

ISSUE 52

# CONTACT

AIR LAND & SEA

DECEMBER 2016

THE AUSTRALIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

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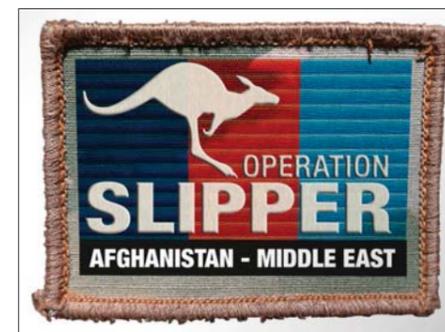
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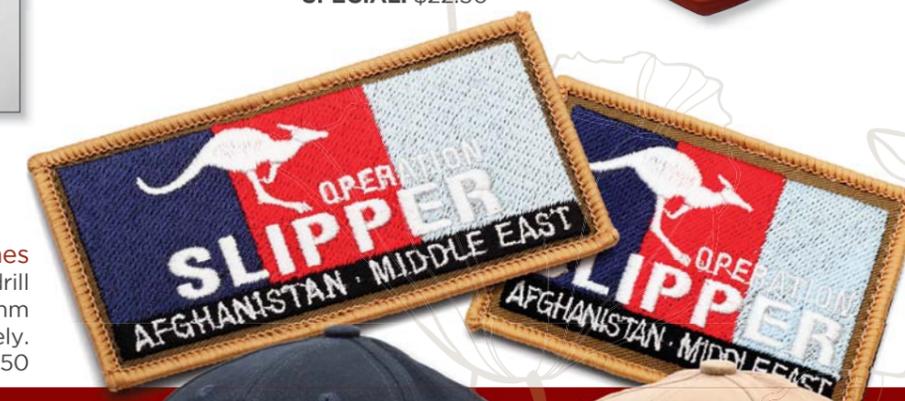


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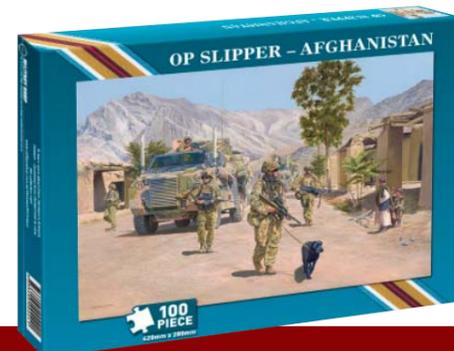
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Issue 52 – December 2016

**CONTACT**

AIR, LAND & SEA



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PERSPECTIVES

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appropriate.

I struggled to decide on a subject for this issue's editorial and, after very recently seeing a damn-good war movie, I thought I'd say a few words about that — Hacksaw Ridge is awesome. Well done to Mel Gibson and the mostly Aussie cast for a truly epic tale, well told.

Hacksaw Ridge is the true story of Private Desmond Doss who, for religious and family-history reasons, refused to touch a weapon even in basic training as a rifle-company medic, after being drafted for WWII.

Peers and superiors alike violently objected to having a 'conscientious objector' in their ranks, but, through superior intervention he was eventually "free to run into the hell fire of battle without a single weapon to protect yourself". And that hell fire presented itself on the Maeda Escarpment on the island of Okinawa.

Here's the scene – on 1 April 1945, more than 100,000 Japanese soldiers faced about 182,000 US troops and 1300 Allied ships in one of the last defensive stands in the taking of Japan. The Battle of Okinawa lasted 82 days with 14,009 Allies killed and more than 80,000 wounded. 77,166 Japanese soldiers were counted among the dead as well as up to half the 300,000 civilian population (all males over 18 and nearly 1800 'middle school' boys aged 14+ had been drafted as front-line fighters. Even schoolgirls were drafted as support forces, such as medics. And the capital city was all-but destroyed by bombers).

Desmond Doss' unit entered the fight on April 29 and eventually took Hacksaw Ridge a week later, after suffering massive casualties. Doss, an unarmed medic, dodged bullets from shell hole to shell hole for most of the battle and is credited with saving more than 75 comrades, including his own company commander, who had fought so hard during training to get rid of the 'conscientious objector'.

This movie is a 'Hollywood epic' and a Mel Gibson tour de force. As such, you might expect it to glamourise its hero and 'big him up'. But, if you read his Medal of Honour citation you might think, as I do, the film doesn't go far enough in honouring this man's superhuman actions on Okinawa, where he was badly wounded four times – and continued to prove himself a superhero even then (go read the citation, [here](#)).

After the war, Desmond Doss, with a Medal of Honour, three Bronze Stars and three Purple Hearts, and badly disabled by his war wounds, tended a small farm in Georgia until his death in 2006, aged 87.

Desmond Doss is the very worthy subject of Mel Gibson's directing genius in the movie Hacksaw Ridge, which was shot in NSW, Australia, and featured many fine acting performances from the who's who of Australian acting talent. Hugo Weaving, as Doss' alcoholic WWI-tormented veteran father was brilliant.

And ex-commando and double leg amputee Damien Thomlinson had several appearances, some of which involved his using his missing legs, which must have been very poignant if not traumatic for the now actor. Well done mate. I looked out for you in this movie and was delighted with/by your performance.

Sincerely,

Brian Hartigan  
Managing Editor

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**INCOMING**

## IRISH FANS

I stumbled across your website some time ago and thoroughly enjoy reading CONTACT.

As a Reservist in the Irish Defence Forces I have a keen interest in all things military and must compliment you on your excellent publication.

It gives a great insight into all aspects of military life on the other side of the globe.

You are probably already aware that we have a similar magazine in Ireland called An Cosantoir which is the official publication for the Irish Defence Forces here. It is also available in digital edition.

Maybe you could have a look and drop them a line to plug CONTACT for you.

I have sent your link to many of my colleagues, so hopefully your readership will increase here.

2016 has been a very busy year for the Irish Defence Forces particularly with all the ceremonies concerning the 1916 Rising Commemoration. I hope you got to see some of the various exhibitions when you were home.

Great to see that you enjoyed your holidays here. Maybe on your next trip we can arrange a military link-up.

Best Wishes,

**Russell W, via email**

Hi Russell, very nice to hear from you. Yes, I have been aware of An Cosantoir for many years. We used to get free hardcopies when I worked at the official Australian ARMY Newspaper – more than 14 years ago. I also email the editor regularly. I actually got his permission to reproduce some 1916 stuff from An Cosantoir in CONTACT in the June issue. And I had hoped to catch up with him while I was on holidays – but it didn't work out, unfortunately [apologies to hard-working Sergeant Wayne Fitzgerald]. Hopefully next time. And likewise with you.

**Brian Hartigan, Managing Editor**

I love your magazine etc but what's with all the Irish stuff recently?

**Sapper G, via ESP**

Well, they didn't nickname me The Big Irish Git for nothing. Born and raised on the Emerald Isle, but moved here 32 years ago. And sure isn't me little Irish mammy still over there, so there's bound to be a bit of draw back to the auld sod from time to time. And with this being a significant centenary year, with lots of military involvement, I couldn't resist – Ed

## OLD TIMES

I was going through my "library" yesterday when I came across an ARMY magazine. It was No. 35 dated June '98.

I started to go through it, as I love the older items, and I came across an article "Tiger on the prowl" – story and photos by Cpl Brian Hartigan.

You've done well, from a past magazine to one of your own.

I volunteer at two army museums. Bardia Barracks at Ingleburn, and the Engineers museum at Holsworthy. I have shown the boys one of your articles which I printed,

Hoping to get some more orders for you, we will see how it goes over time.

Back to the Tiger, a good unit, but I don't like its partner the MRH 90. The side doors slide to the front, therefore eliminating a door gunner.

**Cheers, John. [via email]**

Thanks for the trip down memory lane John :-)

**Brian Hartigan, Editor**

## 'OLD TIMER'

I am an ex serviceman. I was in the RAAC from 1990 to 1994. I was a Leopard MBT gunner.

Your magazine was always available in our HQ for the average serviceman to read and I am interested in subscribing now that I am out of the Military.

I miss the lifestyle and the comradere that I was blessed to experience in my time served.

Your magazine is the closest I have come to reflecting on my service. I miss the Army life terribly and I perceive CONTACT will help me stay up to date with what our military people are doing now.

Please send me the details for a lifetime subscription to your informative magazine. I will pay in full as soon as I have the details.

Thanks again for doing what you do.

**Mick G, via email**

CONTACT was a paper-based mag for the first 10 years, and would have cost you \$45 a year to subscribe. But now it's electronic only and you can subscribe completely free via [www.aussiecombat.com](http://www.aussiecombat.com)

## 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 and Internet sites so we can deliver more of what you want. Feel free to write to [editor@militarycontact.com](mailto:editor@militarycontact.com) about CONTACT or on any military topic – Ed

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

# BIG PUSH NORTHERN

A No 36 Squadron C-17A Globemaster III is marshalled-in next to an AP-3C Orion at RAAF Base Curtin during Exercise Northern Shield 2016.

See story page 44



# P-8A POSEIDON



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# THE INNER SANCTUM

## AN AUSTRALIAN SNIPER

BY JASON SEMPLE

THE TEMPO OF A MODERN SNIPER MEANS JASON SEMPLE NEEDS TO TAKE A BREAK FROM WRITING – SO WE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REVISIT THE VERY POWERFUL FIRST INSTALMENT OF THIS COLUMN TO REMIND OURSELVES WHAT MAKES THIS SPECIALIST TRADE SO SPECIAL. AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM JASON AGAIN NEXT YEAR.

