

ISSUE 46

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JUNE 2015

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CONTENTS

ISSUE 46 – JUNE 2015

27



62



52



- 12** The Big Picture
MRTT boom times
- 14** Heads Up
News from around the world
- 27** Plan Beersheba
An update
- 22** Home-grown docco
Army's longest war
- 36** **WEDGETAIL**
Amazing turnaround
- 44** MPs in Afghanistan
- 50** Timorese tackle Tully
- 52** Taking the blast
out of the fight
- 56** Boots on the ground
- 62** Captain Wales
- 64** Q Store
- 66** Frontline Africa
- 68** Not close enough
Up for VC but not awarded
- 72** Military Fitness
- 74** Cadet Corner
- 80** Gear Insider

56



22



36





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Cover Photos by
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Story page 36

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Issue 46 means this magazine is now 11 years old – and I'm very pleased to report that it is very healthy for a pre teenager.

Last issue, with SAS Sergeant Troy Simmonds' story on the cover, was by far and away our most successful every issue in terms of the number of people who read it – an amazing **33,240** hits up to 29 May!!!

That means there is at least some level of 'viral' activity going on, given that we sent emails to 'only' 25,000 people.

So, whether you are an email recipient or a virus :-)) please pass this magazine on to all your friends and colleagues, and help us to try and break last issue's amazing record.

Not that you need reminding – but I'll say it anyway – this magazine is a free read. We depend on the generous support of our wonderful advertisers to keep it going.

I know that you already do support our quality advertisers by making the odd purchase now and again – and when you do, I sincerely hope you tell them "CONTACT sent me", or words to that effect.

But, even if you don't actually need to make a purchase right now, please do at least click the hyperlinks in each ad and visit their web sites to see what they have to offer.

This will also help us by generating visitor statistics on their sites, which they can hopefully trace back to CONTACT.

That way everyone is happy and CONTACT thrives for the next 11 years and more.

I know many of you miss the printed version of CONTACT. I've had much feedback and pestering from people who want me to kill some trees and spread ink on their macerated carcasses.

Well there may be an opportunity for that – but whether I go ahead with it or not is entirely up to YOU!

Issue 50 is a pretty significant milestone and I am thinking I could be persuaded to produce a special issue – in print.

The only way this can happen though, is if enough people commit to buying it in advance. So, I'm going to ask for a show of hands. Would you be willing to pay, let's say about \$15 (including postage) for a special printed issue of CONTACT Air Land & Sea number 50?

If you just raised your hand in affirmative answer, thank you.

Unfortunately, I couldn't see you, so I will be making posts on Facebook on this topic in the months ahead. When I do, I will need at least 1000 likes before I'd even consider going to the next step. And I would eventually need about 2000 people to actually buy the magazine to make it work.

So, now's your chance to prove that print might still be viable.

Otherwise it will be proof positive that print is dead.

On that happy note – welcome to **CONTACT Air Land & Sea** number 46.

I hope you like it. And, as always, I'd love to get your feedback, via editor@militarycontact.com

Sincerely,

Brian Hartigan

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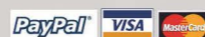
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INCOMING

PERSONAL PET PEEVE

Thank you again Brian for a most informative and interesting magazine.

I would like to pass on my pet peeve – it's about stories written about the Victoria Cross.

Too often it is said that the VC was 'won' by its recipient. So Very Wrong! The VC is awarded, not won.

I was reading the story of LCpl Josh Leakey and thought YAY – they have it right. But then in the very last couple of sentences, a relative of his is mentioned who "won" the VC in 1945.

Kind Regards, Betty R, via email

Hi Betty. I acknowledge your concern over terminology re the VC (or any other medal).

However, I'm wondering if that is just a personal pet peeve or do you know of any reference to back up your assertion.

I can't find any.

I acknowledge that the Royal Patents for the 'awarding' of the medal do say that the honour is 'awarded'. But I don't think you can infer that the absence of other descriptors therefore prohibits their use.

If you search "won the Victoria Cross" or "win the Victoria Cross" on Google, you will get thousands

of references, including many official government sites – Australian, New Zealand, Canadian and British.

For example...

- *the Australian War Memorial refers to the Battle of Lone Pine as being "remarkable in that seven Australians won the Victoria Cross".*
- *the official Australian anzacsite.gov.au also refers to men at Lone Pine who won the VC.*
- *victoriacrosssociety.com refers to three Devonians won the Victoria Cross in WWI.*
- *a search of the Imperial War Museum web site for turns up more than 50 results for 'won the VC'*

I could go on and on, but I'm confident my point is supported.

I do understand and appreciate what you are saying, and I admire and encourage your pedantry, but, I believe the weight of use in everyday language, supported by common usage in official circles, exonerates little old me and CONTACT magazine – Ed.

Whether you side with Betty or agree with me on this or any other point, please feel free to express your opinion via editor@militarycontact.com

MORE VCs

Hi Brian. Your latest Mag has an article which states that "he is the first living soldier to be awarded the VC in Afghanistan". This is incorrect as Willy Apiata was awarded the VC in 2004.

Steve D, via email

Hi Steve. Willie Apiata was awarded "The VC for New Zealand". There are also three living (and one posthumous) awardees of "The VC for Australia". Australia and New Zealand abandoned the Imperial Awards system several years ago. So therefore, the Aussies and Willie did not receive the same award as the Pommy corporal last month (even though the actual medal itself is still made by the same jeweller in London from the same bronze). It's a technicality, but a distinction none the less – Ed.

Ah yes you are correct. Thanks for your quick reply. Reading the article – the lad did a great job and is deserving.

Regards, Steve D

SNAP SHOTS

Sweet as bro – passed on to a few vets already. Great publication and good to see real ANZAC spirit with the Kiwi snippets too. Keep up the good work.

Ross C, Via email

Thanks very much Brian, great to hear from you & am always guaranteed a fantastic read. Keep up your great work.

Glenn, via email

Brian, I have quickly skimmed through both these mags – up to your usual brilliant standard. Relevant stories and brilliant pics – all round superb quality in magazine publication. Keep up the great work.

Steve P, via email

Hi Brian. Thank you for sending me the link to Issue 45. It is terrific. I especially liked the film-strip style used for the Avalon Airshow pics and the Red Flag pics, and the edge effect used on the Defending Darwin pics. Nice work. Regards.

John H, via email

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. Feel free to write to editor@militarycontact.com about CONTACT or any on other military subject – Ed

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

BOOM TIMES



For the first time ever, the RAAF now have an air-to-air refuel boom capacity. Two KC-30A Multi-Role Tanker Transports made several boom connections on 13 May 2015, launching a new era in RAAF capabilities. During a three-hour flight from RAAF Base Amberley, one MRTT deployed its 17m aerial refuelling boom system mounted beneath its tail and mated it into the fuelling receptacle of a second MRTT. Both aircraft were flying at more than 500km/h when the refuelling officer on the top tanker used his fly-by-wire controls in the cockpit to mate with the other aircraft 14 times. While no fuel was transferred on this first trial, the boom is capable of offloading 4500 litres per minute. E-7A Wedgetail and C-17 Globemaster will be the next platforms to marry up with the tanker, which has already successfully refuelled numerous other Australian, US and European aircraft types with its traditional wing-mounted hose-and-drogue pods. RAAF has five KC-30As.

HEADS UP

BATTLE OF BRITAIN MARKED



Photo by Richard Paver

The Royal Air Force has unveiled a Typhoon fighter jet painted in a Battle of Britain-era paint scheme to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the famous air defence of the homeland and to acknowledge the bravery and sacrifice of those often referred to as 'The Few' – the aircrew who took part in the battle.

The Typhoon is also painted with the 249 Squadron identification number of the only Fighter Command pilot awarded a Victoria Cross during the battle, Flight Lieutenant James Brindley Nicolson VC DFC.

The Typhoon and a WWII Spitfire will perform at air shows across the UK this summer.

The Battle of Britain was the first strategic defeat suffered by the Nazi.



STRING OF FIRSTS

The number of 'firsts' in the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program seem to be coming thick and fast at the moment.

- In an historic milestone, an Australian Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) has taken to the skies with an Australian pilot in the seat for the first time. Squadron Leader Andrew Jackson (pictured) is the first Australian F-35A pilot to qualify on the aircraft and until now had been flying United States F-35s. "While I'm told that all the F-35s are the same, it's awesome to finally go flying in a jet that has 'Skippy' painted on the side," Squadron Leader Jackson said.
- The first female F-35 pilot had her first flight on 5 May. Former F-15 pilot Lieutenant Colonel Christine Mau, 33rd Fighter Wing Operations Group deputy commander, completed her first training flight in the single-seat fifth-generation fighter after completing 14 virtual training missions in the full-mission simulator at the F-35 Academic Training Center.
- Six US Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II jet aircraft began flight operations in May aboard USS Wasp off the US east coast to mark the beginning of the first shipboard phase of official F-35B Operational Test.
- The first F-35A Lightning with Australian-made tails rolled off the production line in April.

Chooks hatched

The first two of seven CH-47F Chinook 'Foxtrot' helicopters were commissioned into the Australian Army in Townsville on 5 May.

In a project worth \$631 million, the Australian Army will be re-equipped with seven F-model Chinooks plus two flight simulators to replace its six D models, with all major equipment deliveries scheduled for completion by August this year.

The helicopters will be operated by Army's 5th Aviation Regiment from RAAF Base Townsville.

Both simulators have already been delivered and are being used by crews to undertake a wide range of training scenarios.

The project also includes nearly \$50 million in construction works at the RAAF base, which are scheduled to finish in 2017.

The outgoing Delta-model Chinooks have proven themselves as the Army's operational 'workhorse' and the new Foxtrots will further enhance this capability for the Australian Defence Force.



Army Chaplain Brenton Fry blesses the new Chinooks. Photo Corporal Mark Doran

CHEAP PRECISION STRIKE



WATCH SALES-PITCH VIDEO



Artist's rendering, courtesy BAE Systems

An Australian Tiger helicopter test-fired BAE Systems' Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System (APKWS) laser-guided rocket late last year – scoring 10 out of 10 in the live fire flight trials.

APKWS turns a standard unguided 2.75-inch (70mm) rocket into a precision laser-guided rocket to give warfighters a low-cost surgical-strike capability.

David Harrold, director of precision guidance solutions at BAE Systems, said the demonstrations had proven the versatility and flexibility of the APKWS rocket.

"The results are clear that our unique mid-body design can quickly and cost-effectively transform current inventory

unguided FZ rockets into highly precise weapons for greater mission success as it has done for Hydra rockets since 2012."

The 10 Aussie test shots were conducted in extreme heat at ranges from 1500m to 4500m, at altitudes from 200 feet to 1500 feet, and at speeds of up to 140 knots.

All 10 shots hit the target within 1m of their guiding laser spot.

Major David Paterson from the Army's test team said the combination of a perfect seven-for-seven from an earlier ground trial and 10 for 10 from the flight trial confirmed this as a fully functioning capability.

While the successful flight trials took place last November, the news took six months to emerge.

Lieutenant General Angus Campbell is congratulated by Deputy Chief of Army, Major General Rick Burr. Photo by Lauren Larking



NEW ARMY CHIEF

Lieutenant General Angus Campbell formally took over as Chief of the Australian Army from Lieutenant General David Morrison at a parade in Canberra on 15 May.

Lieutenant General Morrison expressed his gratitude to family, friends and colleagues for their support during his 36-year career, which has included roles in Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste, and command roles with 2RAR, 3 Brigade and Forces Command.

"It has been an honour and privilege to serve with and lead the talented men and women, military and civilian, of the Australian Army," he said.

Lieutenant Angus General Campbell brings a wealth of experience to the role, having served as Commander of the Joint Agency Task Force for Operation Sovereign Borders and Joint Task Force 633, and commanded on operations in Timor-Leste.

He also served as Deputy National Security Adviser in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

IN BRIEF



Photo by Able Seaman Chris Beerens

UPGRADE STARTS

HMAS Parramatta (left) is towed from the ship lift at the Henderson Australia Marine Complex Common User Facility, Western Australia, to commence her Anti-Ship Missile Defence (ASMD) upgrade and maintenance work.

The scope of the project includes ship integration of the leading edge CEA Phased Array Radar (PAR), the Vampir NG Infrared Search & Track (IRST) system, the Sharpeye Navigation Radar System (NRS), and an upgraded Saab Combat Management System (CMS) including an improved Operations Room layout.

She is expected to be out of the water for roughly a year.

DSTO SHOWCASE

Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) opened its doors to industry and academia to showcase innovative technologies being developed to give the Australian Defence Force a capability edge.

The Partnerships Week from 4 to 8 May was part of DSTO's outreach campaign for closer ties with companies, universities and other research organisations.

The event included site tours, technology demonstrations, research capability displays and access to DSTO researchers to discuss new and emerging capabilities.

Among the attractions were new technologies to support the future soldier

– power-generating clothing and the Flexoskeleton, which is a flexible device to lessen backpack loads.

Other technologies on display ranged from miniature satellites to the full-scale model of the Joint Strike Fighter being used to study the effects of lightning on the aircraft.

REMEMBRANCE PIN

On 7 May the Australian Army launched the Army Remembrance Pin to commemorate the valued service of members who died while in Army service, during war or peace, since 3 September 1945.

The Army Remembrance Pin continues the tradition of the Mothers' and Widows'

badges distributed to the loved ones of WWI and WWII veterans who were killed in action or who died of wounds on active service or after discharge.

The pin is available to eligible family members of Army members who died in service, domestically or overseas, since the conclusion of WWII.

