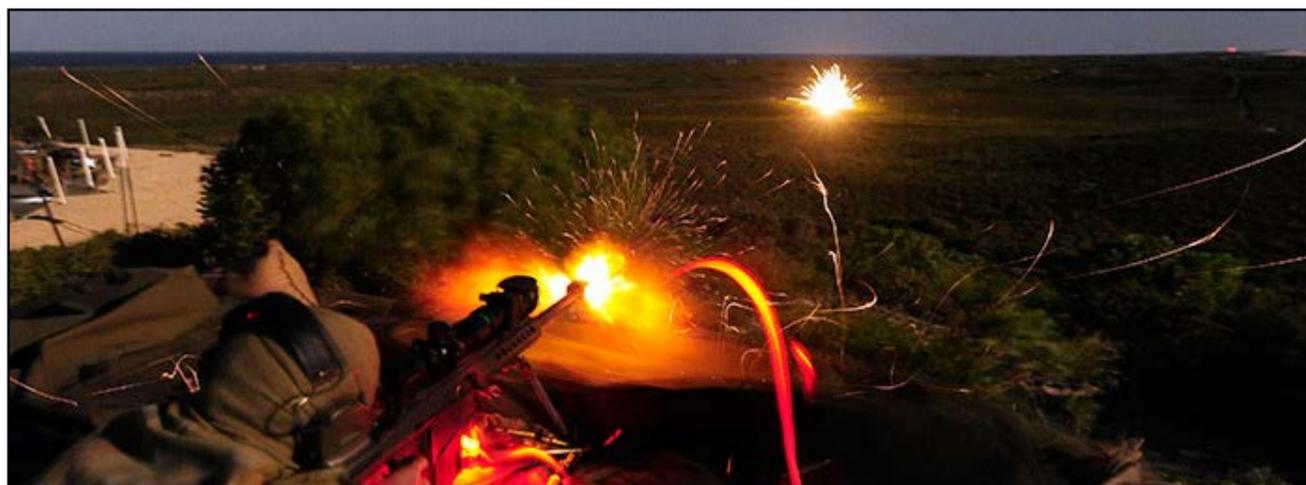
it was a good opportunity to hone my skills and showcase what SASR has in its inventory for training and equipment," he said.

SASR Sniper Cell Sgt S has a keen interest in the future development of sniper cells around the Army.

"After operations, sniping tends to drop off in training where units don't understand sniping to its full potential," he said.

"But it's important to keep up the skills in peacetime so that if a conflict comes up again they are fully prepared.

"Snipers don't always get the individual and collective specialist



## The Australian Army is doing things very well when it comes to training snipers

training at the small-team level that they really need.

"It's a great experience for the soldiers from Forcomd to be around others who have the same passion for sniping.

"They all love the Army, they all love doing the training and doing the job and they feel prepared to do everything after doing this concentration," Sgt S said.

"We have imparted as much knowledge as we can. We have trained Forcomd snipers to a higher standard, shown them new equipment and discussed issues and fixes.

"We conducted training and reviews for .338 Blaser, .50 cal Barrett and various scopes so they can train other RAR soldiers in the future."

"ADF sniper skill-levels are very high compared to a lot of other armies.

"The Australian Army is doing things very well when it comes to training snipers."

Sergeant S said next year's concentration with Socomd and Forcomd snipers may also include United States Marine Corps snipers rotating through Darwin.

TOP FIVE PAIRS		
Score	Sniper Pair	Unit
Highest possible score 1646		
1234	Tpr D and Cpl P	SASR
1217	Pte H and Pte M	2 Cdo Regt
1213	LCpl Karl Fabreschi and Pte Kai Seibert	2RAR
1174	Pte Tyson Napier and Cpl Dwain Bould	1RAR
1170	Cpl Adam Pontifex and Pte Simon Lancaster	7RAR





Corporal Baird was awarded the Medal for Gallantry for actions in Afghanistan in 2007-08

# Corporal Cameron Baird VC MG

**Corporal Cameron Stewart Baird was invested as the 100<sup>th</sup> Australian and the first 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment soldier to receive the Victoria Cross during a ceremony at Government House, Canberra, on 18 February.**

Corporal Baird received the fourth Australian VC for action in Afghanistan – the first posthumously awarded.

He was killed in action on 22 June 2013 while operating as a member of the Special Operations Task Group, alongside the Afghan Provincial Response Company conducting an operation to disrupt an insurgent network in the Khod Valley.

He was on his fifth tour in Afghanistan and had also served in Iraq and East Timor.

Cameron's father Doug, mother Kaye and brother Brendan issued a statement after the military's highest honour was invested on their son and brother, which read in part...

"This award recognises Cameron's valour, extreme devotion to duty and ultimate self-sacrifice. For us, the Baird family, this is a very special day that brings with it mixed emotions. We are tremendously proud of Cameron.

We are honoured to accept this award on his behalf, and we are grateful to the Governor-General and the ADF for bestowing this honour.

But, in accepting this honour, we are also deeply saddened that Cameron could not be here – not that he'd like the attention.

Cameron lived for the Army, his mates, and to serve his country. He was an easygoing bloke whose leadership and relaxed nature instilled confidence in all who knew him. He was also a typical, down-to-earth, Aussie larrikin with

a great sense of humour and who loved a practical joke.

We firmly believe Cameron would be more than a bit embarrassed, and probably a bit shocked by all the attention. We also know that Cameron would be the first to tell you: "This is not just about me – it's about my Army family, my brothers-in-arms, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment".

While today is about Cameron, it is also about the mateship he shared with these blokes, with whom he trained, lived and fought alongside.

Cameron would often say about his job: "This is not Hollywood. We're just everyday people who go home to our families when the job is done". But Cameron is the 40<sup>th</sup> Australian soldier who did not come home from Afghanistan when the job was done.

This recognition honours Cameron and his brothers-in-arms in a way that we who knew and loved him will cherish."