It's 10.45pm on 27 February 1998. It's a warm evening and looks like rain. But I am not worried about the weather. I am worried about the two stab wounds I have in my chest and abdomen. Even though I am pressing my hands on the wounds, I can feel a river of blood escaping.

I am in Ultimo, Sydney. I've been in the NSW Police Force (or Service back then) for exactly two weeks and I am lying in the gutter completely sure of my impending death.

A courageous police officer, Pete Forsyth, is lying on top of me, but he is already dead – two fatal

stab wounds to his heart. But before succumbing, Pete was in the process of giving me first aid. He was a proper hero to the very end.

Unfortunately, Pete would not be the last mate I lost in the line of duty, with four more killed in the years to come.

Thankfully, against all odds, I survived that night. "Never give up" as they say.

From that night onwards I promised myself I would take every opportunity to improve in life. I had to make it count. I owed it to Pete, to myself and to those who worked so hard to save my life.



Author Jason Semple with spotter. "We encouraged shooting from all positions. This spot was a nasty uphill gallery we built deep in the Queensland bush."



The result, 17 years later, is a life spent in Specialist Police Tactical Operations in two Australian police organisations – the NSW Tactical Operations Unit (TOU) and the AFP's Operational Response Group (ORG). In between, I enjoyed a period of private contracting for companies representing the US DoD and am currently employed as a specialist advisor/mentor in the Middle East.

The road I have travelled has been one I would not trade for any other. I have met some of the finest men and women in policing and military circles, as well as certain other agencies closely aligned – men and women who decided their calling was to protect their countrymen, both domestically and abroad. Brave men and women, some of whom paid the ultimate price. Each one had an impact on who I am today. They are Australians, Americans, Emiratis, Pommies, Philipinos, Solomon Islanders, Timorese, Iraqis, Afghanis, Somalis – all with different cultural beliefs and values, but all aiming at the same collective goal of peace and security.

Whether you serve in the military or police, the ethos is very much the same. You want to protect those who cannot protect themselves, domestically and overseas. You want to bring justice or penalty against individuals who prey on those who prey on others.

The methods and delivery of this intent may differ, but the endgame is a shared one. The Green Beret motto sums it up nicely. 'De Oppresso Liber' – 'To Liberate from Oppression'.

Over a number of articles I hope to accurately and informatively share the world of police tactical-group snipers, and touch on related topics.

But I want to make one thing clear – I am not special and I do not write these articles to beat my chest. I write to share with you the work of some brave, talented and dedicated people. I am merely one of these guys and would have been ineffective without my team by my side.

I would like to respectfully show how much the sniping skillset has evolved, especially over the past 10 years. There has been a quantum leap in sniping like never before in history. The leaps we have seen in ballistic software, our understanding of the contributing factors of internal and external ballistics and the equipment at hand is remarkable.

A good sniper now is literally a ballisticsian and physics guru. We know exponentially more now than we did even in the early millennium. It's my goal to share some insights on that progression.

This quantum leap came about with technology and also due to the fact that sniping is a brotherhood where we as specialists coexist and

share our knowledge with other snipers to progress the skillset as a whole. The level of acceptance and camaraderie between snipers from different military, police and other agencies creates a powerful synergy. I intend to share some of this synergy.

First, let me explain a little about the two PTG units I worked for and the type of work these units conduct on a daily basis, to give you some background on my training and experience.

Even though I did many deployments overseas with the AFP, the backbone of my tactical experience came from constant high-risk policing with the Tactical Operations Unit, State Protection Group, NSW Police.

The State Protection Group was established in 1991 to deal with a wide range of extraordinary policing responses to situations, which are beyond the scope, or capacity, of police generally. SPG directly support operational police in high-risk incidents such as sieges with a specialist tactical, negotiation, intelligence and command-support service.

The command also provides support to rescue and bomb-disposal operations and operations requiring the services of the Dog Unit.

SPG is also responsible for the delivery and maintenance of the Police Service firearms capability through the Police Armory.

The core responsibilities I had as an operator in the TOU SPG were; provide a police tactical group counter-terrorist-response capability in accordance with the Australian National Anti-Terrorist Plan; conduct site appreciation/surveys and tactical reconnaissance; daily domestic duties including providing a 24-hour response capability to the New South Wales Police, in resolving high-risk incidents across the State; hostage rescue; arrest of armed and dangerous offenders; protection of undercover agents/intelligence-agency personnel; witness protection and escort; high-risk vehicle intercepts; VIP protection/escorts, counter-assault and counter-sniper team; suicide intervention; high-risk search-warrant assist; escort of high-risk

prisoners; siege resolution; operational support for major law-enforcement operations; navigation and specialised rural operations; hostage survival and evacuation plans; sniper/counter-sniper duties including hostage reception duties; and, remote-area first-aid and casualty evacuation.

As you can see there was a high expectation on our members to have high skill levels in a number of areas. The unit was involved in hundreds of operations a year, which provided members with a rich pool of experiences. And we got extensive training in a number of skills and tactics.

After a number of years with the TOU, I resigned and undertook private contracting work in Iraq training Iraqi Special Police Commando's in north Baghdad until returning to Australia in early 2007.

I returned to undertake duties with the AFP and its new tactical unit. There I would ultimately be responsible for building its sniper team alongside an ex-SAS member who had also come on board.

In 2006 the Australian Federal Police formed a tactical group that could provide assistance both domestically and internationally to AFP operations and the protection of government assets and personnel abroad. It was initially made up of current and former members of nearly every police tactical team across Australia, bringing with them an awesome cross-section of skills and experience.

This group was called the Operational Response Group, and was placed at the disposal of National AFP investigational teams and the International Deployment Group (IDG).

The Operational Response Group was AFP's specialist tactical and stability policing capability, able to respond to civil disorder and international crisis, nationally and internationally, within 24 hours.

ORG was a police tactical group within National Counter-Terrorism Committee arrangements, providing the Commonwealth an offshore specialist and tactical policing response capability.

The unit provided similar capabilities to the AFP's Specialist Response and Security Team but focused



Rob Maylor, Mike Brookes-Jones, the author Jason Semple and Daniel Keighran VC, in 2015.

on national and international deployments outside the Australian Capital Territory, where the SRS had responsibility. ORG was created to enhance the operational policing capabilities of the AFP's International Deployment Group (IDG) operating predominantly in the Pacific region.

ORG provided the AFP with a specialist tactical policing capability which included; high-risk searches, search warrants and arrests; support to public-order policing; remote rural patrols; protection of people in high-risk situations; support members deployed to missions such as RAMSI; advanced training in specialist weaponry and less-lethal capabilities; rapid response for containment of civil disorder and restoration of order; tactical negotiations, communications and marine-operations support; remote and covert surveillance; prison-riot response; and, major civil-disorder interventions, and capacity building in other specialist police units overseas (such as Solomon Islands and Philippines).

My role in ORG was senior sniper in the Marksman Reconnaissance Team (MRT). As I said earlier, myself and another federal agent (ex-SAS) were tasked with building this team from scratch. And we built it all right, with some exceptional men and the best weapons and equipment money could buy.

I will always be grateful for the support and foresight of certain senior AFP officers who allowed us to get on with creating something unique. I will also be grateful to have worked with teammates who were genuine innovators and guys I will always respect and admire.

If we didn't know a skill, we would hunt down the most proficient expert and get them to come and train us. Guys like Glen Roberts of WA TRG in long-range shooting, expert tactical trackers like David Scott Donelan and a host of others.

Our expanded roles required the use of all the skillsets we had developed over our careers. We had an excellent and valued relationship with Australian Special Forces both from the east and west of Australia. We would not have many of the skills without that help from our military brothers and we will always be grateful and in their debt.

Our domestic and overseas work required a new level of tactical application. Fast roping/rappelling into jungle locations, swim-up assaults through crocodile- and shark-infested waters, horrendous jungle stomps, long-term jungle observation posts, continuous close-target reconnaissance tasks in hostile and inhospitable environments.

We often found ourselves coming out of jungle operations and rolling straight into urban counter-



# AUSTRALIAN CAPABILITY



Counter-terrorism sniper training in 'the west'.

terrorist and major criminal operations in Australia's capital cities. This required experienced members to make these transitions quickly and effectively. It also required a level of maturity, as you could be sneaking into a village under NVGs one day, and 48 hours later you were in the Melbourne CBD on another, highly visible task.

During later articles I will describe what it was like and some of the ordeals we faced during these operations. I will be restricted on some information due to the Commonwealth Secrecy Act, but I will be able to explain some skills and personal experiences.

I will also write articles on the latest weapons, equipment, ammunition and specific sniper training.

I will do my best to accurately portray the work and the type of men who actually conducted the operations.

I will try to capture the human side as well – the humor, the personal sacrifice, and the pain that came with both arduous activities and the injuries we sustained on the job.

I look forward to sharing all this with you and for you to get an insight into our world.

See you in March 2017.



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Every modern Australian soldier is familiar with night-vision goggles and night-fighting equipment. The technology has come a long way in the relatively few years since soldiers of my vintage (early 1990s) were lucky if they saw a pair of second-hand hand-me-down pilot NVGs to use on gun picket at night.