Further information, including eligibility requirements and the details of the application process is available [here](#).



HEADS UP

ROYAL SALUTE



Photo by Sergeant Rupert Frere RLC

The birth of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's second child was marked by Royal Salutes by Army units in Hyde Park and the Tower of London on 4 May.

Crowds flocked to the firing sites to join in the celebrations and show their support for the baby Princess Charlotte Elizabeth Diana of Cambridge.

As Big Ben struck two O'clock in Westminster, the two Royal

Salutes, miles apart at either end of the capital, began to fire in unison and with perfect precision.

In Hyde Park, each of the six Guns fired blank artillery rounds at 10-second intervals until 41 shots had been fired.

Meanwhile at the Tower of London, a longer salute of 62 rounds was fired – the extra 21 rounds indicating the loyalty of the City of London.

BOMBS AWAY



Photo by Sergeant Rupert Frere RLC

British Army bomb-disposal experts were called out again on 21 May to deal with yet another unexploded World War Two bomb, this time in Wembley.

The incident caused homes and offices to be evacuated and major traffic disruption in a very busy part of the capital.

The air-dropped WWII Sprengbombe-Cylindrisch general purpose 50kg device was uncovered during construction works in Empire Way Wembley, within 200m of Wembley Stadium and just 50m from flats, cranes and towers.

It is believed the bomb was dropped over London during a Nazi bombing raid in the early 1940s and lay undisturbed deep in the ground for 70 years until taking a few hard knocks from mechanical diggers when it was unearthed in May.

Bomb disposal teams from Northolt and Ashchurch were involved in excavating and stabilising the device so that it can be safely defused.

The device was eventually taken to a quarry outside the city and detonated in a controlled explosion.

HOBERT VISIT STIRS MEMORIES

One of the last remaining survivors from the sinking of HMAS Canberra (I), Geoffrey George Cooper made a trip down memory lane when he visited HMAS Canberra (III) during her first visit to Hobart in April.

The 92 year-old former able seaman gun layer was working in the shell-room below the B 8-inch gun turret when the 10,000 tonne heavy cruiser was struck and sunk by Japanese torpedoes on 9 August 1942.

In what later came to be known as the Battle of Savo Island, 84 of Able Seaman Cooper's shipmates died and another 109 were wounded.

Able Seaman Cooper served out the war and returned to Australia on HMAS Hobart, discharging in 1945.

Mr Cooper was amazed by the size of the new 28,000 tonne Canberra and thought it would be hard to find the crew in such a large space.

HMAS Canberra (III) in Hobart and, inset, HMAS Canberra (I) survivor Geoffrey Cooper talks to senior crew.



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NAVY FIREFIGHTER RUNS FLIGHTS FOR CANCER



Despite undergoing cancer treatment, Chief Petty Officer Bartus 'Bart' Couprie became the first Royal New Zealand Navy firefighter to compete in the Sky Tower Stair Challenge at the end on 23 May.

After 29 years of service in the Navy Chief Petty Officer Couprie joined 750 other firefighters from New Zealand and around the world to climb the 1108 steps of the Auckland Sky Tower in full firefighting kit and breathing

apparatus to raise funds for people suffering from leukaemia, lymphoma and other blood cancers.

"Cancer and I are not on the best of terms," Chief Petty Officer Couprie said.

"Eight months ago I was diagnosed with prostate cancer and I'm currently undergoing treatment.

"Luckily, my prognosis is excellent." "Others aren't as lucky so I'm doing all I can to help them."

Chief Petty Officer Couprie is a firefighting instructor at the Navy's Sea Safety Training Squadron, which is responsible for training sailors in damage control and sea safety.

"My treatment means that I am able to continue at work and take the opportunity to help others.

"I got heaps of support from so many people when I was diagnosed and this is a great opportunity to pay it forward," he said.

Photo by
Chris Weissenborn

CALLING THE SPIRITS HOME

The first of what will be a daily public Last Post ceremony was held at Pukeahu National War Memorial Park on Anzac Day – and will be conducted every evening until 11 November 2018.

The Last Post was used in wartime to signal the close of a day of battle. The sound of the Last Post notified those who were still out fighting or wounded to follow the sound of the call to find safety and rest.

Chief of Defence Force Lieutenant General Tim Keating said that, with the opening of Pukeahu, the NZDF would mark the centenary of each of the remaining days of the First World War.

"Sounding the Last Post symbolically calls the spirits of the fallen that day 100 years ago home to our national cenotaph," Lieutenant General Keating said.

"We welcome public attendance and participation in the daily ceremonies and we will provide opportunities



Photo by
Corporal Judith Boulton

for non-New Zealand Defence Force buglers and individuals or groups from the community or from schools to recite The Ode."

The Last Post ceremony will take the form of The Ode recited in Te Reo and English, the playing of Last Post, the observation of a minute's silence and then the playing of Reveille.

This ceremony may be enhanced on significant commemorative days and people are encouraged to lay personal or community floral tributes.

The ceremony will be conducted daily between 5pm and 6pm beside the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior.

The Last Post is used by Commonwealth countries in Anzac Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies as well as other military commemorations.

It is also played at military funerals to symbolise the 'end of the soldier's day' meaning the fallen can rest in peace.

A LITTLE NIGHT FLYING

The Royal New Zealand Air Force conducted routine military training of RNZAF and Army personnel in urban flying operations over 5-8 May 2015 in and around Palmerston North, including the central business district.

Air Component Commander, Air Commodore Kevin McEvoy said the activity was regular training exercises conducted by No. 3 Squadron based at RNZAF Base Ohakea using the Air Force's NH90 and A109 helicopters.

"Exercising in an urban setting prepares us for being able to operate in the city when we are

called upon, typically in emergency situations, so it is an important part of our training," Air Commodore McEvoy said.

"All RNZAF flying operations are conducted with safety in mind and meet civil aviation regulations.

"The Manawatu region is an excellent training location for us and we are appreciative of the local support we receive."

The exercise involved daytime and evening flying with RNZAF helicopters taking off and landing at Ohakea Military Air Base, and Linton Military Camp.

Photo by Anthony Pecchi



NZ HEADS UP

FEMALE FIRST

For the first time in history, five women paraded the Queen's Colour at the RNZAF's 78th anniversary service in Wellington on 1 April.

Chief of Air Force Air Vice-Marshal Mike Yardley said it was just one of the ways the Air Force was consciously defining the RNZAF we want in 10 years time.

"To bring about a more inclusive workplace and to have the diversity we want, we sometimes need to challenge the old norms and traditions," he said.

"Consciously choosing to have airwomen lead this aspect of the RNZAF anniversary is one way we can recognise individual skill and leadership potential, while highlighting the organisation's diversity goals and keeping them at the forefront of people's minds."

"Right now, you see women represented across all roles within our Air Force. Our goal is to increase that representation and to be recognised as a leader in workforce diversity."

"It's only fitting that we reflect on this goal – among others – as we look back and commemorate 78 years, while looking ahead and thinking about where to next."

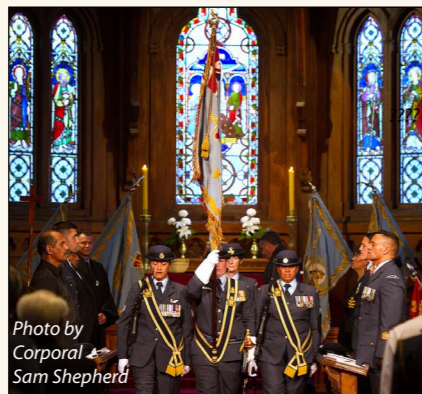


Photo by
Corporal
Sam Shepherd

NEW MEDAL COUNTER PIRACY



A new medal for New Zealand Defence Force personnel who have served in counter-piracy operations has been created.

The New Zealand General Service Medal 2002 (Counter-Piracy) recognises members of the NZDF who have served for 30 days or more in counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, Western Indian Ocean, and off the eastern coasts of Somalia, Yemen and Oman, since 1 January 2009.

New Zealand relies on the sea to transport 99 per cent of its imports and exports. Preventing piracy and deterring terrorism at sea directly contributes to New Zealand's success and makes the Navy a valued partner when joining international coalitions to fight piracy.

The first large NZDF deployment on counter-piracy operations was the frigate HMNZS Te Mana's November 2013 to February 2014 service as part of Combined Task Force 151 and NATO's Operation Ocean Shield.

More than 300 NZDF personnel will be presented with the new medal in coming months.

Eligible currently serving personnel do not need to take any action. Their medals will be issued directly.

AIR FORCE BEATS WORLD

The Royal New Zealand Air Force won top honours in the military section of the Aerospace Maintenance Competition in Miami Beach, Florida, between 13-16 April.

The competition consisted of 20 separate skill challenges, two of which the RNZAF team won outright – the electrical distribution and the fibre-optic fault-finding tests.

Each challenge was scored on accuracy of task and time to complete, with time penalties awarded for errors or missed procedures.

During the event the RNZAF team set several new records for tasks.

Flight Sergeant Brad Watson, Sergeant Brad Mead and Corporals Kerry Walter, Tom Poole and Dave Willetts, beat 38 other teams from eight nations to take out first place – the first time an RNZAF team competed.

Chief of Air Force Air Vice-Marshal Mike Yardley said he was proud of the team's efforts.

"The team thoroughly deserve first place and the win shows the team's skills are first class on an international stage."

Feedback from the judges showed they were impressed with the professionalism and skills strength of the RNZAF team.

"This was an excellent opportunity for us to benchmark our training alongside our international counterparts," Air Vice-Marshal Yardley said.

"The Defence Force is extremely proud of what this team has achieved."



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WORDS LEADING SEAMAN JAYSON TUFREY
PHOTOS BRIAN HARTIGAN (TARIN KOT 2006)

The Australian Army has released a graphic and realistic account of its 12 years in Afghanistan in a series of on-line videos.

'The Longest War: The Australian Army in Afghanistan' was launched at the Australian War Memorial on May 7.

The videos show what Army did in Afghanistan and how our soldiers lived and worked.

They are powerful and sometimes emotional accounts of our soldiers' experiences in their own words.

With more than three hours of video, some of which has never been seen before, interviews with soldiers and their families, and more than 1000 images, *The Longest War* provides an unprecedented insight into the lives of soldiers in a harsh and uncompromising environment.

It all started as a vague idea from [now-retired] Chief of Army Lieutenant General David Morrison who wanted to find a way for the Army to tell its story of its time in Afghanistan to the Australian public.

"We've introduced a contract with Australia; it talks about our values and the fact that we protect this country, not just its geographic

land mass but also its interests and its values all around the world," Lieutenant General Morrison said.

"This work is done by our soldiers, sailors, airmen and women, and almost completely it is done out of the public eye, with almost no recognition of individual service and action.

"This is an attempt to tell their story, in their words, often with their own video footage.

"This is not a history or a documentary that will be shown on TV with commentary from those who weren't there – this is our Army telling our story about our war."

Defence Minister Kevin Andrews said he was pleased and privileged to launch the comprehensive story of the Army's contribution to Operation Slipper.

Home Grown Docco



"For the Australian soldiers who deployed to Afghanistan and their families, *The Longest War* is a story of joy and grief, of pride and loss," Mr Andrews said.

"In more than a decade of operations we should never forget the Army lost 41 Australian soldiers."

Mr Andrews said it was appropriate to launch the videos during the Centenary of Anzac and at the Australian War Memorial.

"This centenary is about our opportunity to shed a light on the support that our contemporary veterans and their families need in an ongoing way," he said.

"We must also remember the 1600 Australian service men and women who continue to serve our nation's vital security interests in the Middle East today."

The story of *The Longest War* is structured into nine chapters. Each has a theme, but the narrative is fluid, designed to enable viewers to create their own journey through the material in their own way and in their own time.

Corporal Mark Donaldson VC said he thought the concept was fantastic.

"From my perspective as a serving soldier, I think it's great the Army has finally had a chance to tell our story through our eyes," Corporal Donaldson said.

"It's the soldiers' stories – it's about what they saw, felt and experienced.

"It is quite untainted, it's raw and it's how it was.

"The beautiful thing is it covers from 2001 all the way through to 2013 so it really gives a timeline of the Army and the ADF in Afghanistan.

"It is going to reach out and affect a lot of families and a lot of these families may not have heard their members talk about these sorts of things in such a way."

Describing his vision of *The Longest War*, Lieutenant General Morrison said his only stipulation was for the story to be told without gloss.

"That's why there's footage of our soldiers being wounded, because they were. That's why there are interviews with men and women who have been deeply affected by their operational service, because they are," he said.

"This is what your Army does and I couldn't be more proud.

"For all of you who have served in Australia's longest war, you have done this country proud.

"Well done and thank you for telling your story."



AUSTRALIA'S LONGEST WAR

In November 2001, Australia joined a US-led coalition with a goal to deny the use of Afghanistan as a terrorist base of operations, to remove the Taliban from power and to defeat al Qaeda in Afghanistan.

For the Australian Army, the mission in Afghanistan was a test of its capabilities – and, ultimately, a monumental achievement.

For its soldiers, it was time to put long years of training into practice.

Afghanistan is a land of contrasts and extremes – blistering deserts and magnificent mountains, with fertile ribbons between.

Our soldiers faced a resilient enemy immersed within an ancient culture that had survived war on its land for centuries.

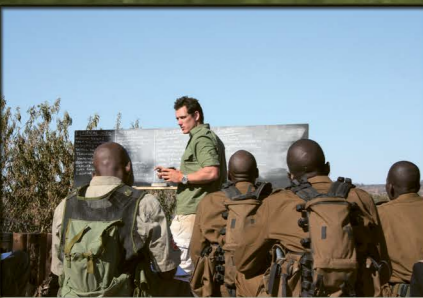
Legacy-mine and improvised-explosive-device threats were everpresent and the enemy was frustratingly hidden among the people.