# VC CITATION

On 22 June 2013, a Commando Platoon of the Special Operations Task Group, with partners from the Afghan National Security Forces, conducted a helicopter assault into Ghawchak village, Uruzgan Province, in order to attack an insurgent network deep within enemy-held territory. Shortly after insertion, Corporal Baird's team was engaged by small-arms fire from several enemy positions. Corporal Baird quickly seized the initiative, leading his team to neutralise the positions, killing six enemy combatants and enabling the assault to continue. Soon afterwards, an adjacent Special Operations Task Group team came under heavy enemy fire, resulting in its commander being seriously wounded. Without hesitation, Corporal Baird led his team to provide support. En route, he and his team were engaged by rifle and machine-gun fire from prepared enemy positions. With complete disregard for his own safety, Corporal Baird charged towards the enemy positions, supported by his team. On nearing the positions, he and his team were engaged by additional enemy on their flank. Instinctively, Corporal Baird neutralised the new threat with grenades and rifle fire, enabling his team to close with the prepared position. With the prepared position now isolated, Corporal Baird manoeuvred and was engaged by enemy machine-gun fire, the bullets striking the ground around him. Displaying great valour, he drew the fire, moved to cover, and suppressed the enemy machine-gun position. This action enabled his team to close on the entrance to the prepared position, thus regaining the initiative.

On three separate occasions Corporal Baird charged an enemy-held building within the prepared compound. On the first occasion he charged the door to the building, followed by

another team member. Despite being totally exposed and immediately engaged by enemy fire, Corporal Baird pushed forward while firing into the building. Now in the closest proximity to the enemy, he was forced to withdraw when his rifle ceased to function. On rectifying his rifle stoppage, and reallocating remaining ammunition within his team, Corporal Baird again advanced towards the door of the building, once more under heavy fire. He engaged the enemy through the door but was unable to suppress the position and took cover to reload. For a third time, Corporal Baird selflessly drew enemy fire away from his team and assaulted the doorway. Enemy fire was seen to strike the ground and compound walls around Corporal Baird, before visibility was obscured by dust and smoke. In this third attempt, the enemy was neutralised and the advantage was regained, but Corporal Baird was killed in the effort. Corporal Baird's acts of valour and self-sacrifice regained the initiative and preserved the lives of his team members. His actions were of the highest order and in keeping with the finest traditions of the Australian Army and the Australian Defence Force.



## Be proud of your service for Australia!

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 Web: www.medalsmementos.com



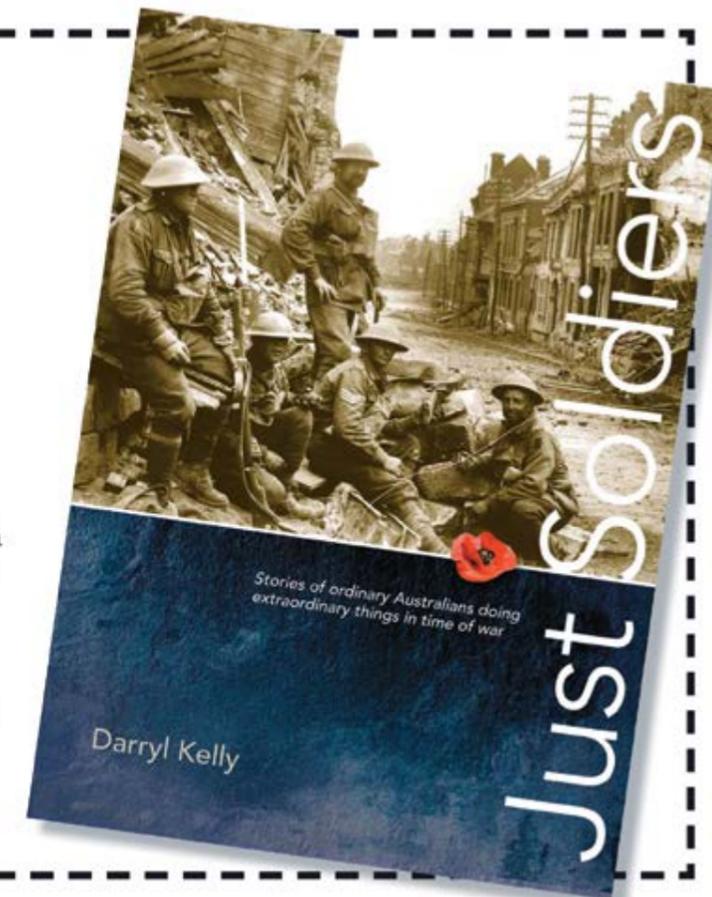
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Expect delays for foreign or rare medals and ribbons.*

## JUST SOLDIERS: STORIES OF ORDINARY AUSTRALIANS DOING EXTRAORDINARY THINGS IN TIME OF WAR

by Darryl Kelly

In 1914, Australia had a population of fewer than 5 million, yet 300,000 from all walks of life volunteered to fight. More than 60,000 were killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed or taken prisoner. This book of WW1 stories, based on fact, portray the human tragedy of war. Many confirm the reputation of Australians as fearless fighting men. Yet, as in life, not all were heroes.

Available at all good book shops or [www.anzacday.org.au](http://www.anzacday.org.au)



# WARRIOR



Trooper David Nicolson (third from left) and his proud family stand in front of the Trooper Nicolson portrait by Caroline McGregor.



ABOVE: Sydney artist Caroline McGregor is flanked by subject of the portrait Trooper David Nicolson and CONTACT Editor Brian Hartigan at the opening of her exhibition in Sydney.

## AN EXHIBITION BY CAROLINE MCGREGOR

On Saturday 15 February CONTACT Editor Brian Hartigan had the honour to officially open an exhibition of soldier portraits titled WARRIOR.

The works by Sydney artist Caroline McGregor were on public exhibition at a gallery in Sydney's trendy suburb of Glebe, throughout February.

The official opening was very well attended by family and friends of the artist, CONTACT magazine and the subjects of the art works.

Guest of honour was Trooper David Nicolson, the subject of one portrait and author of "I Survived Four IEDs", which graced the front cover of CONTACT in March 2012.

After the exhibition closed, Caroline said she was overwhelmed by the public reaction to her exhibition.

"I've used this word a lot lately, but can't think of another more appropriate - I have been so humbled by the response," she said.

"Working alone in my studio for the past few years, I really didn't know what to expect.