By the time INTERFET ramped up in September 1999, Project Ninox had issued the best night fighting equipment then available to almost the entire deploying force, something many allies had not been able to achieve – not to mention the groups who had to face our troops.

Sixteen years later, a major new rollout of the best night-fighting equipment available is again underway.

A very recent government approval of **Project LAND 53 Phase 1BR – Night Fighting Equipment Replacement**, has enabled the ADF to again take the lead with cutting-edge night-fighting-equipment (NFE) technology.

This equipment will enhance the lethality and situational awareness of ADF combatants and give them a considerable advantage during the dark hours on the 24/7 battlefield.

Minister for Defence Industry Christopher Pyne said the first tranche of night-fighting equipment would see our military supplied with new state-of-the-art night-vision goggles, helmet mounts, head harnesses and laser aiming devices.

"Contracts worth \$307 million have now been signed with L-3 Oceania, which included the cost of equipment and ongoing support," Minister Pyne said.

"These night-vision goggles will be provided to Army close combatants, such as special forces and

**The new night vision goggles (NVGs) manufactured by L-3 Warrior Systems, is the PVS-31A binocular NVG with black-and-white phosphor screen, which offers a significant increase in performance over legacy NVGs (more detail in the story).**

infantry, as well as general combatants, such as drivers and medics, as well as elements of the Royal Australian Navy and Royal Australian Air Force.

"These high-tech goggles are leading-edge and will give our fighting men and women greater capability in the field."

Minister for Defence Marise Payne said experience over the past decade had highlighted the importance of night-vision technology in modern warfare.

"Deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq have proven the importance of being able to effectively fight at night," Minister Payne said.

"This new equipment will ensure the ADF retains its night-fighting edge against the enemy – a critical advantage on the battlefield," she said.

The new suite of night-fighting equipment includes new night-vision goggles, two types of laser devices, a mounting bracket and a head harness.

The key element of the night-fighting suite of equipment is, of course, the night-vision goggles.

Laser aiming, illuminating device (LAID), right, is another L-3 Warrior Systems product – the PEQ-16B with visible laser, infra-red laser, infra-red illuminator and visible illuminator/torch. The laser will enable both low-power (class 1) and high-power (class 3B) laser for training and operational environments.



A laser aiming, illuminating and ranging device (LAIRD), right, is the L-3 Warrior Systems Squad Rangefinder (SRF) with visible laser, infra-red laser, infra-red illuminator and laser range finder. This range finder will be able to accurately provide range data to targets at distances exceeding 1000m (ADF figure) or out to 3000m according to L-3 Warrior Systems. This device also offers both low-power (class 1) and high-power (class 3B) laser output to permit employment in training and operational environments. L-3 Warrior Systems says this new device offers significant savings in size, weight and power consumption over previous units.



The new system employs the binocular PVS-31A with a black-and-white phosphor image.

It is a compact, lightweight, third-generation binocular that offers superior situational awareness compared to a single-tube monocular.

At just 356g, the new NVG is 35 per cent lighter than legacy binoculars and not a lot more than recent monocular devices.

Binocular systems provide stereoscopic vision, enhancing depth perception for the combatant, and provide significant detection increases under typical conditions.

However, a unique feature of the PVS-31A is that both tubes are independent and can be used as monoculars on either eye by rotating either the left or right optic into the stowed position as desired. When stowed, the unused optic automatically shuts down.

An advantage of this is that it offers a level of redundancy in the case one optic malfunctions or is damaged.

NVGs are often worn on soldiers' helmets throughout a mission, even in daylight hours, ready to use in buildings, tunnels and so on, or to eliminate the need for mounting when night comes. As such, however, they can cause a snag hazard. So, having the goggles fold much flatter against the helmet when not in use is another significant advantage.

The PVS-31 family actually comes in the now 'traditional' green image or in black and white. Australia opted for the black and white PVS-31A because the image is more natural, with superior contrast detail in shapes and shadows and has better depth perception.

Gain or brightness of the image can be adjusted by a simple rotation of the on/off switch, which is centrally located and is easy to use, even while wearing gloves.

PVS-31A can run off a single AA battery in the goggles themselves or via a longer-lasting remote battery pack mounted on the back of the helmet. The remote battery not only extends the on-time of the goggles but also serves to counterbalance their weight.

Delivery of the new equipment will occur in yearly batches, out to 2022.

Maintenance support will be provided in Australia by L-3 Warrior Systems subsidiary L-3 Oceania.

1RAR and the School of Infantry will be the first to receive the equipment, to round out the LAND 125-3C Night Fighting Equipment previously delivered with the EF88.

Project LAND 53 Phase 1BR – Night Fighting Equipment Replacement is not the end of the road for investment in this field, however.

Defence has a \$2billion fully funded 'Night Fighting Equipment Roadmap' that it says will continue to enhance night-fighting equipment out to 2040, and help ADF combatants maintain an edge on the battlefield – even in the dark.



The NVG mount is the Wilcox G24. There will also be a soft head harness that will integrate with the Wilcox G24 mount and NVG.

**TAB DATA**

<b>Manufacturer:</b>	L-3 Warrior Systems
<b>Dimensions:</b>	107mm x 107mm x 86mm
<b>Weight:</b>	356g
<b>Magnification:</b>	1X
<b>Field of view:</b>	40 degrees
<b>Focus:</b>	45cm to infinity
<b>Power:</b>	One AA battery internal or four AAs remote
<b>Battery life:</b>	Up to 15 hours single battery or up to 50 hours with remote batteries
<b>Waterproof:</b>	20m for 2 hours
<b>Finish:</b>	Matte black, corrosion resistant

**Key features of LAND 53 Phase 1BR:**

- Lighter, better, night-vision equipment.
- Integration of laser-range-finding capability to individual and crew-served weapons.
- Integrated torch and infra-red illuminator on the laser.
- Low- and high-power laser modes to optimise safe training and operational employment.
- Lasers attach to standard weapon rails (NATO 4694 and Picatinny 1913).
- Requires no specific NVG driver kits.
- Interface permits component upgrades without system replacement.

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# SUPPLY ON

# DEMAND

## JOINT LOGISTICS UNIT - WEST

By Serge DeSilva-Ranasinghe and Mitchell Sutton

Behind the ADF's successful adaptation to the extraordinarily high operational tempo of the past decade has been the continuing work of Joint Logistics Command, the ADF's tri-service logistics manager. At the front-line of much of this activity has been Joint Logistics Unit - West (JLU-West), one of seven such units located at strategic points around the country. Operating out of Guildford's Palmer Barracks and HMAS Stirling, JLU-West has played a vital role in supplying, storing and maintaining military equipment, both for everyday operations and every conceivable contingency. "It's hard to describe the complexity," explained the unit's commander, Commander Sean Noble of the Royal Australian Navy. "We have everything out here, from parts for submarines, to propellers and anchors from ships, weapons and parts of weapons, night vision goggles, aiming devices, generators, outboard motors, vehicles and parts of aircraft. Anything that Australia owns and operates."

While WA has long had its own logistics units meeting the needs of the individual services, such as the Army's Perth Logistics Battalion, it is only relatively recently that the focus has shifted to providing a tri-service capability, situated within an integrated national network. All ADF units are now supported by a geographically proximate Joint Logistics Unit or business unit, which provide warehousing and distribution, maintenance and materiel management, explosive ordnance and military retail clothing capability. Deployed units are supported by operations cells, which redirect supplies and maintain caches of specialised equipment for anticipated scenarios.

At present around 140 personnel are assigned to this task as part of Joint Logistics Unit-West.

Reflecting the wider trend towards the privatisation of support roles in Defence, 80 of the unit's total personnel are contractors, with the rest of the unit comprised of public-service personnel and uniformed military members.

These contractors work for a number

of different companies, including; LINFOX, which is tasked with warehouse and distribution; Broadspectrum (formerly Transfield), which is responsible for land-materiel maintenance; and, Serco-Sodexo, which runs the ADF's clothing stores.

As the JLU charged with supporting all ADF activities in Western Australia, the responsibilities of JLU-West are significant. Around half of the Navy's fleet is based at HMAS Stirling, including all Collins-class submarines, Anzac-class frigates and the oiler HMAS Sirius. The RAAF and Army presence is also significant. RAAF Base Pearce's 2 Flight Training School and No.79 Squadron operate PC-9/A and Hawk-127 training aircraft, while the Army maintains a diverse number of units with a wide range of needs, from the Special Air Service Regiment to specialised regional force surveillance units. All of the equipment requirements for those units are met by JLU-West.

"We are primarily focused on the second tier of delivery, so right behind the customer," explained Commander Noble.

"The first tier of support is what's embedded in the unit, which is what you intend to consume during the conduct of your mission. Second tier is equipment you might need quickly, but you don't need to carry with you and we push it forward as you require it. Tier three is what we keep at our contracted managed warehouse. We don't call that forward until we actually need it, so warehousing and distribution will be managed by a third-party contractor. The fourth line is international support in theatre."

In order to manage such a large task, the size of the unit's stores and associated infrastructure is considerable. The majority of JLU-West's activities and personnel are based at Palmer Barracks in Guildford, with around half the unit currently located there. It is primarily used for maintenance and the storage of Army and Air Force equipment, physically large items, mission-specific caches and specialised equipment that is unlikely to be needed at short notice. A smaller site at HMAS Stirling is used for naval stores, though it lacks the maintenance facilities of its larger counterpart. A clothing store at RAAF Base Pearce (Bullsbrook) and another at Irwin Barracks (Karrakatta) also fall under the unit's remit.