More than 26,000 Australian soldiers served in Afghanistan on Operation Slipper from 2001-2014. For them and their families, this was a time of joy and grief, pride and loss.

41 Australian soldiers died in Afghanistan, while many more were wounded physically and mentally.

The Army witnessed countless acts of courage and bravery and many soldiers received commendations, medals and awards for gallantry – including four Victoria Crosses.





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PLAN BEERSHEEBA – AN UPDATE

Following news of significant unit movements in northern Australia late last year, we received a letter to the editor (below) asking about the Australian Army's new Armoured Cavalry Regiments and what it all meant for older units and formations.

Sadly, the information took a long time in coming, but we got there in the end – and now present an official update on the Australian Army's Plan Beersheeba and how the restructure is affecting specific units.

We appreciate the depth and quality of the information supplied and hope that it adequately addresses the letter-writer's concerns.



Got something to say?
E-mail: editor@militarycontact.com

INCOMING

...from issue #45

A QUESTION OF ARMOUR

Hey Irish, what's the go with the new Armoured Cavalry Regiments? I'm obviously way behind on this. I read the white paper announcement, but it doesn't have some of the small details.

Have you done a story on it? What actually happens to 1ARMD, 2CAV, 3/4CAV etc?

I was a bucket in RAAC in 2CAV and 2/14LHR. Both units are affected. I'd like to know do they keep their names (I'm guessing no) but what happens to their Battle Honours, Guidons etc?

What's the make up of the new regiments? How many squadrons of ASLAV, Abrams etc in each new regiment? What new positions are there and what have been abolished?

I'm obviously not keeping up with things... I heard that C Squadron 2CAV was abolished. It felt weird to hear that. I was in the first troop of C Squadron when it was raised in '95. We formed a 4th troop in B Squadron, which became C Squadron. Weird.

Damian G via Facebook

Damian, I'm afraid I'm not full bottle on this either. When info gets released in disjointed dribs and drabs, I often lose sight of the bigger picture (which, as you suggest, wasn't articulated in fullest clarity anyway).

Trying to get an answer for you, though, brought

up an issue with Defence media relations that I've never been able to get my head around.

I would have thought that, with a topic this broad and this close to Defence's heart, they would trip over themselves for an opportunity to enlighten the community. I also thought Defence would relish the opportunity to write this story themselves, controlling an error-free message. I also figured the story was probably already written anyway. How many junior officers have formulated briefs on this issue for generals or visiting VIPs at every level of Defence, do you think?

But no – Defence would rather risk providing an interview, risk that I might ask the wrong questions, risk that I might misinterpret the answers, risk that I might add my own spin to the story. Defence would rather not "do the journalist's work for him".

Anyway, my December email "wasn't received", and my February follow-up (from the same email address I always use) was answered within an hour saying, "Sorry, I can't provide a written story – but I'd be happy to organise an interview for you".

I declined the interview, re-formulated your queries into specific questions and resubmitted.

Sorry for the delay, but your pre-Christmas questions have eventually been answered (quite comprehensively in the end, for which I thank Defence MediaOps). More to follow – Ed.

PLAN BEERSHEBA UPDATE

PHOTOS BY BRIAN HARTIGAN

Question: Can you please give an overview of Plan Beersheba – the concept broadly and progress generally?

Response: Plan Beersheba is the Australian Army's modernisation plan announced by government in November 2011 and re-affirmed in the Defence White Paper 2013. Plan Beersheba considers the Army's role in the broader Australian Defence Force and incorporates the lessons learned over a decade of continuous operations in order to achieve government direction to the Army in a more sustainable manner.

One of the principal features of Plan Beersheba is the force generation cycle – a 36-month period in which the three combat brigades of the Army rotate through phases of readiness. The three phases are the ready phase, the readying phase, and the reset phase. Each phase is 12 months long.

The force generation cycle allows the Army to maintain a combat brigade (or parts thereof) on operations, or ready for deployment at short notice, indefinitely.

Under Plan Beersheba, the Army will achieve a common brigade structure that yields three standard combat brigades. These combat brigades are supplemented and reinforced by capabilities

from three supporting brigades and a Reserve force of six brigades. The Reserve brigades align closely with their full-time counterparts as part of a total-force concept for the Army.

Employing a force generation cycle across common brigade structures allows for the Army to focus training on basic war-fighting skills across the range of operation types in which the government may require assistance. This approach maintains the necessary operational preparedness and warning times. Army describes this as training in foundational war-fighting.

Implementation of Plan Beersheba is progressing well, with the 1st Brigade adopting the new common brigade structures in 2014 followed by the 3rd Brigade at the start of 2015. The 7th Brigade is scheduled to adopt the structures from 2016.

Question: Can you please outline what units and formations have been affected by Plan Beersheba – movements, amalgamations, establishments, disestablishments, re-namings, role changes, re-equipping and so on?

Response: The 1st, 3rd and 7th Brigades are in the process of being reorganised into structurally identical Combat Brigades. With the exception



PLAN BEERSHEEBA UPDATE



of the new armoured cavalry regiment this has involved reorganising existing units rather than amalgamations and disestablishments.

The most significant change in roles within the combat brigades is the change from three different types of infantry (mechanised, motorised and light) battalions to a standard infantry battalion structure in all three brigades, and the raising of armoured cavalry regiments. The armoured cavalry regiment is the name given to the new common structure for the 1st Armoured Regiment, 2nd Cavalry Regiment and 2nd / 14th Light Horse Regiment (Queensland Mounted Infantry). Each regiment will consist of a cavalry squadron, an armoured personnel carrier squadron and a tank squadron. The units are not being renamed.

The 2nd Division will have a directed role to provide a variety of capabilities, including up to an infantry-based battle-group as round-out and reinforcement to the combat brigades. The six brigades of the 2nd Division are grouped into pairs, which run through a force generation cycle that aligns with one of the combat brigades. This allows the Reserve brigade pair to train with the Combat Brigade that they may be called upon to reinforce.

Within the 2nd Division this change involved modifications in brigade structures and the allocation of independent sub-units under command of a nearby unit headquarters. Artillery batteries now provide mortar capability to the infantry battalions, and armoured units have protected mobility lift roles.

The 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, has been allocated as the core of the landing force for the Australian amphibious capability.

Question: What is the makeup of the new/proposed armoured cavalry regiments?

Response: The armoured cavalry regiments will contain a unit headquarters structured to command battle-group-sized combined-arms operations, a logistic support subunit, an ASLAV-based cavalry squadron, an M113-equipped armoured personnel carrier squadron and a tank squadron.

Question: How many armoured cavalry regiments will there eventually be?

Response: There will be three armoured cavalry regiments when Plan Beersheba is implemented.

Question: What will they be called (e.g. 1ACR, 2ACR, 3ACR?)?

Response: The 1st Brigade armoured cavalry regiment will be the 1st Armoured Regiment.

The 3rd Brigade armoured cavalry regiment will be the 2nd Cavalry Regiment.

The 7th Brigade armoured cavalry regiment will be the 2nd / 14th Light Horse Regiment (Queensland Mounted Infantry) (2/14LHR (QMI)).

In order to have one armoured cavalry regiment in each brigade, 2nd Cavalry Regiment transferred from 1st Brigade in Darwin to 3rd Brigade in Townsville at the end of 2014.

PLAN BEERSHEEBA UPDATE

Question: Where will they be located?

Response: The 1st Armoured Regiment is located mainly in Darwin, with a single squadron located in Adelaide.

The 2nd Cavalry Regiment is located with the rest of the 3rd Brigade in Townsville.

2/14LHR (QMI) is located in Brisbane at Gallipoli Barracks. The final location of 2/14LHR (QMI)'s tank squadron is yet to be determined and it will be several years before it is raised.

Question: How many ASLAVs, Abrams, (Bushmaster?), (arty?), (support battalion?), (infantry/cav scout?), (UAV?) etc etc, and/or how many squadrons/batteries/bricks of each, make up a 'typical' ACR?

Response: An armoured cavalry regiment will contain an ASLAV-based cavalry squadron, an M113-equipped armoured personnel carrier squadron and a tank squadron along with support vehicles.

Question: How close to 'typical' will each actual armoured cavalry regiment eventually be?

Response: The three units will possess the same structures and identical entitlements to personnel and equipment.

The actual structure of each unit will remain the same, but the composition will vary due to normal fluctuations as each moves through Army's force generation cycle.

Question: What does the typical new command chain look like and is there any major change from the old structure?

Response: The chain of command will look the same as usual for units and sub-units within a brigade structure.

Question: If units have been renamed, disestablished, amalgamated or otherwise 'changed' under Plan Beersheba, what happens to their Battle Honours, Guidons etc? (please be specific in relation to actual affected entities).

Response: The major change in the Regular Army's order of battle has been the transfer of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment from the 1st Brigade to the 3rd Brigade. The 2nd Cavalry Regiment's lineage and associated heritage remains with the unit in the new location.

In order to implement the move of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment to the 3rd Brigade, B Squadron, 3rd/4th Cavalry Regiment, a sub-unit of the 3rd Brigade, will be transferred to the 11th Brigade and be reconstituted at some time in the future. In the meantime, B Squadron's Guidon and other heritage items are in the custody of the School of Armour.

Over the past several years a number of changes to units and sub-units have been made in the 2nd Division and the care of honours and heritage has been transferred to new organisations on a case-by-case basis.



Better than a medal

Hero's surprise honour from 'fans'

The last issue of **CONTACT** featured the amazing story of SAS Sergeant Troy Simmonds and how he survived the same battle that saw Corporal Mark Donaldson awarded a VC.

Subsequent to our running that story (but not because of it), former soldier Zayne van Bommel presented Troy Simmonds with a portrait he had earlier commissioned **CONTACT** friend Caroline McGregor to paint.

"Troy's story had me in complete disbelief that this man, this Australian war hero, had not been honoured by the Army or the government," Zayne said.

"I thought about how I, as a private citizen, could in some small way rectify this, and immediately thought of Caroline, whom I knew could do Troy justice."

To cut a long story short – Caroline McGregor was commissioned by Zayne to paint a portrait of Troy, from a photo taken in Afghanistan in 2002, supplied by Troy's wife, Lia.

Initially, it was meant to be a secret, but the cat was let out of the bag when talk of media involvement at the presentation emerged – Lia knew Troy wouldn't want a fuss.

And so, at a no-fuss gathering in a local pub, with just a few mates the day after the Op Slipper Welcome Home Parades, Zayne presented Caroline's work to a very grateful Troy Simmonds.

Ever humble, Troy said he felt very awkward about the attention.

"I was just in the unit for a long time during an operationally busy period and apart from being a patrol commander in a battle that became significant because of a VC, I didn't do anything more remarkable than anyone else," he said.

"So, I was overwhelmed by this gesture. I am really touched by the thoughts, kindness and efforts that went into it.

"Caroline has done an amazing job. She has definitely captured my eyes and the essence of focus, tiredness, humour, stress and world-weariness that comes with being on ops.

"And I think she has been very kind to me and made me more handsome than I really was!"

Troy says the painting is better than a medal and will definitely become a much-loved family heirloom – except that, "Lia is already complaining about my beady eyes following her every time she goes in that room!"

Former SAS Sergeant Troy Simmonds proudly shows off the portrait of his younger self painted by Caroline McGregor and (below) an inscription by Zayne van Bommel who commissioned the painting.



This portrait is given by the people of Australia
in appreciation of the service of

8258361/4800025

Sgt Troy Simmonds

"Simmo"

Service to Australia

6 years 1 RAR - 16 Years SASR

Operational Deployments

Somalia - East Timor x 3 - Iraq x 2 - Afghanistan x 6

And for his Command, Leadership and
Professionalism under enemy fire in the battle of
Khas Uruzgan Afghanistan 2008

Artist: Caroline McGregor



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010411Z OCT 14

...that's 1 October 2014 at 4.11am UTC for those who need translation from the military date/time group – or 7.11am local

When the 'shit got real' for Australia's

WEDGETAIL



FILE PHOTO BY CORPORAL SHANNON MCCARTHY
DIGITALLY ALTERED BY CONTACT MAGAZINE

**WATCH AUSTRALIA'S E-7A
WEDGETAIL IN ACTION
OVER IRAQ**



WORDS BRIAN HARTIGAN
VIDEO ADF AND USAF
PHOTOS ADF

010411Z OCT 14 was the exact moment that the 'shit got real' for callsign Magpie 01 – Australia's E-7A Wedgetail airborne early warning and control aircraft – as it crossed the official line that separates the air war against ISIS from the rest of the world.

That first mission was supposed to be a fairly easy-paced shadowing of an American E-3 Sentry on station over the northern-Iraqi Battle Management Area (BMA), to allow the mission crew (using their own onboard callsign "Outback") to observe how the

job was done in real time before taking on any live tasking.

But when the ageing E-3 developed technical problems early in its mission, the Aussies stepped up and took over – throwing themselves and Australia's newest and most advanced warplane headlong into the fight.

Back at Air Task Group Headquarters, RAAF Squadron Leader Glenn 'Fish' Salmon heard the call, "All stations, g'day. Outback has the BMA" – and

callsign Outback began to prove itself to its coalition partners.

So successful has Australia's Wedgetail now become that stories of American strike squadrons delaying or planning missions to coincide with Wedgetail flight times have filtered back to a proud Aussie hierarchy.