"The fact that so many people 'got it' has blown me away!

"Thanks to everyone who made it possible, and thanks to everyone who came to see it - and mostly, thanks to the boys out there doing the hard stuff!"

Caroline's body of work began, "As a cry for public recognition for the efforts of our young soldiers risking their lives on the other side of the world".

"As a nation we tend to look the other way and not share responsibility for the situations they found themselves in.

"But, as a wise man once aptly put it, "We sleep safely in our beds only because rough men stand ready in the night to visit violence on those who would do us harm"."

**Feedback suggests overwhelming support for this exhibition to be seen in a bigger space. If anyone with influence at the Australian War Memorial, The National Portrait Gallery or other institution sees this, please contact Caroline McGregor via facebook.com/CarolineMcGregorArt**



RIGHT: Rosie Hartigan from CONTACT magazine views a portrait from Caroline McGregor's exhibition.

## LETTERS HOME – Childers



### Kirsty Strike – Gap-Year girl ▲

Geraldton WA's Kirsty Strike has come a long way in life since leaving Strathalbyn College to try the Navy's gap-year program.

She joined the gap-year program hoping to travel Australia and the world and has recently returned from her first overseas deployment on board HMAS Childers after visiting a number of ports in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

"During my gap year I got to sample the Navy, conducting training in Victoria, serving on ships in Sydney and then working with the submarine division in Western Australia," she said.

"The Navy has allowed me to see a lot of our amazing country, as well as to travel the globe."

Kirsty, who is an Able Seaman, was thrilled that during a visit to Chittagong she and her crewmates onboard HMAS Childers were hosted by the Bangladesh Navy.

"The Bangladesh Navy were very proud and professional and great

hosts, showing us around their country," she said.

The West Australian attributes her passion for swimming as a major reason she chose the Navy over the Army or Air Force, and after training 10 years with the Geraldton Swimming Club the water lover is now serving at sea.

"It is a little different to be on the sea rather than in it but sometimes, if the conditions are right, we get to swim in the middle of the ocean, and I feel right at home," she said.

Kirsty's role as a communications specialist on the patrol boat has her communicating with various ships via visual signaling or tactical voice circuits to assist manoeuvring vessels around the area of operations.

"This is what I have trained for, it is very exciting but also challenging," she said.

Kirsty finds time whenever she can to catch up with her parents Yvonne and Doug in WA, and at home in Cairns, she spends time with her boyfriend Mitchell.

### Christian Duncan – in his brothers' footsteps ▶

Wynnum, Queensland, local Christian Duncan was following in the footsteps of his two brothers when he joined the Navy in 2008 – fulfilling the wishes of his late father, who always wanted all three sons to join the ADF.

Once his father's dream, it is now Leading Seaman Duncan's dream to continue working in the Navy and progress through the ranks.

Christian said the Navy was exactly what he was looking for and praised the stability, the diverse range of roles and the lifestyle.

"I tried out various career paths before joining the Navy and worked many jobs to try and make enough money to support my family, but nothing compares to the Navy wage and the benefits that allow my family and I to live comfortably," he said.

Christian is a sailor serving onboard Armidale-class patrol boat HMAS Childers, which was alongside Port Blair, India, when this photo was taken.

HMAS Childers participated in the maritime activity Milan 2014 between 4 and 9 February 2014 around India's Andaman Islands.



### Deanna Garbutt – XO ◀

◀ Lieutenant Deanna Garbutt is the Executive Officer of the Ardent VI crew embarked in HMAS Childers and was photographed here at a parade during the maritime activity Milan 2014 in Port Blair, India.

Milan is a biennial India-hosted activity that aims to foster cooperation between regional navies on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief capabilities.

# Q STORE

## INFORCE 9VX and 6VX tactical lights

Built in the USA purely for military and LE, the professional handheld range of tactical flashlights from INFORCE raise the bar when it comes to quality, performance and cost effectiveness.

Both the 9VX (right) and the 6VX offer lightweight carbon-fibre composite bodies.

Each is MIL-STD-810F certified by an independent US DoD testing laboratory for environmental parameters such as high/low temps, drop, salt corrosion, humidity and, notably, submersion to 20m.

A removable MOLLE clip allows quick retention and a cord lanyard.

INFORCE focus on performance criteria with the 9VX producing 300 lumens over a consistent power curve run time of 3hr (high mode), and 60 lumens for 15hr (low mode).

The engineered reflector provides a focused hot spot with balanced peripheral for discerning your surroundings.

A disorienting CQB strobe is easily activated.

The 9VX and 6VX both come with limited lifetime warranty and both are available exclusively to ADF via **360 Defence**. Visit, [www.360defence.com.au](http://www.360defence.com.au)



Photos/Videos



Home2You  
countdown



Time Zone  
Tracker



Time since  
last...



Quotes

Info

Set Password

## Making fun of absence

With a focus on our troops returning from Afghanistan last year it's easy to forget the average Defence family is separated for about two months a year normally.

For families with young kids, it can be difficult to understand and explain the comings and goings.

The **Home2You** app allows families to create a countdown to help ease the angst around the Defence parent's trips away.

Whether deployed, on course or 'out bush', this app

also allows the family to store photos, videos, special messages, memories and milestones that can be treasured.

**Home2You** on iTunes ranked third most popular paid lifestyle app within 12 hours of launch – and an Android version is expected soon.

**Home2You** is a great new resource not only for Defence families, but also for fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) workers and, in fact, any separated family.