A feature of JLU-West is its armoury. It includes a weapons-test firing facility, which allows the measurement of weapon velocities and accuracy for maintenance purposes.

"The reason for the armoury is not to meet specific needs, but rather for geographic dispersion purposes," Commander Noble explained.

Maintenance activities also form a significant element of activity at the site. Palmer maintains a vehicle pool of around 700 vehicles, including Mercedes G-Wagon, Land Rovers, Unimogs, trucks, bulldozers, graders, trailers, water tankers and their add-ons. These are organised into a loan pool, with vehicles to be accessed as needed. Other equipment maintained includes radios and weapons up to and including .50 calibre machine guns.

"Our fleet managers are responsible for maintenance tasks. We ensure the heavy depot level maintenance is pooled and scheduled in such a way that units can still meet their operational need as we cycle equipment through for major servicing," Commander Noble said.

"The aim is to maintain the value and usability of our fleets across Western Australia."

Beyond the storage and maintenance of equipment, JLU-West is also responsible for regional explosive ordnance services. Whilst WA Police are charged with Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) tasks of a civilian nature, JLU-West will intervene if military munitions are involved. It also collects and disposes of unexploded ordnance in the possession of local police in rural areas several times a year. Around eight personnel are involved in EOD efforts, providing an on-call 24-hour service. They are equipped with bomb-disposal equipment, including response vehicles, robots and X-ray machines.

"The police would contact the EO team at least twice a week," Commander Noble said.

"The tasks could range from an old World War II grenade found during a drug bust, or a washed-up bit of old military ordnance. Recently there was a

fisherman in Applecross who threw his net out and pulled up a grenade. It happens."

JLU-West's involvement in operations over the past decade has been heavy, due both to the general increase in deployment frequency and its unique geographical position. This has included providing logistics support for operations occurring in the Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO).

"The role of JLU-West in supporting the MEAO is significant, and we deal with land, sea and air requirements. You get various aircraft transiting through Pearce, so ordnance and maintenance requirements can be large," Commander Noble said.

"Much of this activity has demonstrated the integrated nature of Joint Logistics Command, with JLU-West playing a small role in the larger national supply network."

"When units in the Middle East require something, it will be pulled from one of the seven JLUs, consolidated and freighted forward to the Middle East. The shipping is all opportunity based. So, if there's a ship coming through Perth on its way to the Middle East, and it's a big, bulky item, the fastest way of getting it there will be putting it on that ship, out of Perth."

Other deployments have been closer to home. The multinational aerial efforts during the early phases of the MH370 search demonstrated the unit's ability to respond at short notice. During March 2014, maritime patrol aircraft from New Zealand, China, the US, Japan and South Korea operated concurrently with the RAAF out of Pearce, posing a wide variety of logistics challenges. JLU-West proved equal to these challenges.

"Everything had logistics implications – where people stay, how we feed them, how we get fuel to their aircraft, how we maintain the aircraft."



A more frequent and predictable occurrence has been the need to support the government's response to natural disasters under Defence Aid to the Civil Community provisions, with JLU-West recently mobilised to support fire-fighting efforts.

"To support all the fire fighters who came in from interstate, we built accommodation camps, and all of the stores to support that effort came out of the cache we have at Palmer," Commander Noble said.

Increased operational tempo has resulted in a number of improvements in the way logistics units operate. "The big improvements are, firstly, what we warehouse, and secondly, the increase in our ability to send equipment around the planet. Forces no longer need to take absolutely everything with them, which was a huge expense. They'll take what they need, and then when it breaks, we'll repair it and have that shipped in behind them. We can move anything around the world within a couple of days at the very least. So, the whole way of thinking about how you deploy gets reshaped, because you know you've got that reach-back."

Despite these improvements, JLU-West continues to face a unique set of challenges. These primarily concern the unique nature of military stores and the need to maintain equipment for a wide range of contingencies. The first issue faced is that of security, which can often complicate the maintenance and disposal process.

"Even damaged, broken bits of communications equipment can still pose an intelligence risk if they fall into the wrong hands," Commander Noble said.

Similar difficulties surround the need to maintain the electronic 'Blue Force Tracker' components for

vehicles, which allow battlefield commanders to track the position of his own and allied forces via GPS, and to help distinguish friend from foe.

A third difficulty faced is that of size – military equipment is often much heavier than its civilian counterparts, which in turn requires specialised tools for handling.

"We can't just have a normal winch, for instance. It has to be a heavy-duty winch which is going to be able to pull several tons of vehicle."

A second lot of challenges emerge from the need to maintain a variety of specialised caches in order to equip the three services at short notice for a variety of potential scenarios.

"The services work 24/7 in any terrain or environment, so our caches have to reflect that," Commander Noble said.

This effort involves constant quality monitoring and turnover of stores by JLU-West staff to guarantee the reliability of the cache contents.

"It's not just a matter of them containing some consumable parts, like batteries, food or rubber that will deteriorate over time. It needs to be rotated and certified fit for use at immediate notice."

Whatever the contingencies the ADF may face in the future, and however much equipment may change, JLU-West will continue to play a pivotal role in enabling the activities of all three Defence services in Western Australia and overseas.

**Serge DeSilva-Ranasinghe is a security analyst, defence writer and consultant. Mitchell Sutton is a security analyst and defence writer.**



# LONG TAN AWARDS

## THE LONGEST BATTLE FINALLY WON



William Roche, Noel Grimes, Frank Alcorta, Lieutenant Colonel Harry Smith (Retd), Geoffrey Peters, Ian Campbell, Neil Bextrum and Colonel Francis Roberts (Retd). Photo by Sergeant Janine Fabre.

Ten Vietnam Veterans of the Battle of Long Tan were finally awarded military honours on 8 November during a ceremony at Government House in Canberra.

Medals for Gallantry were awarded to Lieutenant Adrian Roberts, Sergeant Frank Alcorta and Lance Corporal Barry Magnussen (deceased).

Commendations for Gallantry were awarded to Second Lieutenant Gordon Sharp (deceased), and Privates Neil Bextrum, Ron Brett (deceased), Ian Campbell, William Roche, Geoffrey Peters and Noel Grimes.

Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove invested the soldiers at the ceremony at Government House – more than 50 years after what has become one of Australia's most famous battles.

The Battle of Long Tan took place on 18 August 1966.

It was the most costly single battle fought by Australian soldiers in the Vietnam War, involving 105 Australians and three New Zealanders from D Company 6RAR, and more than 2000 enemy troops.

A total of 17 Australians were killed in action and 25 were wounded, one of whom later died from his wounds.

D Company were greatly assisted by an ammunition resupply by RAAF helicopters, close fire support from New Zealand's 161 Field Battery, with additional artillery support from the Australian task force at Nui Dat and the arrival of APC reinforcements as night fell.

Now, finally, after 50 years of another kind of battling, Lieutenant Colonel Harry Smith (Retd) and his men have been formally recognised.

Mr Smith lobbied for years on behalf of his men, leading eventually to a Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal recommending the new awards earlier this year.

The Tribunal did not, however, recommend a Victoria Cross for the late Warrant Officer Class 2 Jack Kirby. The Tribunal decreed that the Distinguished Conduct Medal awarded to WO2 Kirby in 1966 was, "the appropriate award to recognise [his] distinguished conduct and leadership in the field during the Battle."

While not completely happy with the outcome, Mr Smith, now 82, said, "It's time for this old soldier and [my] men to put the battle behind us".

The Tribunal's findings on this matter are published online at [defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au](http://defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au)

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# SUBMARINE RESCUE

Exercise Black Carillon

BY SAMUEL VINICOMBE

For two weeks in September, unbeknownst to most Western Australians, a life-and-death drama was playing out off their shores. As the people of Perth carried out their day-to-day business, 60 lives were at stake – HMAS Dechaineaux, a Collins-class submarine based out of Fleet Base West, had run aground, deep below the waves. Immobilised on the sea-bed, it was only a matter of time before their oxygen ran out. As time ticked, a glimmer of hope appeared on the horizon – Marine Vessels Besant and Stoker, resplendent in red and white, were bearing down, full steam ahead. Rescue was imminent.

Fortunately for all involved, the grounding and rescue mission were all part of Exercise Black Carillon 16 – an annual shakeout designed to test the Royal Australian Navy’s submarine escape and rescue capability to the limits.

Exercise Black Carillon is an invaluable opportunity for the crews of the submarine and rescue vessels to put their training to the test.

This year’s exercise coincided with the Asia-Pacific Submarine Conference and, for the first time, used both rescue vessels working in concert.

I first set eyes on the pride of the Navy’s submarine rescue capability on a chilly, windswept evening at the Fremantle wharf. Larger than life, high bowed and with a paint scheme reminiscent of the Polish flag, Besant and Stoker were hard to miss.

They had just recently returned from Exercise Black Carillon, their inaugural training exercise together.



Above: Simulated casualty volunteers enter the LR5 Submarine Rescue Vessel before being transferred to HMAS Dechaineux below the waves, during Exercise Black Carillon 16. Left: Diver Brent Dyhrberg unhooks the winch cable to the LR5, releasing it from MV Stoker, before a docking evolution with HMAS Dechaineux. All photos by Leading Seaman Bradley Darvill.