But it hasn't all been plain sailing. Today's success on Operation Okra was preceded by years of ridicule as a 'project of concern' and years of hard graft to turn the multi-billion-dollar project around.

So what is Wedgetail and how does it work?

Well to find out, I visited 2 Squadron at home on RAAF Base Williamtown recently – and had the extreme honour of becoming just the second journalist to fly on Wedgetail and the first to fly on an actual live training mission.

And I basically found out that much of what Wedgetail and its radar is capable of runs into those areas generally covered by, 'if I told you I'd have to shoot you'...

NOTE: The true capabilities of the MESA radar and other electronics aboard Wedgetail are classified. 'Facts' and figures quoted in this story were compiled from various Internet sources and were not supplied by 2 Sqn or Defence.

What I can tell you is that the E-7A Wedgetail is based on a Boeing 737-700 Basic Business Jet (the same model as the PM's VIP flight), with a few basic modifications to accommodate the fin-like multi-role electronically scanned array (MESA) radar it carries on its back – and literally tonnes of electronic wizardry inside.

Wedgetail has been a long time coming – and carries a significant weight of expectation.

Australia formally announced its desire to get into airborne early warning and control – a capability it did not have previously – in 1996.

Northrop Grumman was already developing the MESA radar at its own expense and talking to Boeing about a suitable platform to carry it.

The ubiquitous B737 was big enough to carry the 10.8m long by 3.4m high radar 'fin' and all the electronics that go with it – and the B737BBJ, with its extended-range fuel tanks (and an optional air-to-air refuel capability, which RAAF opted for) was ideal.

So then the RAAF came along, looking for a modern AEW&C capability that was capable enough for a physically-large country's needs, but small enough to integrate into a relatively small air force.

So, soon after the turn of the new millennium, Boeing was awarded a contract for four aircraft with an option for three more. In the end, six were acquired.

The first two Wedgetails were assembled and tested in the USA with the final four assembled by Boeing in Australia.

Aircraft deliveries to the RAAF were initially scheduled to begin in 2006, but integrating the radar with sensor computer systems and software proved stubborn and significant program delays were encountered.

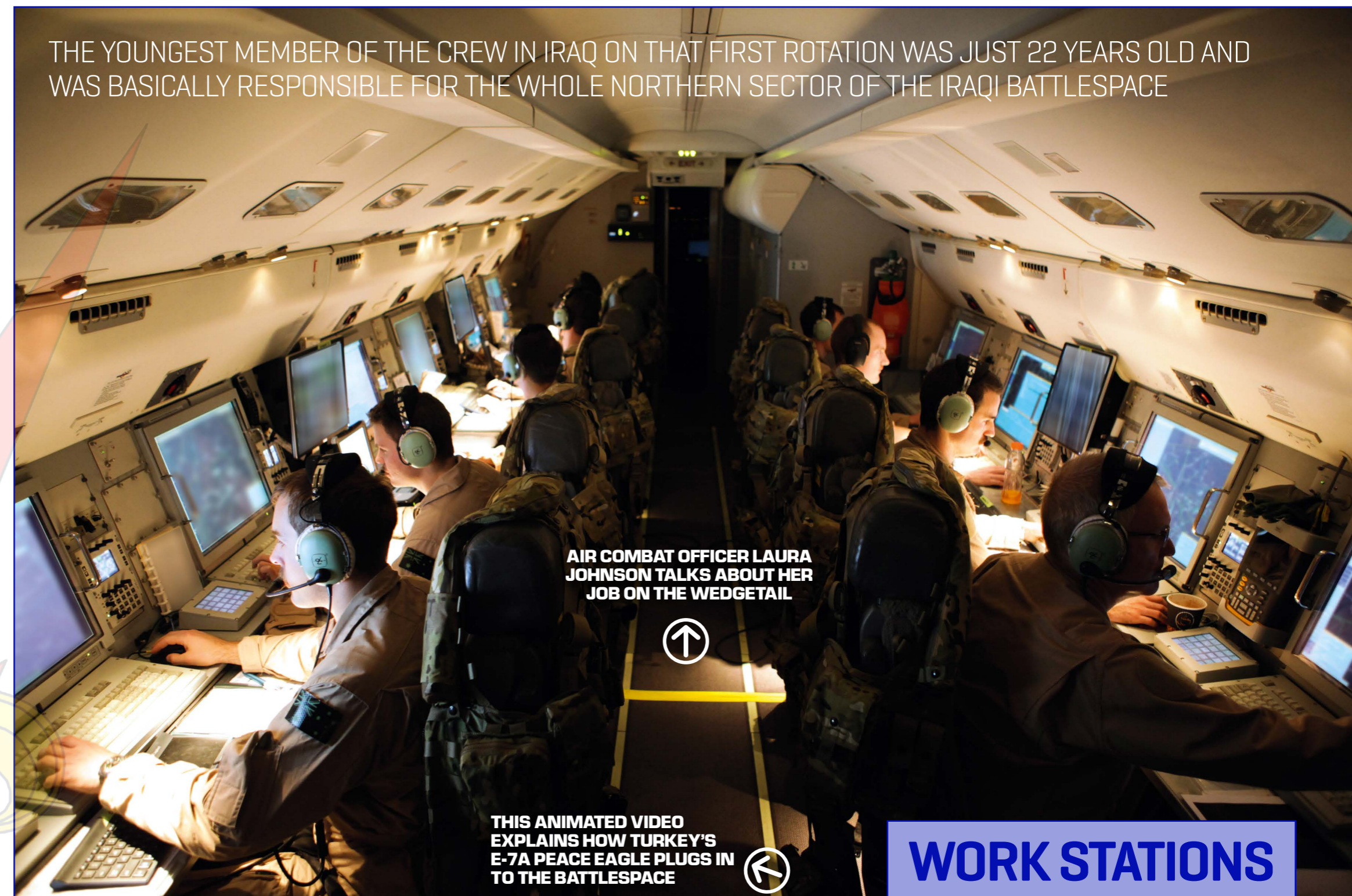
Eventually, however, the first two Wedgetails were delivered to the RAAF in November 2009 – three years behind schedule – but actually remained in Boeing ownership until May 2010.

The rest were progressively delivered until the sixth and final Wedgetail was handed over on 5 June 2012, with Initial Operational Capability declared in November the same year – just three short years ago.

In the interim, 2 Squadron has undertaken a massive program of exercises, building up from local training missions with RAAF Williamtown-based F/A-18s, to larger domestic exercises such as Aces North and Pitch Black, followed by Exercise Cope North in Guam, and eventually the much larger 'Red Flag' series of exercises in Nevada and Alaska.

A typical Red Flag exercise involves a variety of attack, fighter and bomber aircraft (F-15E, F-16, F/A-18, A-10, B-1, B-2), air superiority aircraft (F-22, F-15C), airlift support (C-130, C-17), search and rescue aircraft (HH-60, HC-130, CH-47), aerial refueling aircraft (KC-130, KC-135, KC-10), command and control aircraft (E-3, E-8C, E-2C, Wedgetail), reconnaissance aircraft (Predator, Global Hawk, RC-135, U-2), electronic warfare aircraft (EC-130, EA-6B and F-16CJ), and ground-based command and control, space and cyber forces – and a full-time aggressor squadron playing enemy.

Red Flag is said to be the biggest, most complex air-



warfare exercise in the world and as close to fighting a real war as an exercise can get.

Because of this escalating and intense program of exercises and despite its delayed introduction into RAAF service, Wedgetail and 2 Squadron were more than ready and willing when the callup for operations in Iraq was received late last year – and quick to prove the platform's capability as a major strategic asset for Australia.

Wing Commander Paul Carpenter, who commanded Australia's first Wedgetail detachment in the Middle East, says the value of all that training struck him when one young air combat officer paused during a mission brief for an Iraq sortie and said, "Red Flag standard, really..."

"The youngest member of the crew in Iraq on that first rotation was just 22 years old and he was basically responsible for the whole northern sector of the Iraqi battlespace, talking to every fighter and tanker and doing all the organising of those assets in action," Wing Commander Carpenter says.

"The senior guys on the crew were managing the plan, but the guy actually executing that plan, the guy actually talking to the other jets was someone in his early 20s, responsible for an enormous amount of airspace and an enormous amount of hardware and capability with enormous strategic implications.

"Obviously, one bomb dropped in the wrong place can have enormous political and national implications, so the personal responsibility associated

WORK STATIONS

Wedgetail's 10 work stations are in the forward section of the aircraft, six on the port side and four to starboard.

They get most of their information from the distinctive dorsal-mounted radar antenna assembly, which incorporates side-emitting electronic manifold arrays in the vertical portion of the assembly and a 'top hat' array in the assembly's horizontal cap. Between them, these providing 120° of radar coverage on each side of the aircraft. Other 'top hat' elements cover 60° fore and aft – for complete 360° coverage.

Radar signal processing equipment and central computers are installed in a separate cabin area directly below the antenna array.



MOST OF THE INFORMATION COMING TO THE AIR COMBAT OFFICERS COMES FROM THE MESA RADAR, CAPABLE OF SIMULTANEOUS AIR AND SEA SEARCH TO A MAXIMUM RANGE OF MORE THAN 600KM

NORTHROP GRUMMAN
CORPORATE VIDEO EXPLAINS
THE MESA RADAR

Turkey and Republic of Korea also fly E-7A -
called Peace Eagle and Peace Eye respectively.

VIEW TURKEY'S PEACE EAGLE VIDEO ABOVE
AND ROK'S PEACE EYE BELOW

with managing sensitive and critical information is really quite high."

Wing Commander Carpenter says the people the RAAF needs to recruit to get the most out of Wedgetail – and the new P-8 Poseidon in the near future – need to be adaptable and comfortable working with uncertainty – working in the grey areas.

"We're sending these young guys and girls into a very dynamic battlespace in the Middle East, a long way from home, on short notice to move, with all sorts of crazy things going on in Iraq and Syria.

"A new starter doesn't need to know how to do the job the day he or she walks in the door, but they need a high capacity to learn and a personality to handle a lot of variables.

"To get the most out of a Wedgetail, the crew is processing an enormous amount of information in a digital environment and required to recognise what's important, filter out the crap and act on that info in very very short cycles.

"There is a lot of initiative, resilience and mental capacity required – not to mention good looks."

And most of the information coming to the air combat officers on Wedgetail comes from the MESA radar, which (in general, unclassified terms) is capable of simultaneous air and sea search to a maximum range of more than 600km.

Unlike a conventional rotating radar, MESA can look in any direction at any time, even shooting out beams of energy in multiple opposite directions – or it



A RAAF E-7A Wedgetail prepares to receive fuel from a USAF KC-135 Stratotanker during a mission over Iraq. Photo by Major General Craig Orme

WATCH A 'TYPICAL WEDGETAIL MISSION', INCLUDING IN-AIR REFUELLING

can concentrate its efforts in areas of interest, only returning occasionally to monitor 'safe' areas.

It can track up to 180 targets and conduct 24 simultaneous intercepts.

The aircraft also has an ESM (Electronic Support Measures) system, with a maximum range of 850km (depending on aircraft altitude), gathering location and type info on other radars as they transmit, or go quiet, to build up a 'pattern-of-life' picture for an area.

There are actually two major radar components in the fin atop the Wedgetail.

Side-emitting electronic manifold arrays provide 120° of radar coverage on either side of the aircraft, while the 'top hat array' fills in the remaining 60 degrees fore and aft, to give a full 360 degrees of coverage.

The cabin features 10 operator consoles with space for two more.

But operating the Wedgetail is not all about the good-looking aircrew. There's a lot that goes on behind the scenes too.

Maintenance and flightline operations are pretty obvious enabling elements of any RAAF squadron

AVIATION RECORD

An Australian Wedgetail made history during the first rotation on Operation Okra when it set an impressive aviation record for the longest Australian command and control mission in a war zone.

Commander of Australia's Air Task Group Air Commodore Steve Robertson said the endurance mission – 16 hours and 18 minutes – was a fine endorsement of Australia's air power capabilities.

"After already being 'on station' for a number of hours, the Australian Wedgetail crew was advised that the Coalition aircraft due to relieve them was delayed," Air Commodore Robertson said.

"In response, they quickly assessed their ability to coordinate necessary air-to-air refuelling and agreed to substantially extend their mission."

In fact, the Wedgetail crew completed two air-to-air refuels during the record flight.

Air Commodore Robertson said the aircrew's ability to 'go above and beyond' was a clear demonstration of Australia's important contribution to the air campaign.

Australian E-7A Wedgetail crew head off on their first operational flight over Iraq.
Photo Corporal Max Bree



and, in this regard, while 2 Squadron have attracted a highly rated ground crew, they are also blessed with owning a new jet, based on the most common of all commercial-jet platforms, which so far has given little in the way of mechanical trouble.

Other enablers include operations and logistics staff – all of whom do vital work in not only getting the aircraft off the ground, but making sure that when it arrives at a new location it and its crew can function, not just for one mission or the next, but for several weeks without major inputs.

This may sound simple or even like a throwaway line but, as a former aircraft mechanic, I can appreciate that literally years of planning and rehearsal and programming has obviously gone into ensuring that a jet of this size and complexity can sustainably deploy away from home for long periods.

Routine maintenance has to be forecast and the right spares and consumables loaded into space-critical flyaway kits.

As Wing Commander Carpenter says, mission-critical spares and supply chains may not be sexy subjects for media consumption, but without a lot of hard work and dedication from a lot people, Wedgetail would be little more than a very expensive and inefficient airliner.

And speaking of the media, Wing Commander Carpenter says that the secret status of much of its capability – and the complexity of what it actually does – makes it difficult to engage with the media.