[www.Facebook.com/CONTACTmagazine](http://www.Facebook.com/CONTACTmagazine)



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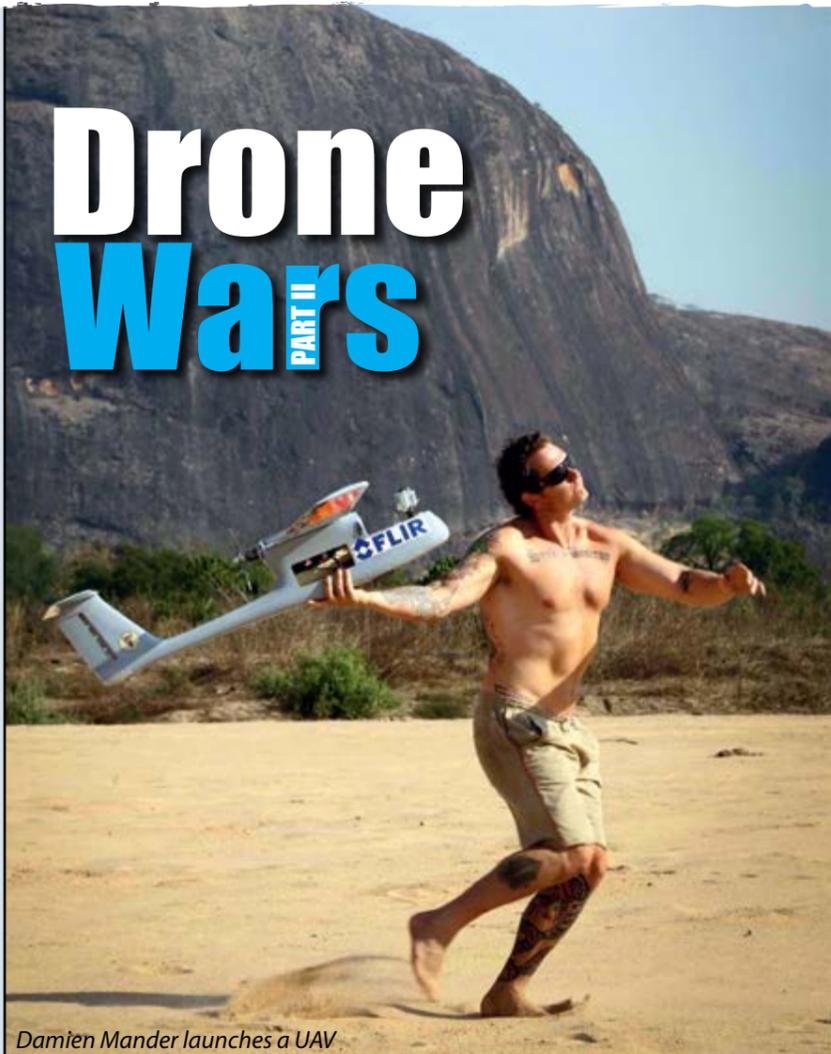
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Damien Mander launches a UAV

## Drone Wars PART II

**Despite a 23-year international ban on trade in ivory, elephants continue to be shot for their tusks.**

When Simon Beart approached me in Melbourne in early 2012 and said he would like to build drones for the IAPF, I politely replied, as I generally do, and forgot about it. I've had plenty of such offers in the past.

Running a not-for-profit, I have a simple formula that helps me avoid disappointment. Ninety-five people out of 100 who offer help, never come through. So, the faster I can reply to

these 95 people, the quicker I can get to the five really dedicated ones.

Two days after arriving to meet Derek Littleton's team in Niassa, I received an email from Simon saying he was a week away from being airborne.

Then the cogs in my head began to turn – and we started the logistical task of completing the drones and bringing them to Africa.

But, while a drone would be good, it wouldn't be enough. We needed an additional capability – and there was only one place to go for that.

FLIR lead the market in lightweight, thermal imaging cameras, suitable for the exact thing we needed. A thermal imaging camera displays an area in two dimensions. It distinguishes everything in layers depending on the heat signature that it puts out. A human being against the night backdrop of the Africa bush is perfect illustration of white on black.

The drones we are using are small in comparison to a Predator UAV that routinely patrols the skies anywhere the United States has an interest – but they have their purpose.

Our drones are a great example of what technology should be – smaller, lighter, easier to function and cheaper, yet sophisticated in their effectiveness. Gyroscopes that measure rates of rotation; magnetometers that act as digital compasses; pressure sensors that calculate altitude; accelerometers, to measure the force of gravity – all the capabilities of these technologies are now embedded in tiny chips you can buy at a decent electrical store.

And global positioning systems that used to cost tens of thousands of dollars in the 1990s are now a thumbnail-sized device that cost as little as \$10.

In Niassa, the drone allows us to have eyes on target, to see things out in front of us and in places we don't have the resources to otherwise get to.

Previously we would walk around, waiting to bump into something. Now, we peek over the horizon.

The drone can provide day or night aerial intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance.

Real-time intelligence is everything in an operational environment. Having this far exceeds locating a two-day old footprint or, worse still, the mutilated carcass of an animal.

Having the resources to follow up on intelligence is critical too. If we can cover with a drone in a few hours what a ground team covers in a week, why not extract some of the rangers from the field. They can then be trained as a specialist reaction unit and on constant standby to respond to real-time intelligence.

As trials begin, the complex list of unforeseen problems in one of Africa's most remote

areas becomes evident. Three days into operations, we crash and badly damage the first drone – the wings ripped from the fuselage and the volatile battery packs destroyed.

Ninety per cent of the problems we encounter are software related. Online support networks help us problem solve and we are soon airborne again.

Hours after re-entering operations, the drone locates the dying embers of a poachers campfire in the early hours. A radio call from Simon relays the position and Derek prepares his ground units for deployment.

Stalking through the bush towards the target, I wonder to myself how long it would have taken to locate this well-hidden camp without the drone.

Weapons raised, the raiding line closes the final 50m silently and takes the camp by surprise just after 5am.

A week earlier, a similar raid ended in a fire-fight with one ranger shot through the shoulder and one wounded poacher fleeing back to Tanzania.

Of the four people in this camp, two have fishing licenses. The other two are Tanzanian, have no paperwork and poor excuses as to why they are in the area.

They are all arrested and taken to the nearest police headquarters, four hours away, for questioning.

These types of small groups are often responsible for poaching, moving weapons or ivory and informing colleagues of elephant movements in the area. They make up some of the 35,000 people living within Niassa's boundaries. Numerous counterfeit fishing licences make the regulation of movement an almost impossible task.

Many would consider these people to be poor. They are, in comparison to western society, but, relatively speaking, they lived simply and were comfortable. For many years they survived on a local trade system, not requiring money. They now see what they never had – and suddenly need it.