As we toured Stoker, the ingenuity, technological advancement and practicality of the ships became apparent. World-class escape and rescue platforms, they are the only paired ships of their kind in existence, and are unique in their separate but complementary roles and abilities.

MV Besant, at 83 metres, is the initial response-intervention or escape-gear ship (ESG), capable of mobilising and deploying in under 20 hours.

Named after the captain of the ill-fated AE1, the first RAN submarine lost at sea, Besant is just a year old and, together with Stoker, replaced the ageing Seahorse Standard, the previous submarine rescue capability vessel.

As an ESG, Besant’s primary role is rapid response, capable of embarking a side-scan sonar and the SCORPIO SC45 remotely-operated vehicle to conduct surveys, damage assessment and debris removal from around a disabled submarine.

Besant’s capabilities extend to deploying transponders for the LR5 rescue vehicle tracking system, as well as carrying decompression chambers. These chambers enable Besant to act in a first-respondent-support role if the crew elected to escape rather than be rescued from the stricken submarine.

MV Stoker is the larger of the two vessels at 93 metres and is the primary rescue-gear ship (RGS).

Named after Lieutenant Henry Stoker, the Commanding Officer of the more successful AE2, Stoker entered into service six months ago. It is differentiated from other submarine rescue vessels in its ability to deploy the LR5 off its stern.

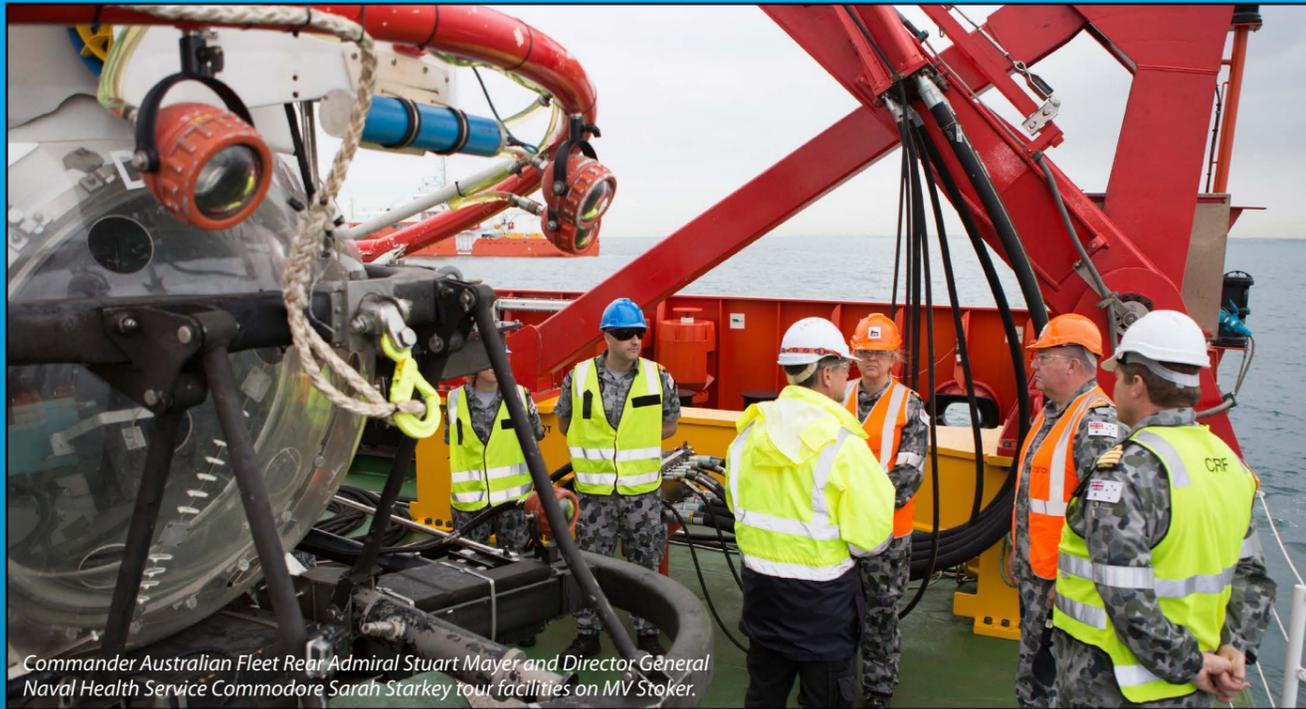
The remainder of the deck is used to facilitate the on-board hyperbaric treatment facilities. These two 36-man hyperbaric chambers allow for the decompression and treatment of the rescued submariners.

With a crew of 20 on-board during operations and up to 80 additional naval staff, Stoker can deploy in less than 36 hours and has a range of up to 5000 nautical miles.

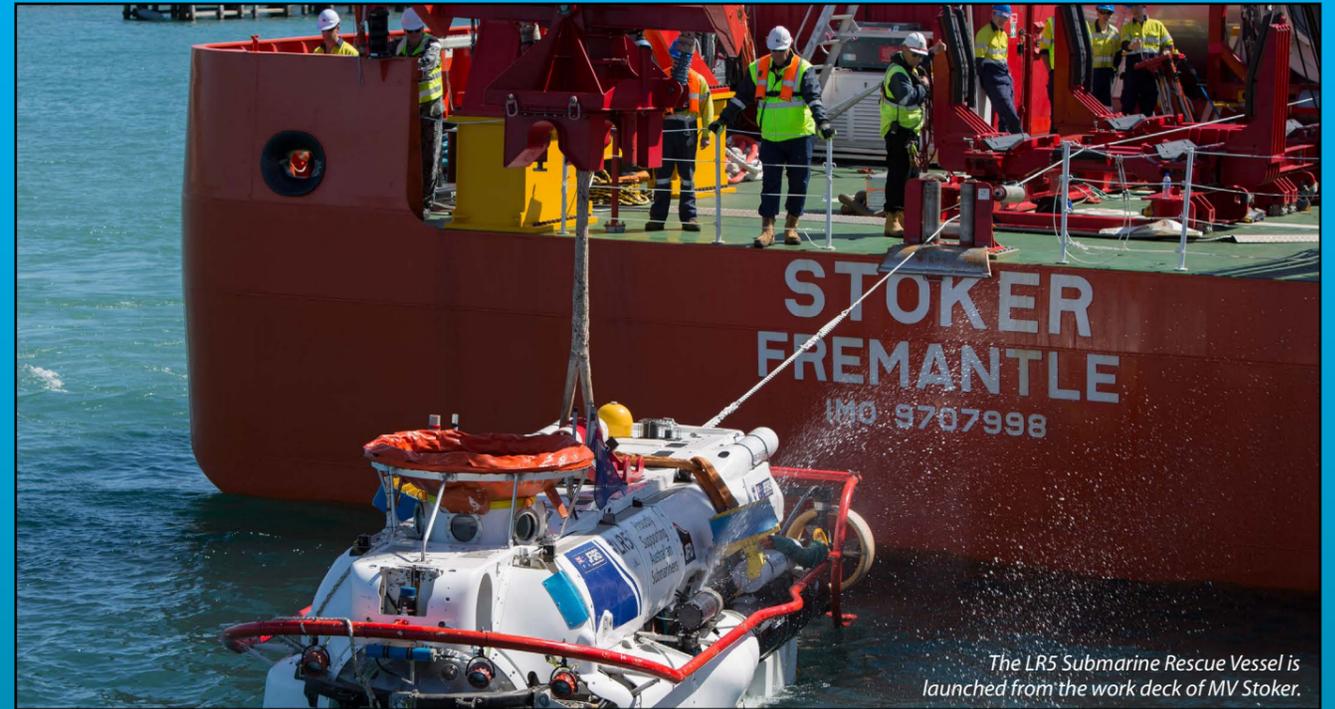
The highlight of the system is the futuristic-looking James Fisher Submarine Rescue System submersible, LR5.

The submersible is capable of carrying the payload equivalent of a Ford Falcon, around 1200kg, and can operate hand-like manipulators. It also has a flood-lighting capability so that the vessel can operate in the pitch-black depths.

During Exercise Black Carillon 16, LR5 successfully conducted numerous dives to the ‘incapacitated’



Commander Australian Fleet Rear Admiral Stuart Mayer and Director General Naval Health Service Commodore Sarah Starkey tour facilities on MV Stoker.



The LR5 Submarine Rescue Vessel is launched from the work deck of MV Stoker.

Dechaineaux. Each dive took up to two hours and consisted of LR5 locating the disabled submarine, aligning and mating with the sealed pressure locks, then transferring personnel into the pressurised rescue chamber, before returning to the surface to transfer them to the hyperbaric treatment facilities on-board Stoker.

My tour of Stoker provided a comprehensive explanation of the intricacies of the operations.

Operated and maintained by Serco Defence, the ships are government owned and work closely with the RAN Submarine Service.

One of the standout features is the rescue systems' flexibility – "It can go anywhere in the world," the Serco representative said. "We're a global rescue service. This [system] is the most portable in the world – 17 truckloads, 300 tonnes of gear".

Exercise Black Carillon 16 recreated a realistic rescue operation, replete with a full medical team of the Navy's underwater medical specialists performing lifesaving medical techniques designed to mitigate or respond to decompression sickness, commonly known as 'the bends'.

Commodore Peter Scott, Director General Submarines, emphasised the importance of medical support in rescue operations.

"We wouldn't rely solely on our own capacity," Commodore Scott said.