It was nonetheless disappointing that Wedgetail didn't get a lot of commercial media coverage out of Operation Okra.

"In terms of the operation over there, the main game is obviously dropping bombs and having kinetic effects against ISIL," he says.

"So in that context, fighters are very easy to explain and understand in a short news article, and people are interested in that. Tankers too are pretty easy to understand and explain.

"But AEW&C is very hard to wrap up in 50 words or less.

"Do we distil it down and say we just control the airspace? I guess we could, but that doesn't really do it justice.

"But to talk about what we do and what we are capable of doing without getting into classified areas and still tell the story of what we do is quite difficult.

"So it's always going to be hard for us in the media space, and I guess we have to live with that."

But for Wing Commander Carpenter there are two

AIRCRAFT STATS

Length:	110 ft 4 in (33.6m)
Wingspan:	117 ft 2 in (35.8m)
Height:	41 ft 2 in (12.5m)
Empty weight:	102,750lb (46,606kg)
Payload:	43,720lb (19,830kg)
Max takeoff weight:	171,000lb (77,564kg)
Powerplant:	2 × CFM International CFM56-7B27A turbofans
Power:	27,000lbf (118kN) each
Cruise speed:	530mph (853km/h)
Range:	3500nm (6482km)
Endurance:	10 hours without refuel
Endurance record:	16 hours 18 minutes with 2 air-to-air refuels
Service ceiling:	41,000ft (12,500m)
Crew:	2 x pilots + 10 mission specialists
Protection:	EW self-protection, including directed infra-red counter-measures, chaff and flares
Communications:	HF, VHF, UHF, Link-11, Link-16, UHF SATCOM, ICS

THE RADAR

MESA Radar: (multi-role electronically scanned array)	Northrop Grumman
	288 high-power transmit/receive modules operationally ready minutes after takeoff
Wide area surveillance:	more than 340,000 square miles
Scan rate:	more than 30,000 square miles per second
	typical 10-second scan rate (but, since scan rates are variable and sectors selectable, other coverage rates, ranges and priorities are programmable
	Sector-selection modes provide three to four times higher target search rates and eight to 10 times higher track updates than rotating radars.

aspects of media coverage he is happy about – in the end.

"I have two news clippings from the same newspaper on my desk that relate to Wedgetail.

"One, from February 2009, says ` \$3.8billion failure – disaster – Wedgetail is not performing to specifications and likely never will'.

"The other is from about the 4th of October last year, praising Wedgetail's first operational mission in Iraq.

"That was the contrast after six years of enormous effort across the whole of team Wedgetail.

"That's what we've achieved in just under six

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Overview

Detection

Coordination

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Detection

Multi-role Electronically Scanned Array (MESA) radar

With the MESA radar located on top of the fuselage, the Wedgetail solves the radar horizon limitation by elevating it 10,000 metres above the earth's surface. This allows the military to 'see everything' including low flying aircraft trying to 'sneak up'.

ELECTRONICALLY SCANNED RADAR ANTENNA

Communication

Onboard Communication Centre

Apart from radar detection, the Wedgetail also serves as a mobile communications relay point for the Air Force. The communication centre onboard the aircraft enhances our ability to communicate with other members of the Service. By combining information from various sources, officers working on the aircraft like Signals Operator Technicals can quickly provide this picture to all friendly units, increasing their 'situational awareness'.

Related Job: Air Surveillance Operator

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Two CFM International 56-7 turbofans (118-404 (27,200 hp) thrust each)

Length: 33.6m | Height: 12.6m

34.3m

Maximum take-off weight: 77,565 kg

Maximum landing weight: 60,782 kg

Maximum: 870 km/h | Cruise: 760 km/h

10 hours (without air-to-air refuelling)

12,500m

MESA radar with range in excess of 400km

Electronic warfare self-protection measures including directed infra-red counter-measures, chaff and flares

Communication systems including HF, VHF, UHF, Link-11, Link-16, UHF SATCOM and ICS

Related Job: Geospatial Imagery Intelligence Analyst

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NOTE: The true capabilities of the MESA radar and other electronics aboard Wedgetail are classified. 'Facts' and figures quoted in this story were compiled from various Internet sources and were not supplied by 2 Sqn or Defence.

years – a \$3.8billion project of concern transformed into a totally amazing capability that is sought after and requested by our coalition partners in the Middle East."

FOOTNOTE: Just as we wrap up this story, it has been announced that Wedgetail has reached "Final Operational Capability" – FOC – which means, the fleet is now officially fully operational and able to support ongoing operations domestically and overseas. But it's not just the aircraft – FOC also takes into account logistics, management, sustainment, facilities and training. Well done everyone involved.

AUSSIE MILITARY POLICE IN AFGHANISTAN



There are four Australian Army Military Police embedded with the NATO-led Resolute Support mission at Hamid Karzai International Airport, providing traditional military policing support to the base in Kabul.

Below: Private Dylan Hutchings (right) and Sergeant Ashley Yewsang talk with Turkish Air Force First Lieutenant Mustafa Baysal.

Bottom: Privates Andrew Tov (left) and Dylan Hutchings, conduct a patrol at Hamid Karzai International Airport.

Right: Sergeant Ashley Yewsang directs a vehicle to pull over for a spot check.




WATCH INTERVIEW
WITH SERGEANT
ASHLEY YEWSANG



PHOTOS BY CORPORAL DAVID COTTON

NA CONTACT 0414

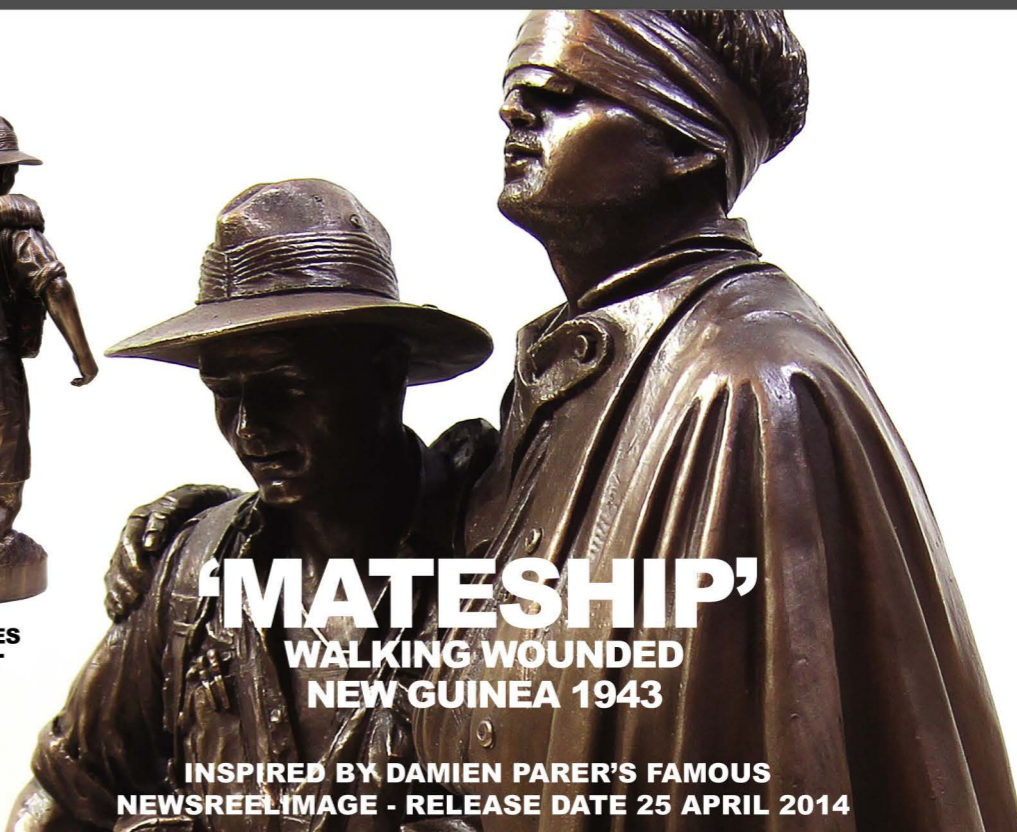


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FLIGHT CAMP

The Royal Australian Air Force celebrated International Women's Day by hosting a Flight Camp for young women at RAAF Base East Sale on 15 March.

Meeting the young women, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence, Darren Chester said the future of aviation looked encouraging.

"It was great to see the interest from these young women as we toured the latest RAAF aircraft types, including a C-17A Globemaster and F/A-18A/B Hornets," Mr Chester said.

"These young women are highly motivated and interested in aviation. I'm sure they will have a bright career ahead of them.

"The Flight Camps are a great initiative by Air Force – providing young women aged between 16 and 18 years with the opportunity to explore aviation roles through a targeted experiential program."

Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Geoff Brown said he was impressed by the girls' motivation.

"Air Force Flight Camps provide young women with an opportunity to experience Air Force life, with a focus on non-traditional work opportunities in air crew, technical trades and engineering," Air Marshal Brown said.

"Meeting these young women, and seeing how motivated they are to succeed, makes me confident in the next generation of youth.

"I am hopeful that the opportunities they receive at the Flight Camp, including flying in Air Force aircraft and simulators, leadership activities and physical training, inspires them to consider a career in Air Force."

Participants for the camp were from Western Australia, Victoria, NSW and the ACT.

Clockwise from right: Flight Camp participants get a tour of training facilities at the School of Air Traffic Control at RAAF Base East Sale.

Flight Camp participants concentrate while learning what's involved in being a joint battlefield airspace controller (JBAC) at the School of Air Traffic Control.

Flight Lieutenant Andreas Jacobs (Roulette 4) and Bella from the ACT conduct a radio check before take-off.

Bek and Georgia from Victoria receive an aircraft safety briefing before boarding a flight on the civilian rescue helicopter used at RAAF Base East Sale.

Abbie and Gabby from WA compile flight documentation before flying in a CT-4 trainer aircraft.



PHOTOS PETTY OFFICER RICK PRIDEAUX



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TIMORESE TACKLE TULLY

A contingent of 39 Timor-Leste defence personnel participated in jungle warfare training at the Combat Training Centre – Jungle Training Wing (CTC-JTW) in Tully from 20 April to 1 May.

Part of Australia's commitment to the Defence Cooperation Program – Timor-Leste (DCP-TL), the latest Junior Officers Close Country Instructors Training (JOCCIT) course was the largest deployment of Timorese military since Timor-Leste's independence in 2002.

The intense instructional course covered individual and collective training and honed junior leadership attributes while developing instructional skills in a jungle environment.

It also demonstrated Australia's cooperation with the Portuguese military, as both nations support the growth of Timor-Leste's defence capability.

A Portuguese infantry adviser attended the course, along with Australian Army infantry adviser Captain Paul Nolan, DCP-TL Specialist Training Wing, as observer trainers.

"The JOCCIT contingent was a composite of officers and senior non-commissioned officers from the Timor-Leste military, the F-FDTL, and included three English language instructor support interpreters," Captain Nolan said.

"JOCCIT is an integral part of F-FDTL training as Timor-Leste's military transformed from a guerrilla-warfare army to a well-developed and modern national defence force.

"They usually train and operate at section level and have only limited experience at platoon level, while company and battalion level operations are rare.

"So, sending a platoon abroad for training is a significant achievement for the F-FDTL.

"They have gained a lot of new skill sets and, when they return home, they can build on those."

F-FDTL contingent commander Major Valerio Valente said the training in Australia was important for his country's soldiers and consolidated the preparation they had been conducting in their home units since February.

"JOCCIT not only gives our soldiers training in jungle warfare, the course also trains their minds," Major Valente said.

"DCP-TL has given us fantastic support during our training continuum and the Australian instructors understand the Timorese culture.

"The trainees were very happy with JOCCIT because every day they were learning new skills."

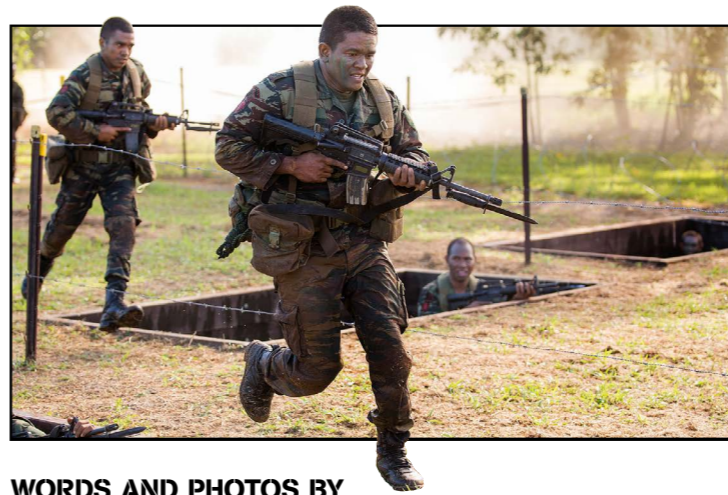
Captain Nolan said CTC-JTW was a great equaliser and brought soldiers back to the core skills of jungle warfare.

"The Timorese have a lot of experience fighting in the jungle, so we can also learn from their jungle craft as much as we teach them," he said.

"F-FDTL have unique ways of dealing with the jungle and when they operate in small groups they are very effective.

"Contingent morale was amazing during the course. Nothing got them down – no matter how wet or tired they were, they still kept working and working hard."

While in Australia the contingent was invited by the Tully RSL to participate in the local dawn service and march alongside local veterans on Anzac Day.