Driving through villages I see shiny new motorbikes, iPhones and designer clothes – all undoubtedly purchased with the backing of the ivory trade.



**Continued next issue**

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### Private Roy Roderick O'Connor 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF

# A BORN SOLDIER

Here is one bloke whose feats of valour well and truly fell through the cracks...

Roy O'Connor was a keen young lad. At school he was a senior cadet and, on leaving school, joined the local militia as a signaller.

His parents Daniel and Isbelle were very proud of their son as he made his way in the adult world.

Roy took on a three-year apprenticeship as an upholsterer at the local Launceston firm of W. Coogan<sup>1</sup>. Yet he was a keen soldier and, with the onset of war, was eager to enlist in the AIF. But, he had not yet completed his apprenticeship, so his plan to join up was put on hold.

In January 1915, he approached his father to write a letter granting him permission to enlist. His father had no hesitation in allowing his son to serve his country and gladly wrote the letter.

Nineteen-year-old Roy Roderick O'Connor enlisted in the AIF on 21 January 1915 and was allocated to the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion's, 4<sup>th</sup> Reinforcement Draft, with the regimental number 1880<sup>1</sup>.

More than half the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion was made up of men from Tasmania, with the remainder from South Australia and Western Australia<sup>2</sup>.

The 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion's reinforcements were undergoing initial training in Western Australia, so young Roy embarked for Fremantle.

The Tasmanians melded well with their cousins from the mainland. Training was hard but Roy relished it. He was determined and, as seen by many, a born soldier.

On Sunday 4 April, Roy overstayed his leave and was AWOL for two days. He was charged and fined one pound and forfeited two days pay<sup>1</sup>.

The men of the 4<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements were now ready to venture ever closer to war and embarked on the troopship *Argyllshire* on 19 April 1915<sup>3</sup>. During the passage, a message was received telling the soldiers of the ANZAC landings at Gallipoli. The ship was abuzz with the news and Roy was even more excited about reaching the front lines.

Arriving in Egypt, the men rounded off the final part of their training, which had taken on much more meaning, and then they moved to the Egyptian port of Alexandria, to embark firstly for Mudros, then on to Gallipoli.

But Roy fell ill during the voyage and was forced to report sick. A medical officer examined the young soldier and said,



Sergeant John Lord with the grave of Private Roy O'Connor, Warloy-Baillon, Somme, France.

Source: Museum Victoria

"Sorry son, you're off to hospital – you've got a bad case of tonsillitis."

"But sir, you can't – I'm going to Gallipoli," Roy pleaded.

"Not like this you're not!" the MO insisted.

Roy was devastated as he reported to the field hospital on Mudros<sup>1</sup>. As he walked into the ward, the stark realities of war struck home. The ward was full to overflowing with wounded recently evacuated from Gallipoli. Roy was embarrassed to be there with a sore throat when all those around him had been wounded and maimed in the thick of battle.

On 10 June, Roy crossed his fingers as another medical officer examined him.

"Well sir – can I leave?" Roy asked.

"Yes Private O'Connor – off to the war you go!"

Roy near ran back to his bed and started pulling his uniform from his kit bag.

"You're off young fella?" asked the soldier in the next bed.

"Too bloody right I am. Next stop for me – Gallipoli!" Roy replied pulling the shirt over his head.

"Just watch what you wish for lad!" the soldier said holding up the stump of his arm.

The young lad paused for a moment – then hurriedly continued dressing.

Roy landed at ANZAC Cove on 11 June and was taken on strength for the battalion<sup>1</sup>.

The Company Sergeant Major led Roy to the forward trenches.

"When do we get to see some Turks sir?" Roy asked.

"Why, you keen to get your head shot off son?" the CSM enquired.

"No sir, just want to get into it!" Roy replied.

"Don't worry. More than enough to go round," the veteran soldier quipped.

Roy soon earned the respect of all around him – he was a most capable soldier, keen and dependable. He took his turn like all the others in the front line. He ran the gauntlet of snipers as he carried water, food and ammunition from the beach and was a reliable sentry when tasked to provide early warning to his mates. He was now a veteran in every respect.

The months of June to August were the worst on the peninsula, thanks to the heat, flies, poor water and bland food. Sickness was rife, but Roy held his own and remained on duty. This ended in mid October, when his tonsils again flared up.

He was hospitalised at ANZAC on 22 October and, later that day, evacuated offshore to a waiting hospital ship.



## Feeling severe pain in his upper arm, he reached around to see if it was broken - but it wasn't there

A day later it was decided his condition warranted evacuation to England, where he was admitted to hospital in Woolwich<sup>1</sup>.

Roy spent Christmas in England and read of the successful evacuation from Gallipoli. He was eager to get back and rejoin his battalion, but his recovery was slow thanks to the European winter.

In mid February he was deemed fit and arrangements were made to have him returned to his unit. He embarked on 22 February, bound for Alexandria, arriving there on 5 March and rejoined the battalion two weeks later<sup>1</sup>.

On 29 March 1916, the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion moved to Alexandria and embarked on the troopship Corsican bound for Marseilles, arriving on 5 April for a three-day train ride to the French town of Godeswaersvelde<sup>2,4</sup>.

The battalion underwent orientation, training and a stint in the forward trenches in an area near Fleurbaix, commonly called 'The Nursery Sector' and were soon deemed ready to do battle with their foe - the formidable German Army.

On 1 July, the British offensive on the Somme commenced and the 12<sup>th</sup> made its way towards its first real action at a place, which, in years to come, would conjure up terrible memories for those who fought there - Pozieres.

Pozieres was deemed key terrain. The allies knew it and the enemy knew it. On the night of 22 July, the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion moved up a communication trench dubbed 'Black Watch Alley'. They moved through the shattered remnants of Pozieres and, on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, occupied the vital north-east corner of the battlefield<sup>2</sup>.

The Germans had the distinct advantage of being able to fire on the allies from not only the front, but also from the heights of Thiepval on the left flank. Heavy fighting took place on the 24<sup>th</sup> with several strong enemy attacks being repulsed<sup>2,5</sup>.