"We'd be drawing on some of the local hospitals, who were also involved in the exercise."

The importance of inter-operability, not only within the medical field but internationally, was reiterated by Captain Matt Buckley, Commander Submarine Force.

"The lessons of submarine rescue cross international borders, and knowledge shared in this area will only improve capabilities," Captain Buckley said.

Commodore Scott emphasised the importance of shared knowledge and experience of submarine escape and rescue capabilities between regional partners.

He explained that while "submarines... rely on stealth and protection of capabilities... escape and rescue is a much more humanitarian mission", and the Royal Australian Navy is "very open and trusting in our region" in this regard.

Coinciding with the culmination of the exercise, the Asia-Pacific Submarine Conference was hosted in Fremantle, bringing together leaders from submarine-operating navies to discuss issues

on submarine survivability, escape, and inter-operability of rescue assets.

Representatives attending from our region included China, India, Indonesia and Singapore, as well as from as far afield as France, Germany, Canada and the US.

Exercise Black Carillon 16 concluded a success, demonstrating the combined effectiveness of the ships in their separate roles.

Operating in an increasingly diverse and complicated environment, this first-class training provided confidence for all involved.

Whether viewed as an expensive insurance policy or as a world-class investment, MVs Besant and Stoker are set to form an integral part of the Royal Australian Navy's submarine capability for years to come.



Clearance Diving Officer Lieutenant Matthew Walker takes reading from the recompression chamber on MV Stoker.



Commander Australian Fleet Rear Admiral Stuart Mayer boards the LR5 Submarine Rescue Vessel for transfer to HMAS Dechaineux in Cockburn Sound, WA.



The Author, Samuel Vinicombe, is a security analyst and defence correspondent based in Perth, WA

HMAS Dechaineux manoeuvres past MV Besant before sinking in Cockburn Sound during Exercise Black Carillon 2016.

EXERCISE

# HAAMEL

## PERSPECTIVES

*At a traffic control point into Camp Baxter with Lieutenant Megan Pate, Charlie Company, IMP Battalion, and Corporal Cassie Radunz, Military Police Dog Element, Oakey, Queensland.*

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** Tell us about your role here on the exercise

**Lieutenant Pate:** Our role is in 'white force' [performing real-world tasks, independent of exercise scenarios]. We look at the traffic moving around on the civilian roads, external to the training area, just to make sure that the traffic flow is going well. We're a safety mechanism.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** What kind of training have you received in order to perform that role?

**Lieutenant Pate:** Initially, as a general service officer, I went through five stages of training, in residential blocks. That included Kapooka and RMC Duntroon. From there, I was posted to military police and I did the service police officer basic course and that was four months up at Holsworthy, with the School of Policing, which gives you an understanding of all the capabilities and roles that we do as military police.

Exercise Hamel is a major Army exercise designed to develop, confirm, and evaluate the foundation war fighting skills of a brigade.

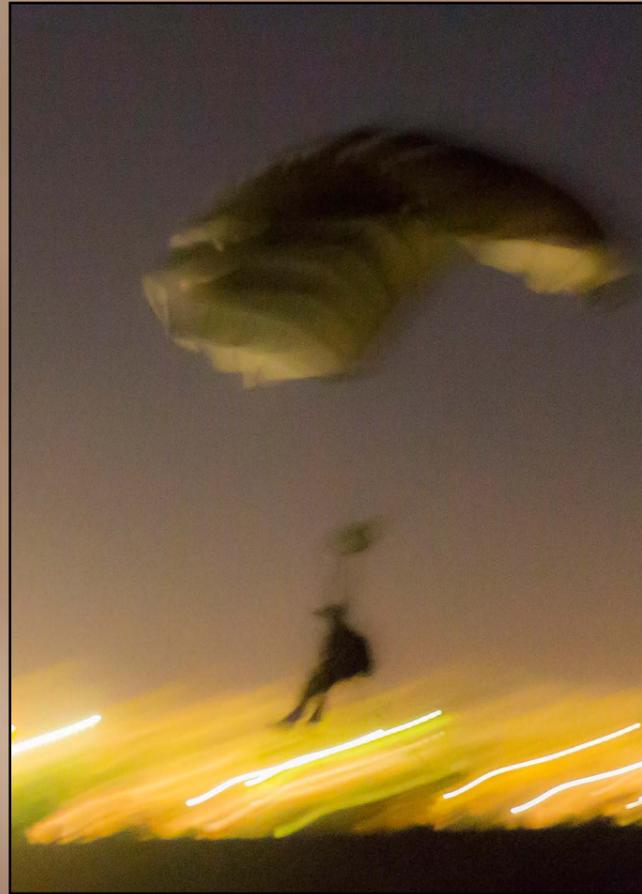
In 2016, it was Darwin's 1st Brigade that was tested to ensure they are ready for potential future deployments that could include anything from humanitarian-assistance missions through to high-tempo war-fighting operations.

Exercise Hamel, which takes its name from a battle fought in France in 1918, took place around Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Whyalla and the Cultana training area in June and July.

We published an exercise report in the last issue of CONTACT.

This time we're taking another look at the exercise – and the Army more broadly – from the differing perspectives of exercise participants.

This report is compiled from interviews conducted by Captain Sharon Mascall-Dare for the Australian Army Training and Doctrine podcast



**Captain Mascall-Dare:** You mentioned you're an army reservist, so what do you do in your civilian life?

Lieutenant Pate: I'm actually a forensic scientist. At the moment, I'm doing some work with the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine in an anthropology role. Just setting up their skeletal remains collection. That sort of ties in with my studies with the military policing role – obviously with the forensic elements of investigations.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** How does that cross over – you mention there's a bit of similarity?

Lieutenant Pate: Military police can be called on to do the more complex and serious investigations. They actually have some forensic training, and if there is any event that requires investigation that's complex within Australia, or anything happens overseas in a deployed environment, they're sent along to investigate. They can cordon off the crime scene and collect evidence. That ties in, obviously, with the forensics that I do. But that's just one element of what we do as military police.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** Do you find then that you're frequently using your training from your civilian work in forensic science, in your work in the military police, in the Australian Army?

Lieutenant Pate: Yeah, particularly in the investigation role. I did a bit of training – another two months at the School of Policing, so that crosses over quite a bit with the crime scene and understanding how the evidence chain is linked. Also, how they process the evidence down the stream of the investigation.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** For your personal and professional development then, what do you expect to get out of an exercise such as Exercise Hamel?

Lieutenant Pate: We're doing a white-force role here, so it's really good just to get that perspective. It's actually the first Hamel I've been involved with, so it's been a really good opportunity to understand how it all links together. I see how that links in with both the blue force and also the opposition forces,

and just understanding how it all works. I've been quite lucky being able to see how it works at the top level. We have the commanders' update briefs each morning, so being able to be there and listen to how all the different elements, all the different units culminating in an exercise that everyone's involved with, defence wide.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** You talk about the fact you're involved in a white force role, in your current position here, at Exercise Hamel, but how did the military police as a whole, fit into the exercise?

Lieutenant Pate: We have dual roles here as military police. In the white force role, we're doing security and traffic management of the area. We also have policing roles in the DPU, which is Domestic Policing Unit. That's another group within our corps, and they're doing a lot of security and minor crimes – just general-duties-policing kind of role. We also have teams that are in the box, so to speak, and they're part of blue force – part of the exercise in the training scenarios and doing what they would do out in the field.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** Corporal Cassie Radunz, what kind of role have you been performing here at Hamel?

Corporal Radunz: I'm here as a Military Police Dog Element section commander. I provide overall command to my team of six MPDs in play within Exercise Hamel.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** What do the dogs do?

Corporal Radunz: The military police dogs are currently trained in helping provide a search and apprehension role on humans. They are able to

provide tracking and off-lead search capability, with the intent that they aid in the apprehension of non-lethal perpetrators.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** I'm assuming you must be a dog person then – you must like working with dogs to do the job you're doing here.

Corporal Radunz: Definitely. They're much easier to work with than humans. They love you better, they don't answer back and they seem to do as they're told on 90% of the occasions.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** How important is it for military police to have that dog capability?

Corporal Radunz: I think it's very important because the dogs give us non-lethal use-of-force options to apprehend someone, instead of resorting to high-end or lethal force options when its not necessarily needed.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** What kind of training have you received in order to work with dogs, in the military place?

Corporal Radunz: Handlers go through a three-month basic military-working-dog course in Amberley, under the RAAF overarching stream. Once they've completed that course, they come

back to the Military Police Dog Element in Oakey where we conduct a two-week in-field phase, just to consolidate their skills. From there, they work closely with their section commander and platoon sergeant in order to continue that training and certify their dogs within a 12-month period.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** Give us some examples of the kinds of things you've been doing here – how that's involved your dog handling skills?

Corporal Radunz: The handlers have been specifically involved in a lot of the neo operations located down in Whyalla. Also providing the brigade commander, 1 Brigade, with a tac party. We provide a capability to him in order to provide that extra security and early warning, especially at night. We can stake them out within a position so we can get an early warning if enemy are trying to infiltrate the area. Also, especially with public-order management – that is, controlling rowdy crowds and potentially even just de-escalating a situation before it gets out of control.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** What has been the advantage of being part of an exercise like this, in terms of your own personal and professional development?