**WORDS AND PHOTOS BY
CORPORAL MARK DORAN, ARMY NEWSPAPER**





TAKING THE BLAST OUT OF THE FIGHT

It takes bravery to tackle explosives, and Australian military experts are continuing to help their Afghan allies to take the blast out of the fight.

Last year, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) claimed more than eight lives a day in Afghanistan, with devices ranging from rough, cobbled-together contraptions, to sophisticated devices.

Three Australians are among the dedicated team of counter-IED (CIED) advisers trying to help the Afghan government stop the carnage.

Flight Sergeant Dean Maher is one of those currently deployed on Operation Highroad, Australia's contribution to the NATO-led Resolute Support mission.

Resolute Support is focused on training, advising and assisting the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) and Afghan security institutions.

Flight Sergeant Maher advises at the Central Training Centre in Kabul, which delivers both explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and IED defeat (IEDD) courses.

"EOD training deals with unexploded ordnance found in the public domain. It could be from previous conflicts or the current troubles," Flight Sergeant Maher said.

"IED training deals with specific devices created by the insurgents to attack Coalition forces and the ANDSF."

Flight Sergeant Maher said his role was to engage with central command and address any training issues they might have.

"I help ensure the tactical-level instruction is being carried out correctly, that there are no issues with the training, they have the correct number of instructors and other aspects of training delivery," he said.

"CIED-trained personnel in the ANDSF are needed now more than ever – the IED trend certainly isn't decreasing.

"Here in Kabul we mainly see vehicle-borne IED threat whereas in wider Afghanistan we see what we've been facing for some time now in victim-operated and radio-operated devices in places like roadsides and areas where the ANDSF usually patrol."

Flight Sergeant Maher said that as soon as the students graduate from their training they will return to their provinces all over Afghanistan and begin field operations immediately.

"We're supporting this training to make sure that when the Coalition leaves Afghanistan, the Afghans have a sustainable training capability for the future.

"The current mission has a schedule to have the training entirely led by Afghan instructors by the end of 2015 – and I believe they're on track to meet that."

PHOTOS BY CORPORAL DAVID COTTON



WATCH VIDEO



Top: An Afghan National Defense and Security Forces student at the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) School pairs detonation cables during an EOD training scenario at the Central Training Centre in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Left: A student in an EOD blast suit uses a metal detector during an explosive ordnance disposal test.

Above: A student in an EOD blast suit probes the ground for detonation cable during an explosive ordnance disposal test at the Central Training Centre in Kabul, Afghanistan.



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Australian and New Zealand Army Contingents



Boots on the ground

Australian and New Zealand Army contingents have commenced training Iraqi Army soldiers as part of the international Building Partner Capacity (BPC) mission in Iraq.

Troops from the Iraqi Army's 76th Brigade, a formation within the Iraqi 16th Division, are now receiving instruction in a diverse range of military skills including, advanced weapon handling, laws of armed conflict and complex obstacle breaching techniques.

The combined training force, known as Task Group Taji, consists of around 300 Australian soldiers and 110 New Zealand soldiers.

The aim of the Australian and New Zealand mission is to help the Iraqi government to prepare sufficient forces to lead the counter-attack against Daesh in an effort to regain control of its territory.

Defence says the relationship with the Iraqi Army training force has started positively with the Commander of the 76th Brigade requesting additional training from the Australian-New Zealand training team. The 76th Brigade's capability will be further enhanced with an extensive consignment of essential equipment to be delivered in the coming weeks.

A New Zealand Defence Force spokesman said training would deliver a broad range of individual and military skills to the Iraqi Security Forces.

International security specialist New Zealand Major Josh Wineera, who led development of the training program the Kiwis will deliver, said the purpose of the BPC mission was to train Iraqi security forces (ISF) to a point where they are capable of commencing combat operations with a standard of training agreed by both the Iraqis and coalition trainers.

"It also aims to train ISF to a state where they are considered a self-sustaining capability for the Iraqi government," Major Wineera said.

"To achieve this, a comprehensive pre-deployment training strategy was designed by a team of experts and specialists in a variety of fields, including linguists, training evaluation, coaching and mentoring and irregular warfare.

"The design team also looked deeply into cross-cultural adult training and cross-cultural adult learning.

"Key factors that have been focused on in pre-deployment training are cultural respect and humility, gaining professional respect and mutual trust and partnered evaluation.

"The pre-deployment training program also recognises that the ISF soldiers who arrive for training will be at varying 'training states' on arrival, ranging from training state one – which is the equivalent of a raw recruit, to training state three – a partner of equal ability who is competent and might be battle-hardened."

Task Group Taji is stationed at the Taji Military Complex northwest of Baghdad and has a two-year mission where ADF and Kiwi personnel will work to build the capacity of units of the regular Iraqi Army.

A further 20 ADF personnel will serve within coalition headquarters in Iraq.

Australia and New Zealand join a number of other countries already contributing to training Iraqi forces, including Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, the UK and the US.

In addition to Task Group Taji's BPC mission, Australia's Air Task Group continues its air operations in Iraq.

Australia's Special Operation Task Group, which is contributing to the advise and assist mission, will be reduced later this year.



Aussie photos by Captain Bradley Richardson
Kiwi photos not credited



WATCH TASK FORCE
TAJI START TRAINING
IN IRAQ

WATCH AUSSIES AND
KIWIS TRAIN BEFORE
DEPARTURE

WATCH TASK FORCE
TAJI DEPARTURE
PARADE



Photos UK MoD – Crown Copyright 2015 – Main by Harland Quarington; Small 1+2 by Petty Officer Owen Cooban; 3+4 by Sergeant Rupert Frere; 5 by Sergeant Ross Tilly; 6 by Corporal Max Bryan.

Three-days of VE 70 commemorations and celebrations in London started with a Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph at 3pm on Friday 8 May, the same time and date 70 years earlier that Winston Churchill announced to the nation that the war in Europe was over.

This was followed by more than 200 beacon lightings across the UK, starting when The Queen lit a beacon on the Long Walk in Windsor.

St Paul's Cathedral, the Houses of Parliament and Trafalgar Square were lit up with V-shaped beams of light each evening, recreating what happened back in 1945.

At 11am on the Saturday cathedrals and churches across the country rang their bells in a sign of victory, while ships and boats sounded their horns.

In the evening, thousands of people attended a Royal British Legion concert at Horse Guards Parade. The star-studded 1940s themed "Party to Remember" was broadcast on the BBC.

Right across the three days parties, picnics and events were held as communities and schools across the UK came together to mark the end of the War in Europe 70 years ago.

On Sunday, HM The Queen led the nation in marking VE Day 70 at a Service of Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey.

Afterwards, more than 1000 veterans were led by 400 members of the Armed Forces on a parade from the Abbey up Whitehall, past the famous balcony where Winston Churchill appeared on the original VE Day after his famous speech to mark Victory in Europe.



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Captain Harry Wales spent a high tempo month with the Australian Army in the leadup to his retirement from the British Army.

While in Australia, the Prince's program included participating in the day-to-day activities of soldiering, including physical training sessions, sport (including wheelchair AFL), preparing for field exercises and learning Aussie bush survival skills.

He also participated in high-end warfighting activities such as patrolling, urban assault, boarding parties, repelling from helicopters and even flying a Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter.

He also accompanied the military contingent at the Dawn Service at Gallipoli, before returning to Australia for more military exercises.

A high-profile advocate for wounded warrior, the Prince also met with some of the Army's wounded, injured and ill members, at the 1st Brigade Soldier Recovery Centre.

While on duty with NORFORCE, Captain Wales met with locals of the Wuggubun community in the Kununurra region of Western Australia, around 470km south-west of Darwin, and spent time engaging with elders and children of the Indigenous community.

Captain Wales was also briefed on NORFORCE's operations and trained in bush survival lessons, including how to source food and water.

After receiving his orders, Captain Wales headed out on patrol with members of NORFORCE, spending two nights camping out in the remote Kununurra region.

During the month-long secondment, Captain Wales spent time with Australian Army units in Darwin, Perth and Sydney, before travelling to New Zealand for a week-long official visit that also included military activities.

MARVELLOUS CAPTAIN WALES

THE AUSSIE AUTUMN SOLDIER

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WALES SHOOT, FLY A
BLACKHAWK, AND
STORM A BUILDING**





Time to remember SASR Golden Jubilee



To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Australian Special Air Service Regiment (SASR), the SAS Historical Foundation has commissioned Australian watch company, Haigh & Hastings, to supply a limited number of quality mechanical timepieces specifically designed to commemorate this special milestone.

The blue bezelled M2 Diver watch with black strap has been customised to suit this special occasion, with an embossed Limited Edition case-back design commemorating the Golden Jubilee.

The box has been specially created to carry the SASR badge and each of the 1000 timepieces comes with its own limited-edition certificate of authenticity.



Major Brett Warner, SAS Historical Foundation, said all who served with the Special Air Service Regiment can be immensely proud of this historical milestone – our 50th anniversary.

“As a not-for-profit organisation, the SAS Historical Foundation is pleased to offer this Limited Edition Haigh & Hastings ‘Timepieces for Adventurous Men’ range as a way to commemorate this special milestone in our proud history of service.”

The Limited Edition range is available for sale through the SAS Historical Foundation website www.australiansas.com

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In the World Wildlife War... Can Mother Nature outlast mans' indeference?

BY DAMIEN MANDER, CEO INTERNATIONAL ANTI-POACHING FOUNDATION

Our generation is losing the World Wildlife War, on behalf of all those who have fought before us. We will be defeated, unless we are empowered to do things differently and stop shifting the furniture around with the same tired approaches, expecting different outcomes.

Collectively, we conservationists function as an industry perpetually trapped in second gear. Mother Nature has been forced onto the back seat, for the benefit of mankind's forward march. We battle for the leftover scraps of a humanitarian feast as our species continually defies nature's self-regulating systems in its insatiable drive to dominate the Earth. Is there a real long-term solution to protecting what the majority deems a lesser important wellbeing – the heart and lungs of the planet?

As a conservationist at ground level in Africa, I deal locally with the very global issue of poaching – in particular, high target species – those species that poachers are willing to go to extreme lengths to kill. When sufficient measures protect these species, only then ecosystems are safe from poachers.

The poaching of decreasing populations of high-target species, and subsequently everything within an eco-system, has reached epidemic proportions across the planet. How can we stop the swelling degradation of the natural world at the front lines?

The solution continually conveyed is that we must "win the hearts and minds" of the people surrounding these natural areas through empowerment. But can we really depend on the age-old cliché of winning the hearts

and minds in order to save the natural world? This concept, which so easily rolls off the tongue, lacks any recent examples that stand to be implemented on a scale necessary for real global change.

The United Nations Population Division projects the number of human inhabitants in Africa will double to 2 billion by 2040. I have little confidence that we can mobilize the hearts and minds of a largely impoverished continent, with a common mindset of immediacy, that the long-term preservation of nature is more beneficial than food on the table tonight. Couple this with a common lack of sufficient political will to save wilderness areas, and we have a recipe for extreme challenge.

There is a group of people in this world who receive very little recognition. They venture out each day, in the face of danger, and defend our natural world from those who aim to destroy it. They receive minimal salaries and often witness their colleagues killed or seriously injured – more often from the very animals they defend.

Research, conservation, environmental NGOs, communal areas, hunting, tourism, game farming and so much more, all rely heavily on the first and last line of defence these individuals provide. These people I refer to are game rangers. In so many places where the difficulty in protecting nature has increased, the level of training and support for these rangers is decreasing. As an equation, this does not add up when so much is at stake.

If under any other scenario, armed

units were to cross international borders and violently take out high-profile targets, it would be a front-page incident or act of terrorism. Yet this environmental terrorism happens daily in the poaching of high-target species in many parts of Africa, and we sit here struggling to justify to the international community that rangers need the same access to training and equipment as our soldiers do. I do not like the fact that this is part of conservation, but this is the world we have created for ourselves to manage. It is deemed acceptable for militaries to protect our national interests and police to protect our local interests, but when it comes to protecting natural interests we have to walk on eggshells.

I am constantly reminded that, "The issue is at a higher level, not at ground level. We need political pressure and support to win this war." To a degree, yes. But for now I can regrettably say that we are not falling over backwards as an industry trying to place all the resources that are being thrown at us. We are struggling to get by on the bare minimum. If resources are provided, the industry can use these under existing government relationships and political buy-in.

Rangers must be given the capacity to hold on to what we have left, while we figure out, as a global community, what the long-term answers are – or nature figures them out for us. I know that rangers in and of themselves are not the solution. But highly-trained, well-equipped, fairly paid rangers are part of a solution. This approach must fit hand-in-hand with committed efforts to lift up local communities, policy changes, tougher border controls,

and a shift in global awareness and priorities. However, first the hemorrhaging must be stopped, before we bleed out as a generation, as a species, as a planet.

Coming off the back of World War 2 and the bush wars in Southern Africa, the conservation industry was filled with the necessary people to carry out the difficult requirements of frontline conservation without having to make a big deal about it. They knew what was required; they had the skills to make it happen and the job was done. We now have a diminishing group of people in the industry who have a military or combat background. A generation of conservationists have risen through the ranks who, for better or worse, lack the experience that we have had to rely on the military in the past to instill.

My organization, the International Anti-Poaching Foundation, recently led the scoping of two new official qualifications under the South Africa Qualifications Authority (to be recognised throughout the Southern African Development Community, SADC): Anti-Poaching Ranger and Anti-Poaching Manager. These qualifications will serve an international community of rangers and provide the industry with a formalised career path, which has a specific focus on the necessary skills required in today's world to defend high-target species from poachers. This is something that has been missing.