During the period 23 to 25 July, Roy was acting as a company runner. His task was one of the

most dangerous on the battlefield, running the gauntlet of shells and machine-gun fire, carrying vital messages from headquarters to outlying strong points in the forward trenches. Under these circumstances his life expectancy could be measured in minutes, not days. Yet young Roy continued to do his duty and do it well.

On 25 July, the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion's trench lines were bombarded near out of existence. It was by far the most severe shelling to date, almost ceaseless from 0400 to 1800hrs<sup>2</sup>. The carnage was so severe trenches were barely discernable among a virtual moonscape of shell holes.

Even through all this hell, men survived and continued to beat off attack after attack. But, of the three companies of the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion occupying the forward trenches, only two officers and 40 men remained<sup>2</sup>. The situation was desperate.

In 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion's HQ, the Commanding Officer called "Runner!" and Roy reported.

"Right lad. I want you to get back to the support trenches and bring up the reserve blokes. Get them up to the front line, and make sure they bloody well get there - got it?"

"Yes sir," Roy snapped.

As he turned to go, the CO called him back. "O'Connor - be careful!"

Roy smiled. "Aim to, sir!"

Rounds were impacting everywhere and the communication trench was crowded with carrying parties lugging ammunition, food and water forward, and stretcher bearers trying to evacuate wounded. Roy scampered along the trench and pushed his way through the maze of bodies, yelling "Runner. Runner coming through".

Then suddenly an incoming round exploded almost on top of him. Roy was thrown against the side of the trench. He was dazed and, feeling severe pain in his upper arm, he reached around to see if it was broken. But it wasn't there - a splinter had taken it off clear above the elbow.

He reached in behind his gas-mask haversack and dragged out the shell-dressing he always kept there and did his best to stem the flow of blood. A soldier stopped to help.

"I'll get a stretcher bearer, mate!" the Digger said.

"No need pal, just get me on my feet!" Roy replied.

The Digger lifted Roy up and leaned him against the trench wall.

"Come on, let's get you to the aid post!" the Digger suggested.

"I'll be right - I've got a job to do!" Roy said, pushing the Digger's arm aside.

The older man looked in awe and shook his head as Roy stumbled his way down the crowded trench.

Roy found the reserve troops trying to shelter from the bombardment in the support line.

"The CO wants you and your blokes up front, sir. I'm to guide you there!" Roy said to the officer in charge.

"Not like that you're not mate?" the officer replied.

"Look sir, no time to argue - you won't get there unless I take you, so let's get moving eh!" Roy insisted.

Roy led the way through the crowded trench, as he guided the party forward.

"Make way! Make way! Urgent party coming through! Make way!" Roy yelled.

As they arrived at the shattered front line, he handed the party over to the sergeant who was now in command. As Roy turned to go, the officer grabbed him by the shoulder.

"Well Done Dig. Now get to the aid post for Christ's sake!"

Roy stumbled into Battalion Headquarters. The CO looked around and went pale. He walked straight up to Roy, cupped his good arm and guided him to a nearby stool.

"I got the reserve blokes up to the front sir!" Roy reported.

The CO nodded. "I knew you would mate!"

Turning to his Adjutant the CO ordered him to get some stretcher bearers.

"You get yourself off to the aid post lad. We can handle it from here."

The medics and doctors did all they could but this gallant young soldier died the next day from his terrible wounds<sup>1</sup>.

Daniel and Isabelle O'Connor trembled as they opened the telegram. They feared the worst and their fears became reality as they read of their son's death.

There had always been confusion as to Roy's true regimental number. Some records show it as 1880 while others say 1879 and 1878. For Isabella O'Connor, the error held some hope. She wrote an impassioned letter to the Officer Commanding Base Records in Melbourne, asking if the mix-up in numbers might mean her son was still alive. But there was no mistake<sup>1</sup>.

For his conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during the Pozieres operation, Private Roy Roderick O'Connor was recommended for the Empire's highest decoration, the Victoria Cross<sup>6</sup>.

Today, Roy lays at rest among his mates in the Warloy-Baillon Communal Cemetery.

He was never awarded the VC nor any other recognition for his amazing actions that day.

### Notes

1 National Achieves of Australia, B2455, WW1 Service Records,  
2 Tasmanian's War Record 1914-1918, Government of Tasmania, J. Walsh and Sons, 1921

3 AWM 8, Unit Embarkation Nominal Rolls, 12th Battalion AIF, 1914-1918 War

4 Translation being God's Fair Field

5 Bean CEW, The Official History of Australia in the War 1914-1918, Volume III, Australian War Memorial, 1936

6 AWM 28, Recommendation Files for Honours and Awards, AIF, 1914-1918

“HOW MUCH CAN YOU KNOW ABOUT YOURSELF IF YOU’VE NEVER BEEN IN A FIGHT?” TYLER DURDEN – FIGHT CLUB

We live relatively comfortable, safe and secure lives. Even with the usual worries about jobs, money and family, most of us don't have to worry about where our next meal is coming from or the threat of persecution for our beliefs.

This is, for the most part, a good thing. However, I believe it comes with a hidden cost – that we have a large number of people across several generations who have never known significant struggle and who are not very well equipped to deal with the mental demands of ADF service.

Before going on I'd like to clarify that this article does not relate to PTSD, which is a serious condition and no amount of training can prepare you for the experiences of serving in a war zone.

The question I want to pose is – can you develop mental toughness. And if so, how?

I tend to believe that a person's base level of mental toughness is largely a product of childhood experiences but that deeper reserves of toughness and resilience can be revealed through repeated exposure to progressively more challenging situations. Much like other aspects of fitness training, mental toughness can be trained by attempting and completing more and more difficult events.

Sometimes these events are provided by life, such as the challenges presented by finding a new job or dealing with illness or injury. But in the absence of external challenges it falls on the individual to seek out these situations and work through them.

The key of course is to find situations that are in the 'Goldilocks zone'. A situation that is too easy will not provide any challenge or stimulus and a situation that is too difficult may have negative consequences such as injury.

The aim is to find situations or experiences that are just outside your comfort zone, and complete them.

When choosing an event or activity, there are a couple of things to keep in mind.