Corporal Radunz: I think for myself it's getting an understanding of how the bigger picture works. Getting exposure to all the different assets. For the dogs too. We bring them down here so they are exposed to all the different assets that the wider army and also foreign forces bring to the plate. The dogs become well rounded. We get to test their training as well. Also for my handlers it's a good experience, to get out here and consolidate their skills I've been training them throughout the year. It gives them an opportunity to test those skills and just to hone in those fine art skills and brief their commanders on a result.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** As somebody in the military police, have you much to do with the other nationalities who are part of this exercise? We've got US forces here, British, New Zealanders.

Corporal Radunz: Personally, no, but I have managed to detach two dogs to Battle Group Chromite throughout the exercise. That's been a really interesting experience for my handlers, given that they do currently wear a different uniform to us. The military police dogs are trained to detect the differences between our uniform and a potential threat wearing different uniforms. Working closely with another foreign force who wear different

uniforms to us, does provide a little bit of friction, and being able to adapt to that, noting that the dog may not always see that person as a friendly partner.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** From what you're seeing on exercise Hamel, what do you think the dogs get out of it?

Corporal Radunz: They get to experience a different environment, which is very, very different to Oakey. Also, they get to experience being around numerous different people, wearing different equipment, with different sounds and smells providing them opportunity to get used to different environments. Getting used to working with and around such a large number of people aids in their training too. They begin to feel more confident and can perform their job no matter what their surroundings are and no matter who is around.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** Do you have a dog?

Corporal Radunz: Yes, I'm currently looking after MPD Jax. He's just had some minor surgery, so I'll look after him until he's fit to go back into the field. I also have my old working dog at home. She was retired to me at the end of last year, due to medical reasons, so I've taken her under my wing and she resides with me.



*With Lieutenant Colonel Ruth Perry, Commanding Officer and Chief Instructor at the Army School of Logistic Operations.*

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** So tell us first, what's your role here on Exercise Hamel?

Lieutenant Colonel Perry: I'm currently a visitor and I see it as my role to observe what is going on on exercise Hamel in terms of the current practices in combat service support and logistics and how we can take that back into the training school and maybe implement it if it's a good idea or use it as a learning point at the school.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** How would you describe logistics

Lieutenant Colonel Perry: Logistics is about providing the maintenance, supply, distribution and health assets that are essential for sustaining combat power, enabling strategic and operational reach and providing the army forces with endurance.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** What does that mean in practice? What kind of jobs does that entail?

Lieutenant Colonel Perry: Well we've got maintainers who make sure they repair and fix our equipment, we have supply operators who make sure we have the endurance to sustain what we're doing in the field and on operations, we have transport operators who are in charge of distribution, and health operators to make sure that the humans are fixed and ready to go and sustained in an operational context.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** For people outside of Army, is it just a case of being able to work out amount of fuel, amount of ammunition, amount of rations, or is it more complicated than that?

Lieutenant Colonel Perry: That's basically it in a nutshell. In terms of logistic planning we work out the fuel, the people, what health assets we need

and how we are going to repair equipment and capability to make sure it keeps on going.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** For you then coming as a visitor to exercise Hamel, what do you hope to get out of being here?

Lieutenant Colonel Perry: Well, I've had a great opportunity during this exercise. It's given me the ability to be able to observe new concepts and practices in combat service support. It's also given me an opportunity to think about how we're preparing individuals through our courses and how we can improve things so that they can perform their roles and responsibilities within logistics and combat service support.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** What's your verdict – do you have ideas to go back with?

Lieutenant Colonel Perry: I have plenty of ideas – but it's all about the resources. So we've got new ideas and we're forever trying to evolve and keep up with the current practices within the wider army. We're moving at such a rapid rate, training really needs to keep up as well, and this is a really big challenge, but I think we're fit for the task. It also provides us with an opportunity to make sure our doctrine is up to speed and also question what we need to change or if we can just sustain the current doctrine and look at how we can use that better.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** You mentioned the fact there's some new practices that you observed out here that may affect the training you are offering. Can you give us an example?

Lieutenant Colonel Perry: Well, it's not exactly new, but, how do we communicate better, how do we sustain better, do we group things together in terms of our assets or do we separate them. Really, it comes down to the task at hand and that's the beauty about logistics – is our work flexible enough to be able to adapt to what a commander wants and produce a capability that sustains the battle.



**Captain Mascall-Dare:** In the course of your career so far, what changes have you noticed in the delivery of logistics, and how are you expecting it to evolve in the future?

**Lieutenant Colonel Perry:** I don't think logistics has changed. It's fundamentally the same. The principles are the same. But, we're adaptable, we're flexible and we primarily are there to make sure that the commander is supported in terms of what he wants to achieve. We're goal focused, we're mission orientated and we're there to support.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** In summary then, what have you observed here that you think is going to make a difference to the way the Army School of Logistic Operations offers its training?

**Lieutenant Colonel Perry:** This has enabled me to validate our current individual training – what are we doing for individuals and their ability to perform their roles and responsibilities. It's essential that we provide them with up-to-date concise set of skills, knowledge and also work on attitudes to make sure that we are doing the right thing by the individuals. Are we giving them the capability they need to

move forward and actually be an asset to the organisation they are a part of?

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** In your view, what is the value of an exercise such as Hamel, given the sheer size and scale? We're talking about 9000 people and a number of nationalities here.

**Lieutenant Colonel Perry:** Well the value is bringing everyone together. Very rarely do we get the opportunity to all come together from the various levels of army and to test out how we operate. We can do it pretty well on a unit level and we can do a pretty well on the brigade level – but then how does that fit within the whole scheme of things and how can we do things better? This is the great opportunity we have, to be able to test how we are doing it now and get better in the future.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** You mention technology – how is it being built into logistics?

**Lieutenant Colonel Perry:** Technology in logistics is far and wide, mainly in communications, in terms of we are forever trying to improve our processes to make them faster and more agile. This is a constant challenge and we love to step up to a challenge.

*In the Exercise Control Joint Operations Centre with Major Derek Hales, lead effects planner for Exercise Hamel.*

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** First of all, what do we mean by the word effects?

**Major Hales:** Probably the best way to describe it is that we are actually operating out there in the real world, around towns like Wyalla and Iron Knob and we have to deconflict the fictitious scenario from what's actually happening there. That's one aspect of it. The other aspect is that we've got certain training outcomes we hope to achieve from Exercise Hamel this year. And it's the implementation of certain effects – which is where we get the word from – to achieve those training outcomes. It's also things like, I've got to generate a mayor and a police chief and 'what's the hospital like down in Wyalla?'. Now we could actually call the hospital down in Wyalla and they'd go, 'what on earth are you talking about?'. So I have to generate a lead doctor for that.

We try to have an eternally consistent scenario, because the exercise works off a number of different levels. You've got the tactical battlespace – units manoeuvring out in the field, trying to decide how best to get around that hill for example – and they need to have realistic injects, which replicate the friction that you get in a real environment – like, oops, there's a village in the way, what do we do about it? You've also got the higher-level government-to-government talks, for example, and the host government is trying to get their troops into the fight – which, of course they would.

So, in this particular scenario, we're here defending the territory of East Cultania, we need to generate that group of people we would realistically be working with in the reoccupation of their territory.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** It sounds like what you're describing is about realism. Is that a fair description?

**Major Hales:** Yes it is. In full-spectrum operations and exercises and things like that, if we are going to expect people to go out there into the real world and do something, we need to make the training as realistic as possible. Things like NGOs for instance.

It's a feature of modern warfare that we operate in the human environment and so we can't just have an open field and a tank battle – as much as I'd love that, because I have an Armoured Corps background. At the headquarters level there actually has to be layers on the scenario to make sure we are not destroying the people we are here to save.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** How then do you generate those different types of effects if you don't physically have them? Do you use simulation, for example.

**Major Hales:** This exercise is the first time we've gotten into the whole constructed-versus-live battlespace. The answer is going to be yes and yes, by the way. This year's Hamel is the first time it's been in the divisional construct – so we've got 1 Brigade, operating in the live space in the vicinity of the Cultana Training Area. Then we've also got the headquarters of 3 Brigade – so there's the real 3 Brigade with my old boss Brigadier Field in charge of it just sitting up the hill from here – and his people are basically in charge of a whole bunch of icons on a computer simulator. And then we have the US brigade – the 3rd of the 25th – same thing, their headquarters are controlling a whole bunch of icons. And on the other side you've got two virtual brigades and one live brigade – being 7 Brigade – as an OPFOR [opposing force]. So, answering your question, yes, there is a huge component of it that occurs on a computer screen. But in the real world, like down in Cultana, we need to actually have real people interacting with the training audience as well. So it's a mixture of the two. It's setting the scenario so that it's realistic – even putting in CMIC and population-control injects, which equates to a little icon getting in the road of a tank icon in the virtual space – and doing the exact same thing down in the live space, having people doing a protest in front of Australian manoeuvre for example.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** Have you drawn on the local community to fulfil that particular role?

**Major Hales:** Quite considerably actually. For the NEO that we did, which was technically a precursor activity, we had 20 civilian role players. While we have detailed scripts for our soldiers going through activities like that, people are people and they think



of things we never would. So, for Wyalla, where it was the plan for 1 Brigade to end up, we've had a community integration program going for the past couple of months. So, the idea being, you go up to someone random on the street and say, "hey, what do you think of those Camerians?" and they're like, "I don't talk to Australians, I've got a Plainian background".

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** Crikey, we've got some kind of aircraft going over our heads right now!