This is only one part of the solution however.

Many other answers sit within military warehouses around the world, collecting dust. The conservation industry struggles along, trying to replicate technology that was superseded decades ago. The right budgets, training, technology and systems can protect what remains – if only they could be accessed. I do not love the drones that patrol the skies, the defence budgets we need, or the high-level support we seek. I only love what these things can do for our common objectives.

Writing this piece carries the very real risk that some in the conservationist community will label me a militant ex-soldier, and seek to distance themselves. Soldiers are respected for putting the security of their home nations ahead of their personal safety. Yet, when we advocate a strong-armed defense of nature, somehow we are deemed 'too militant'.

Rangers are dying. Animals are dying. Can we afford to ignore the



important contributions that military tactics and technologies can bring to conservation when those same components are being employed by criminals and poachers to destroy nature?

It should be noted that well-prepared rangers provide not only a major deterrent to poachers, but they are often able to neutralise situations without having to resort to escalating violence, in the end preserving human lives as well as wildlife.

I am not asking you to consider whether or not rangers should be trained, equipped and supported to the levels required to meet the true level of threat. I am asking you if you are willing to accept the outcome if we do not follow this path.

We should not be scared of adopting or supporting a paramilitary approach to defend high-target species where it is needed. We should be more afraid of our rangers being shot and killed in the line of duty because they don't have the right training. We should be more afraid of the funds from wildlife crime reaching the upper levels of criminal syndicates and terrorist networks.

We now share a planet with 7 billion other people. All fighting hard each day for a better job, to build a grander house and drive a nicer car. We spend

more and more each waking moment to advance our economic interests, to grow bigger, faster and stronger. We no longer live in a society: we live in an economy. In this short-sighted quest to move up, we have imprudently pushed ourselves to a point where we are scrambling for solutions in the natural world. We all need to search our souls and decide what is truly important and then make the tough decisions that will determine our future.

Rangers didn't sign up to protect dotted lines on a map or resources buried underground. An economic inheritance is inconsequential if the environment heritage is lost. Game rangers signed up to protect that heritage, which holds the keys to our future. They deserve our full support, with all the might and all the strength that it takes.

IAPF is reliant on the financial support of individuals, corporations and organisations who understand the urgent need to back determined efforts at the front lines of the wildlife wars. Please visit www.iapf.org to see how you can help.



CLOSE BUT NOT CLOSE ENOUGH

Australians recommended for the VC but not awarded

BY MAJOR DARRYL KELLY

Private William Edward Cox
1st Pioneer Battalion

MYSTERIOUS WAYS

This story is clouded in aspects of mystery, as you will see...

William 'Bill' Cox was born in December 1898, in the rustic settlement of Pitt Town, near Windsor, NSW. His father William was an old soldier, who had served with the New South Wales Infantry in the Sudan and later with the NSW Imperial Bushmen in the Boer War¹.

Young Bill had his early education at the Johnstone Street Public School, in the inner Sydney suburb of Annandale. Following school, Bill sought an apprenticeship at Wedderburn's of Leichardt, as a scale adjuster¹.

At the outbreak of the First World War, Bill was working as a labourer and residing in a house in Church Street, Parramatta. The house was owned by Mrs Agnes Barter. Bill was keen to do his bit and on the 15th of September 1915, he enlisted in the AIF. He was allocated Regimental Number 3735a and was drafted as a reinforcement to the 2nd Infantry Battalion. When he was filling out his enlistment documentation, he firstly listed his next of kin as his father, William James Cox, but then crossed it out and listed his 'Sister' – Agnes Barter instead¹.

Bill underwent initial training at the Holsworthy Camp and on 30 December, embarked on the Troopship 'Medic' bound for the Middle East².

With the withdrawal of the ANZAC forces from Gallipoli, it was decided to double the ranks of the AIF². New units were required to be raised from the existing forces, as the Diggers prepared themselves to take on a new adversary – the German Army.

Volunteers were called for to fill artillery and engineers – and a new concept for the Australians, the pioneers.

The Pioneer Battalions had a combination of skills and could fight as infantry while also able to undertake light engineering roles. This enabled them to better look after themselves in a fight.

This appealed to Bill and he stepped forward and joined the group of Diggers, who had also indicated a similar willingness to volunteer.

Bill was moved to the nearby camp at Serapeum, where the pioneers were being assembled. His records show that he was officially taken on the strength of the 1st Pioneer Battalion on 17 March 1916¹. He relished the training as it combined the hard physical training of the infantry and the commonsense and ingenuity of the engineers.

In late March, the battalion was ordered to break camp and move to the port city of Alexandria. The docks were abuzz with activity as the troops were ushered quickly aboard. As the moorings were slipped, Bill took his final look at Egypt. Next stop was France and the war.

The trip across the Mediterranean was a tense seven days, as they ran the gauntlet of U-boats. Bill and his mates breathed a sigh of relief as the ship docked in the French port of Marseilles.

There was no time for sightseeing as the battalion was mustered together, names checked off and loaded onto a troop train to take them north to the Somme.



Australian troops repairing a communication trench at Armentieres, May 1916. © Image IWM (Q 578)

The rolling, green fields of France were certainly a nice change from the stark sands of Egypt.

The 1st Pioneer Battalion was moved into a training camp near Armentieres. Here the battalion received new equipment and the Diggers were prepared for fighting on the Western Front. The battalion, like other ANZAC units, moved into the 'Nursery Sector' at Fleurbaix, where the Diggers would be introduced to life in the forward trenches.

Like others around him, Bill Cox was mesmerised by the fireworks display of flares whistling up front, both sides of the line, the ducking at the whistling of artillery rounds going overhead and the rattle of distant machine-guns. The old hands chuckled at their new charges – "Don't worry lads, you'll soon get used to what's what" one said.

Bill wrote to his 'sister' on 21 May saying, "Just a line to let you know I am getting on well now. I have been in hospital for a fortnight. I have rheumatics very bad, my hands are bad, yet I can hardly hold the pencil to write"¹.

On 24 May, just before going back into the line, Bill wrote again to his 'sister'. "Just a line to let you know that I am getting on well at present. I am just writing to let you know that I am going over to England for eight days furlough"¹.

In late May 1916, the sergeant assembled Bill's section. They were to be attached to assist the 2nd Tunnelling Company, who were tasked to dig underground

chambers toward the enemy front line at a feature known as the Cordonnerie Salient³. That portion of the line was held by the 11th Battalion and, as the area has been fairly quiet, the job should have been a relatively easy one.

The tunnellers and pioneers gathered their tools and checked their equipment and moved up. The chamber was an old one, which was now disused. The pioneers set about tidying up the entrance and shoring up any damaged timbers before the real task of digging could begin.

Bill was assigned to setting up and operating the vital air pump, located at the head of the shaft. This device was designed to pump air to the face where the digging would take place.

A couple of the infantry soldiers stuck their heads in to see what was happening. Bill was busy working the pump. "Why don't you go down and have a look?" Bill offered the soldiers. "Not on your bloody life mate! I'll take my chances up here any day rather than go down there!" the footslogger replied.

As night fell on 30 May the digging continued in the chamber and the infantrymen manning the forward trenches settled down into their night routine.

Directly opposite, the German 6th Bavarian Reserve Division, was in its final preparation for launching a trench raid against Bill's part of the line. They knew that the Aussies were relatively new to France and they were keen to identify the units, snatch a few prisoners



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Six batteries of German field artillery and mortars, supported by a half battery of heavy guns were loaded and aimed at the Australian trenches.

and assess the Australian reaction to close combat. The Germans were also eager to use their new tactic of the 'box barrage', which saw artillery impacting en masse on the target, then in a pattern similar to a three sided box, they attempted to isolate a certain portion of a trench system, while the base of 'the box' falls on the support/communication trenches, cutting off withdrawal of the forward troops or reinforcement from the rear.

They'd tried it before and it worked – and they were keen to try it again.

Six batteries of German field artillery and mortars, supported by a half battery of heavy guns were loaded and aimed at the Australian trenches. They were just waiting for the assaulting force to move into place and, once ready, the order to open fire would be given.

In the Australian trenches, it was life as normal. Those whose turn on picket was in the middle of the night had turned in early so as to get as much sleep as they could. Others sat in small groups, chatting in hushed tones, while others tried to heat some leftover tea in the dugouts.

Then at 8.15pm all hell broke loose as the German artillery rained in. Everywhere the Diggers turned around seemed to explode. Timber, sandbags, bodies and parts of bodies seemed to be flying in every direction. Then at 9.05pm the fire shifted to form 'the box'³. But the respite was short lived as German soldiers flooded into the shattered trenches, looking to wreak as much destruction and casualties as they could.

The Australian's were caught unawares. Many were clubbed senseless by enemy wheeling Knobkerries⁴ – others were shot or bombed.

As the Germans came to a dug-out, they fumigated it with bombs and then called upon the dazed occupants who survived to come out and surrender. In a couple of cases the occupants of half-buried dug-outs tried to fire back in feeble defence. This was met with a further deluge of bombs, which finally silenced the stubborn defenders.

This is where the story now splits into two separate versions; the citation which was written by the Commanding Officer of the 1st Pioneer Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Nicholson recommending Bill for the VC, states:

"During the bombardment of our trenches on the night of 30/31 May 1916, Private Cox was in charge of the air-pump at the shaft head. He remained at his post pumping air to his comrades below, until killed by a hostile bomb. His body was discovered still seated at his pump with one foot on either side, as if in the action of

actually pumping. It is evident that his devotion was the cause of losing his life"⁵.

The Official History of the AIF, Volume 3, depicts, "Inside were several miners from the 2nd Tunnelling Company and some men from the 1st Pioneer Battalion were down in the gallery. The Germans had thrown down a few bombs, which did little damage. The men below were determined to crawl out; but the first to emerge, a pioneer (PTE W.E. Cox, of Parramatta, NSW), was hit through the stomach by a revolver shot and fell back dying, a second man being wounded by a bayonet. A German officer who could speak a little English ordered the others out, and five were thus made prisoners. The remainder of the ten or eleven prisoners taken in this raid belonged to the 11th Battalion; some were wounded"³.

Who's to say what exactly happened? Could Bill have lost consciousness after being shot, and when regaining consciousness took his place again on the pump thinking that his mates were still in the shaft? Who's right and who's wrong? The real answer will probably never be known.

Meanwhile, another problem was developing back home. With Agnes Barter being listed as the next of kin (NoK), she was notified in the first instance of Bill's death and of his burial. Unfortunately, Bill's father was not notified at the loss of his son, nor did he receive the parcel containing his son's personal effects. These too went to Agnes.

Bill senior eventually sought to remove Agnes as the NoK. In an impassioned letter to the Army, dated 2 October 1919, old Bill stated that as he had only been married once, that Agnes Barter could not be his daughter and in turn she could not possibly be young Bill's sister.

In a surprising outcome, the Army decided to grant the old man's request and formally recognised him as the legal next of kin of his son Bill¹.

Young Bill had every right to nominate anyone he wanted as his NoK, but why would he state that it was his 'sister' when clearly it was not? Also, why would the Army go against the wishes of the soldier and change his decision to vary his bona fide NoK?

As old Bill looked down at his son's medals, he had a tear in his eye. He had fought his battle with the authority and won. These medals were his only tangible link with his lost son, and he was proud of his son and his achievements.

Private William Edward Cox was not awarded the Victoria Cross but was mentioned in Despatches⁵.



Private William Cox

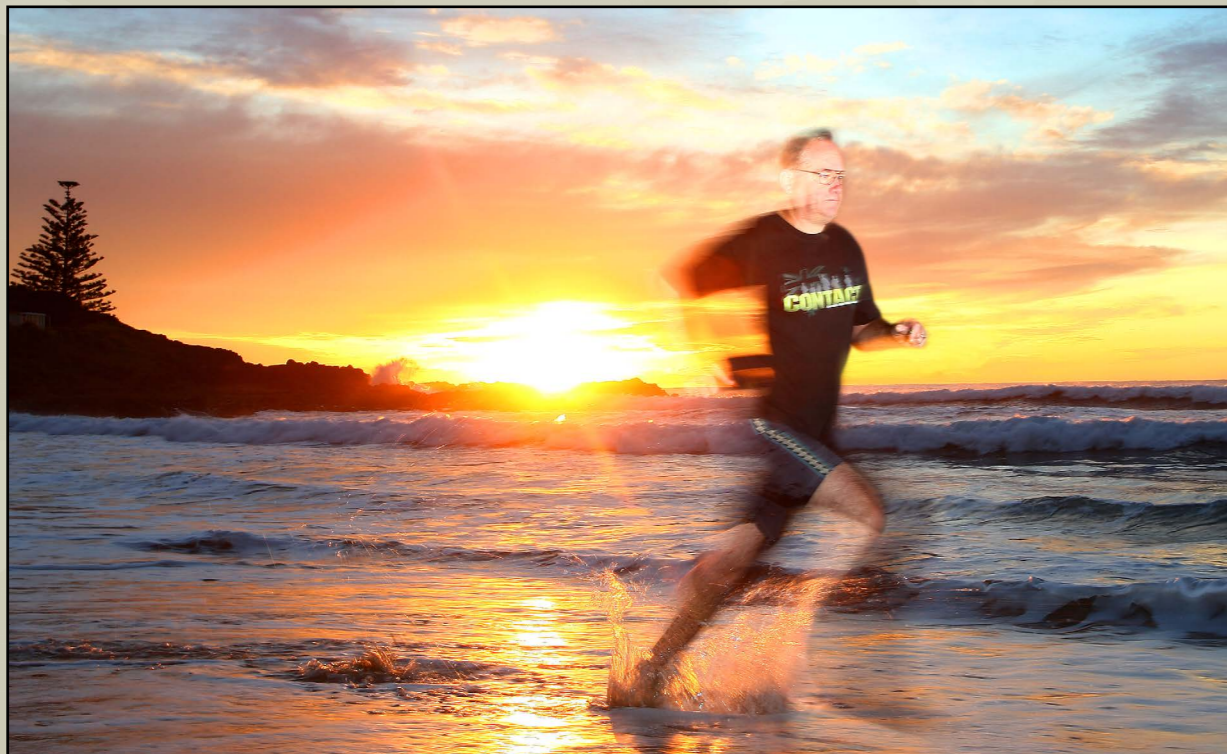
Photo courtesy of the Australian War Memorial

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Notes

- 1 National Archives of Australia, B2455, WWI Service Records, 3735a PTE W.E. Cox
- 2 AWM 8, Unit Embarkation Rolls, 2nd Battalion, 1914-1918 War
- 3 Bean CEW, The Official History of Australia in the War 1914-1918, Volume III, Australian War Memorial, 1936
- 4 Knobkerrie – short stout sticks headed with bolts of iron
- 5 AWM 28, Recommendation Files for Honours and Awards, AIF, 1914-1918

GREY ARMY



After last issue's column on fitness for younger military recruits, it's now time to turn our attention to the other end of the spectrum and look at some considerations for older individuals who are either already in the military or who are considering entering or re-entering the defence force.