1. Everyone has different levels of comfort for different types of activities. Someone who grew up living next to the beach will probably be a lot more comfortable in the water than someone who has never had to swim in the open ocean, and things that are



confronting and challenging to the second person might not even register with the first. You will need to choose activities that target your fears and boundaries. Personally I was never much good with heights so a couple of years ago I decided to tackle it head on and took up skydiving, declining the usual starting point of a tandem jump and going straight to solo! Needless to say, the first jump was very confronting. But by jump number four I was actually starting to enjoy myself.

2. It is a good idea that at least initially you choose activities that have a low real risk, even if they have a high perceived risk. The instinctive part of your brain doesn't tend to understand the concept of real risk and instead reacts to the perceived risk, and this reaction drives the changes to your comfort zone. As an example, if you are afraid of heights then going to an indoor rock-climbing gym or doing an abseiling course will give you exposure to a high level of perceived risk, but the actual risk that you will fall and hurt yourself is extremely low. In contrast, trying to go ice climbing or BASE jumping would expose you to an excessive level of real risk that you might not survive!

Some examples of activities that can be used to expand your comfort zone.

1. Adventure sports – abseiling, rock climbing, skydiving, SCUBA diving, adventure races etc. All of these activities provide challenge and as you progress you can find yourself in situations that many people will never experience.

2. Martial arts – I'm not suggesting that you go and start a fight club or go and get into bar brawls, but learning martial arts in a controlled environment such as a proper boxing or mixed

martial arts gym will teach you a lot about yourself in a short period. My pick would be to learn something like Brazilian Ju Jitsu, as grappling provides ample opportunities for learning about stress, discomfort and thinking clearly under pressure.

3. Arduous physical challenges – you will never know how far you can go until you go there. There is a good reason that the SAS and other elite military units use long-range navigation as a test of mental toughness. Long periods of humping a heavy pack over rough terrain is an excellent way to reveal character, and it is an easy one to replicate outside of the Defence Forces. I'm not talking about a 10km a day stroll through the local park though. My suggestion would be to sign up for an adventure race or a 50 to 100km trail walk challenge and push yourself as much as you can.

Developing and revealing mental toughness is definitely not as straightforward as developing aerobic fitness or strength. But these tips might give you some ideas on how to tackle it.

For more articles and advice on military fitness go to [www.octogenstrengthcoach.com](http://www.octogenstrengthcoach.com) or email Don at [fitness@octogen.com](mailto:fitness@octogen.com)

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## SYDNEY TOP TIS



Commander Australian Fleet Rear Admiral Tim Barrett reviews Training Ship Sydney Cadets on parade at Spectacle Island, Sydney.

Photos by Able Seaman Jake Badior and Able Seaman Chantell Bianchi

Training Ship Sydney won the Navy League of Australia's 'Most Efficient Unit' trophy in 2013 and marked the significant achievement with a ceremonial parade at Spectacle Island in Sydney on 16 November.

Commander Australian Fleet Rear Admiral Tim Barrett was the guest of honour at the parade.



An attendee examines the program at TS Sydney's big parade.



Training Ship Sydney Cadets honour Commander Australian Fleet Rear Admiral Tim Barrett.



TS Sydney Pitt Division Cadet Adele Bartsch stands at ease during the ceremonial parade at Spectacle Island.

Further information on Cadets can be found at [www.cadetnet.gov.au](http://www.cadetnet.gov.au)

ARMY NAVY RAAF



## New Zealand bound

In 2014 New Zealand Cadet Forces celebrate their 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary and marked the occasion by gathering together about 1200 cadets from around New Zealand and Australia at Waiouru Military Camp in the middle of the North Island for Exercise Cadet150 in late January.

More than 60 Australian cadets and staff took a RAAF C-130 Hercules flight from RAAF Base Richmond to join their Kiwi counterparts on 24 January.

Activities at Ex Cadet150 included shooting, flying, sailing, archery, mountain biking, orienteering and high ropes among others.

The grand finale was a parade attended by Governor General Sir Jerry Mateparae and Chief of Defence Forces Lieutenant General Rhys Jones in one of his last functions before retiring as the Chief of Defence Force.

Photo by Corporal Mark Friend.



## Day out at Temora

ABOVE: Cadet Max Stokes, an Australian Air Force Cadet with No. 304 Squadron in Pymble, stands in the cockpit of a C-130J Hercules of No. 37 Squadron during the Warbirds Downunder 2013 Air Show in Temora. ABOVE LEFT: Cadet Miriam Parker, a member of No. 313 Australian Air Force Cadet Squadron at Dubbo, snaps a selfie with Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Geoff Brown. Photos by Eamon Hamilton.



Further information on Cadets can be found at [www.cadetnet.gov.au](http://www.cadetnet.gov.au)

No. 3 Wing Australian Air Force Cadets celebrated the successful completion of their promotion course with a parade at RAAF Base Richmond on 25 January. Here, Parade Commander Cadet Sergeant Ashleigh Wiggett invites the Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Geoff Brown to inspect the parade.

Photo by Corporal Mark Friend

# The latest Navy Cadet novel

by

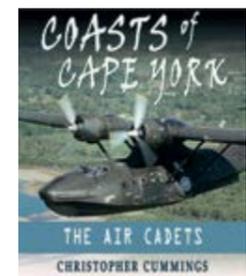
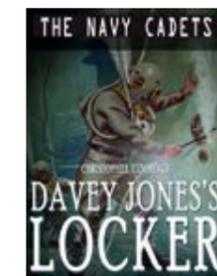
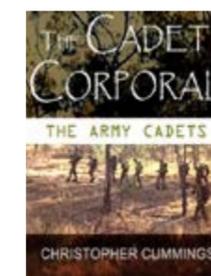
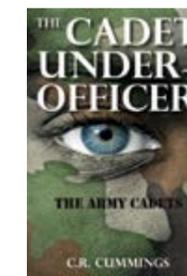
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## New unit in Sydney

Deputy Director Australian Navy Cadets Lieutenant Robert Hall with Adam Moukahal and Mohammed Hammoud at HMAS Penguin. Adam and Mohammed plan to become members of a new Navy cadet unit, TS Australia, based at the multi-use depot Lidcombe. Photo by Leading Seaman Brenton Freind.