Just like young recruits, older individuals have characteristics that can make them both easier and harder to work with.

Unlike younger people, anyone over the age of 35 has generally learned that results don't come overnight and they have much more patience.

They also tend to be more willing to follow a program to the letter without getting distracted by pictures of cats on the Internet.

I find that if someone has decided to enter the military later in life, they are highly motivated and determined to do whatever it takes to succeed.

On the downside, many older individuals still *think* they are 18 and bulletproof and fail to take into account the effects that aging has had on their ability to train hard and recover from intense sessions.

Older individuals may also have more complicated lives with careers, children and other commitments, which means that fitting in training can be more complicated than for someone in school.

Finally, the older you get the more chance that at some stage you'll have suffered an

injury that can be aggravated by intense training.

So, keeping all of the above in mind, here are my recommendations for training for the military if you are between 35 and 65.

General service

The first thing to do if you have not trained for a long time is to get the all clear from your doctor and get some basic range-of-motion testing done by a trainer or physiotherapist.

As you age, flexibility tends to decrease and accumulated muscle imbalances can place you at a higher risk of acute and chronic injuries from training.

Once you know where you are weak or tight, it is a good idea to spend a few weeks prioritising stretching, foam rolling, massage and corrective exercises to reduce the chances of getting injured as the pace of training picks up.

Make a plan

Once you have your flexibility and muscle imbalances under control it is time to structure a training plan.

In general, the older you are the longer it takes to recover from intense training so, where as an 18 year old might be able to train two sessions a day six days a week and

still recover between sessions or after an extra day of rest, an older trainee may need to limit their training to four days per week.

If you are following a training program from the internet, a magazine or a book, it pays to keep in mind that most of these resources are written with the 18 to 35 age group in mind and that you may have to reduce the number of sessions per week and stretch a six week program out over eight weeks, or by reducing the intensity and volume of the sessions.

In regard to each session in a training plan, it is still important to push yourself fairly hard, but don't expect to lift as much or run as fast as you did when you were 18.

Another consideration is that of exercise selection.

I always recommend that older trainees minimise the amount of running and high-impact exercise they perform and substitute more low-impact exercise such as kettlebell training and rowing.

These activities can still be performed with a high level of intensity to build aerobic capacity but they also carry a low risk of giving you sore hips, knees and ankles.

Recovery

Finally, once you have completed a training session, it is critically important that you pay attention to your nutrition and recovery.

Ensure that you spend some time after each session working on your flexibility and have a post-workout meal that contains some easily digestible carbs and protein to aid muscle recovery.

Your overall nutrition plan should include lots of protein, fruit and vegetables and it is also a good idea to supplement with fish oil, a multi vitamin and extra vitamin D.

So there you have it.

While it is unlikely that at 40 or 50 you will be gunning for SAS selection, there is nothing to stop older adults from entering the ADF and contributing in a variety of roles (in fact, two of my clients – one over 40 and the other over 50 – have recently been deployed to the Middle East on operations and to Gallipoli).

If you would like a sample fitness program that shows how I program for older trainees, email me at fitness@octogen.com.au

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Cadet in Women Pilots Relay

Australian Air Force Cadet Leading Aircraftwoman Sarah Bradshaw recently participated in the Women Pilots' Relay of Flight.

The inaugural Women Pilots' Relay of Flight saw 112 female pilots carry a relay baton almost 30,000km around Australia – and raise \$26,860 for the Cancer Council of Australia.

The relay started at Avalon, Victoria on March 2 following the Avalon Airshow and the baton was passed in an anti-clockwise direction around Australia, passing through Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia, South Australia, back into Victoria and

down to Tasmania, and finished in Launceston on April 22 in time for the start of the Australian Women Pilots' Annual conference.

Cadet Leading Aircraftwoman Bradshaw flew her glider into Adelaide Airport – only the third time in 26 years that such permission had been given – to collect the baton from QANTAS First Officer Skye Mules and Captain Helen Trennery.

After facing a large media pack, Cadet Leading Aircraftwoman Bradshaw and her instructor Catherine Conway then launched the glider and flew their precious cargo to Stonefield Gliding Club, about 110km north east of Adelaide.

Australian Air Force Cadet Leading Aircraftwoman Sarah Bradshaw shows the Australian Women Pilot Association baton to her proud dad Warrant Officer Dave Bradshaw – and, inset, accepts the baton from QANTAS pilots First Officer Skye Mules (left) and Captain Helen Trennery. Photo by Corporal Nicci Freeman



Who wants to fly this thing?



WHO WANTS TO FLY THIS THING?

ABOVE: If that was the question, it seems even Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence Darren Chester wanted to ride in the Air Force Cadets' new glider, when he and RAAF senior officers met enthusiastic cadets at Avalon during the Australian International Airshow.

RIGHT: Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Geoff Brown explains the recent acquisition of new gliders for Australian Air Force Cadets to Darren Chester, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence.

Air Force Cadets will receive 22 new gliders to be used throughout Australia, including 11 ASK-21 Mi self-launching gliders and 11 DG 1001 Club soaring gliders.





Further information on Cadets can be found at
www.cadetnet.gov.au

TS Gayundah wins



Naval Cadets at Bulimba Barracks, Brisbane, broke a 44-year drought in March when their Training Ship Gayundah was named the most efficient in the country for 2014 after a year of challenges.

Commanding Officer Lieutenant ANC Wendy Broxham said the title was reward for TS Gayundah's 60 naval cadets' hard work.

"It's a huge honour to win and to put our name out there" she said.

"We are absolutely thrilled. It's a very prestigious to win after a lot of hard work."

NAVY CADETS BEN DAVEY AND LUCY O'MALLEY
 PHOT BY RICHARD WALKER

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Australian Army Cadets lead the Anzac Day march through Darwin city. Photo by Lance Corporal Sebastian Beurich



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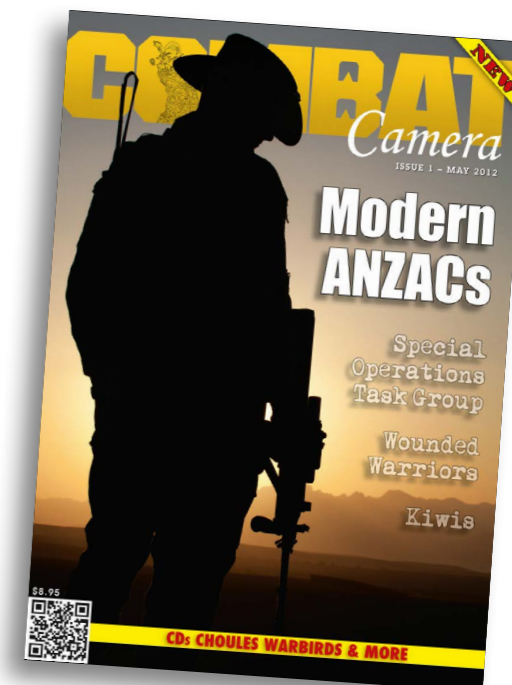
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ALL THE SMALL THINGS....

There's a good song by Blink 182 poking fun at boy bands (and deservedly so) that, in the context of this issue's Gear Insider, is exactly what I want to talk you about – all the small things we use but don't really think about, that come together to allow us to function in the field.

When we look at our personal equipment, we see each component as a system. Our clothing is a system of layers that we put on and take off at different times according to conditions. Our load carriage is a system that we adapt to our role as rifleman, gunner, grenadier and so on. Body armour is a system that modifies to meet the mission and level of protection required. Weapons are systems with components that go on and come off for various roles. Radios, now being a personal communications system well beyond the single PRC 77 set per section not so long ago. Even our sleeping and shelter equipment has evolved into a system.

Despite the 'systematic' evolution of most of our systems, there is one group of items we carry and rely on that are not a system, although some of them once were – yet they are pretty close to crucial in allowing a soldier to function in the field. These items are our hygiene, cooking and comfort items.

As individuals, we subconsciously pay almost as much attention to these as we do our other equipment.

Let's get cooking first, with our food preparation equipment. When I joined, this was actually a minor system. Your two packets of hexamine tabs folded into your metal stove to form rectangle for storage. One of your cup's canteen was for cooking and brews, the other for shaving. You had two dixie plates with folding handles that nested into each other and you could put the hex stove inside that provided you didn't contaminate your dixies. The cups canteen handle folded and it went on the bottom of a water bottle, all conformist and out of the way.

Now, these items are still issued and when issued are still a system. But really, who still uses them in this fashion, if at all? A recruit probably would, a few times, but soon after, the system is broken apart and some items replaced with more functional versions.

From my experience, the first to go is the hex stove, replaced by most people with a US one that slides over the bottom of your cups canteen and then into the waterbottle pouch. A lot of you will be nodding your head here, as this stove is one of the best low cost items a digger can have. Some of you will have moved on to a gas cooker. There are a growing number of items developed for the light-weight hiking civilian market that easily cross over to military use. Stoves are one and we will come across some more shortly. Stove wise, I now carry as a minimum, the US stove and hex tabs, but also a gas stove where the situation allows. In fact, you will often find a few gas stoves through the section, allowing guys to brew-up in bulk for their mates – in effect filling the gap left by the old petrol-fuelled section cooker. Another system that appears gone by the wayside.

Some of you would be wondering why I carry two cooking methods? Well, if you're going on a green holiday with RAAF Airways, there's a whole book of stuff you can't take on board and compressed cans of gas is one of them. So that leaves you with the issue of getting fuel at the other end because the powers that be are only going to provide hexi tabs!

What about the KFS set? Hell, I don't even know where mine is, except for the spoon. And I only need that because the FRED is dead [long live FRED] and sometimes that plastic spoon from the rat packs just won't cut it.

Despite what I've just said, the issued cooking and eating gear actually still has a place – but we haven't been to that place for such a long time. Time was when a field kitchen went with you and you filed through for hot meals served into your dixies, that could include items you needed to cut with a knife or a desert you needed a spoon for. These days, there's either a mess to go to or a hot-box TV dinner with plastic cutlery set comes to you. Otherwise it's rat packs.

My thoughts are that 'the system' has eradicated the system on the food front.

As far as I can tell, hygiene has not had any systematic equipment and although 'the system' used to provide safety-razor handles and razor blades, they too have gone, along with about everything but soap bars and foot powder.

Email your comments, critiques, criticisms or death threats, to gearinsider@militarycontact.com

GEAR
INSIDER

When you look at it, the soldier now supplies his own 'health & beauty' products, as they call them in retail. The razor is the one you prefer or can afford, or a battery/rechargeable electric (not very tac, but great for the electric tree joke on newbies). Soap is a milder commercial one you knocked off from the bathroom, a liquid version in a tube or even a pack of baby wipes out of the nappy bag (just make sure you don't take them all. Nothing worse than the ear bashing you get from the wife after she found herself wipeless in a Westfield baby change room). Shaving cream is now replaced by a thumb-sized bottle of shaving oil or the paper-thin soap leaves from a hiking shop. But I still carry my issued small towel, because it still makes a great neck cooler. But this too has been supplanted by the smaller and faster-drying microfiber version.

While these types of consumables are still provided by defence to soldiers on the battlefield or long exercises, they are mostly supplanted by

the preferred and often more functional items that we provide ourselves.

When you think about this, it becomes clear that this area of soldiers' kit has been overlooked for a while now.

Earlier, I also mentioned comfort. By this I mean the personal items you take for down time – what little of it there is. Jack rations are up to you, and those gas stoves we mentioned open up some great opportunities for the creative digger. I take a book, sometimes a few different magazines that can be shared among the guys. Unfortunately, that's **CONTACT** out of the game, Mr Editor! But with almost every digger owning a smartphone, there is a whole world of entertainment [and **CONTACT** – Ed], as long as there's power. Even better if you can still get data!

Maybe we should discuss portable mini solar panels next issue?

Until then, send your thoughts and suggestions to gearinsider@militarycontact.com

3RAR, Oecusi enclave, East Timor, 1999.
Photo by Corporal Brian Hartigan



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A Royal Australian Navy clearance
diver emerges from the water off Palm
Beach in Sydney during an exercise.
Photo by Able Seaman Kayla Hayes



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