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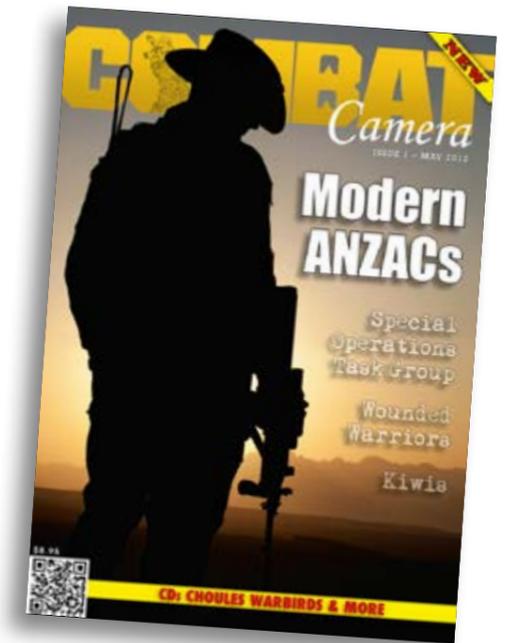
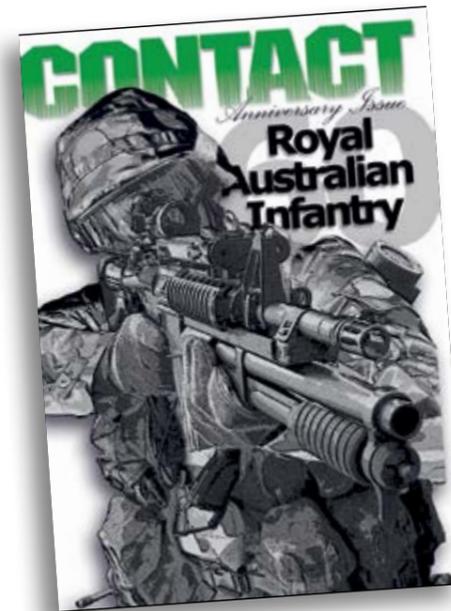
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Pic: Brian Hartigan



**This issue we're back with weapons and we'll expand further on the operating systems and some design features. As discussed earlier, the three main types of operation are gas, recoil and blowback. All need to contain a chamber pressure of up to 65,000lbs/sq in – or 4569kg/sq cm at time of firing. The only practical way to do this is by using a locked breech mechanism.**

## UNDER PRESSURE

Locking mechanisms really only come in two major types. These are the tilting block (L1A1, MAG 58) and the rotary bolt (F88, M4, AK). We have also mentioned the roller locking system for blowback actions, used in German MGs of WWII and the later Spanish CETME and German H&K weapons, but more about those later.

In all these actions, the mechanism must lock the bolt against the barrel to contain the chamber pressures,

and keep it there until the pressure has dropped enough to make opening the chamber safe. The different styles will lock the bolt in place by either engaging it into the barrel or into the receiver.

Most of us have been exposed to the rotary bolt locking system, which is the most common. The rotary bolt system can have two or more 'locking-lugs' on the bolt, either on the head of the bolt, the rear of the bolt or

both. When the action closes, the bolt head will be rotated by a cam action to engage the locking lugs with the barrel or receiver, locking the action against the barrel.

In the F88, the barrel locks into the receiver and so does the bolt, sort of sandwiching the chamber closed, where as with the M16/M4 family, the bolt locks into the barrel.

For tilting-block actions, the bolt is cam'd in a single linear direction, usually up or down, to engage with the receiver.

On the bolt or receiver, there are locking shoulders that engage, stopping rearward movement of the bolt.

In issue #39 we had to discuss the roller-locking blowback mechanism in some detail to explain it in the context of blowback operation for high-pressure cartridges. But, put simply, the closing of the bolt cams two rollers (left and right side) into recesses to lock the action, kind of wedging

it closed until the rollers withdraw.

Once locked, the action will not open until one of three things happen – the weapon is fired and cycles; you manually operate the action; or, if you are strong enough, you smash the weapon into the ground, butt first and impart enough kinetic energy to make it cycle! But that's not going to happen because you're smarter than that, right?

So, all these actions lock up to contain massive pressures that would otherwise drive the working parts back into your face. But they do have to unlock eventually and this is timed to be at a stage when the projectile is out of the barrel, sufficient gas to work the action has been delivered and the chamber pressure has dropped to a safe level. This is called the timing, and is worked out in the design of the weapon.

Convention has the sights running along the top of the barrel and the butt stock sloping down from the line of the barrel to the firer's shoulder. The L1A1 SLR, is a good example.

The AR10 first introduced the high sight line and straight butt stock. Why? Well, when you fire a weapon, recoil forces travel in a straight line. If they do not connect with your shoulder at the end of that straight line, the recoil forces will lever the weapon from its line of sight, causing the weapon

to come off target and be difficult to control, especially in automatic fire. So, if recoil forces flow straight back to the point of contact with your shoulder, the deviation under recoil is less and you can bring the sights back on target faster. Remember your marksmanship principles? After firing, you follow-through bringing the sights back onto target before releasing the trigger. This should happen naturally and the less deviation under recoil, the easier it happens.

Now, what about traditional versus bullpup layout? Is one actually better or is it a matter of preference? There are advantages and disadvantages to both, but one factor is most prevalent – barrel length versus overall length of the weapon.

Soldiers have always looked for a compact weapon with the accuracy and muzzle velocity of a long barrel. You can get this with a bullpup because the action is moved into the butt stock, letting you keep the longer barrel length in a shorter weapon over all.

The down side to a bullpup is that the action is now under your cheek, so unless you want to take an ejected case to the face, you can't easily swap to non-master hand. But, some weapons, such as the FN 200, overcome this by ejecting the case forward or down.

Sorry we missed issue #40 - an editorial error. But we're back on track now. We also realise we're talking to a much bigger audience - so welcome (back) to Gear Insider. Please feel free to send general comments, critiques and death threats via [gearinsider@militarycontact.com](mailto:gearinsider@militarycontact.com)

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