**Major Hales:** Nah, that wasn't me.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** So that wasn't an effect that you planned?

**Major Hales:** Well most of them I don't, they just happen anyway. But, getting back to it – you go into Wyalla and everyone knows what the scenario is and that way you can weave in human intelligence aspects and all these other bits we try to practice. We're tracking up to about 50 role players at a time – real people in local businesses and so on.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** How do you train local people when they don't have a military background and get them to create the effect you're looking for?

**Major Hales:** We're not after Army people. We could do that. We're after civilians. We give them little background notes – "you are in this country,

here are your different wants and needs and hopes and dreams, here's how you are disposed to the Australians as opposed to the opposition" – that's about the level of their brief.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** Why is it then so important to include this kind of planning as part of an exercise such as Hamel?

**Major Hales:** When we do major exercises such as this, when we have a series of mission-essential tasks, and it all has to do with the training certification of the brigade – what that actually means when you get down to the detail is, yes, tactical manoeuvre – but there's also things like stabilisation operations, rear-area security, civil-military integration. It's a full spectrum of operations. So, if you're going to train a unit for full-spectrum operations, you need to give them a full-spectrum environment.

**Captain Mascall-Dare:** From your perspective, what is the value of Exercise Hamel, with all these elements you've touched on?

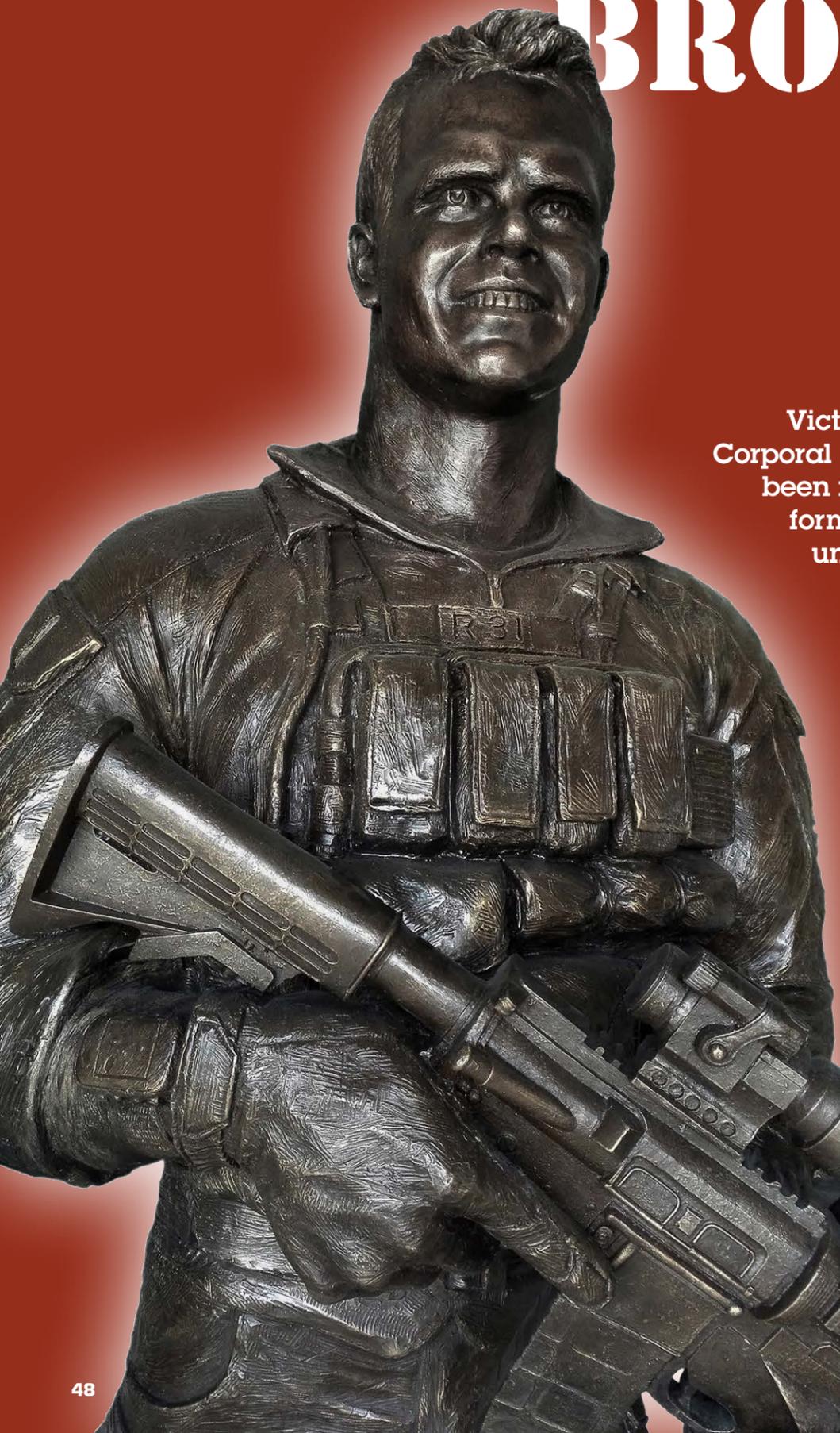
**Major Hales:** It's the only spot where we get to do it. We will do high-level training at headquarters and say, "Yep, that worked" and go home. On Hamel, it won't work – there will be real friction and we will really get stuck in the mud even though we had detailed planning time lines. You just can't replicate the complexity in any other environment.

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# VC CAST IN BRONZE



**Victoria Cross recipient Corporal Cameron Baird has been immortalised in the form of a bronze statue unveiled on Saturday 5 November in front of a plethora of VIP guests assembled at the Currumbin RSL, on Queensland's Gold Coast. The seven-foot bronze statue of Corporal Cameron Baird VC, MG was sculpted and cast by renowned monumental-statue manufacturer NAKED ARMY, in close cooperation with the Baird family.**



*Bringing a clay figure to life. Scott Edwards of NAKED ARMY said he wanted to produce a strong sculpture that conveyed Cameron's tremendous physicality.*

"This statue will honour not only Cameron as Australia's 100<sup>th</sup> VC recipient, but all 41 soldiers who were killed in Afghanistan, and will stand as a memorial to Australia's modern-day warfare," Cameron's father Doug Baird said.

Scott Edwards, from NAKED ARMY, who sculpted the piece, said creating the monument to Cameron Baird VC MG was a project spanning more than two years.

"The original sculpture started as a 12-inch study, which was completed during 2015 and served two purposes – as a collectable piece to help the charity Cam's Cause raise funds, and as the basis for the monumental sculpture, which in turn was sculpted and cast over an eight-month period in 2016," Mr Edwards said.

"In the initial designs for the monument I originally intended a strong, but informal pose, portraying a man who knows the ground he fights on – a strong sculpture that conveyed Cameron's tremendous physicality, but showed little emotion.

"The Baird family suggested we bring out Cameron's personality more, removing the ballistic eyewear which had been proposed, and showing one of Cameron's signature traits – his perpetual half-grin.

"The sculpt relied heavily on photography from Cameron's family and fellow soldiers, which proved challenging as the photography covered a decade of images.

"During that time, Cameron changed a lot physically, from a young soldier to a man at his physical peak."

Mr Edwards said that both the 12-inch and memorial-sized sculpts were completed using traditional materials and techniques, with the aim of creating a 'hyper-real' likeness of Corporal Baird rather than a simple impression.

"The monument was hand-sculpted using clay over a steel frame.

"From that, 'master' molds were made by the NAKED ARMY team.

"The molds were then transported to Australian Bronze foundry in Manly, New South Wales, where the final piece was cast in silicone bronze, which is a state-of-the-art product usually commonly associated with high-end uses such as marine propellers."

"The plinth the statue stands on was constructed in sandstone by a local stonemason, ready for the bronze to be installed.

"The final bronze sculpture stands 2.2 metres tall, and weighs in at more than 350 kilograms.

"And, as a fitting tribute to Cameron Baird, the sculpture was man-handled into place on its plinth at Currumbin RSL by Cameron's Army colleagues and RSL members."

Mr Edwards said the Cameron Baird VC MG monument was perhaps the only contemporary memorial sculpture completed in the ANZAC Centenary period, which was very fitting since serving members like Cameron Baird exemplify the finest traditions of Australian soldiering.

He said NAKED ARMY's aim was to help create tangible connections between Australia's proud military history and current generations.

"During the past decade we have completed various monumental projects and collector figurines for ADF units and RSLs, plus collector figurines for retail.

"NAKED ARMY sculpted and completed the Cameron Baird Memorial sculpture as our contribution to what is a great voluntary effort by Cam's Cause – [www.camscouse.org](http://www.camscouse.org)

Corporal Cameron Baird was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions in a battle on 22 June 2013, in Uruzgan province, Afghanistan, which left Kaye and Doug Baird without their youngest son.

The award was given posthumously in February 2014 – the 100<sup>th</sup> VC awarded to an Australian.



## VC Citation

On 22 June 2013, a commando platoon of the Special Operations Task Group, with partners from the Afghan National Security Forces, conducted a helicopter assault into Ghawchak village, Uruzgan province, in order to attack an insurgent network deep within enemy-held territory.

Shortly after insertion, Corporal Baird's team was engaged by small-arms fire from several enemy positions.

Corporal Baird quickly seized the initiative, leading his team to neutralise the positions, killing six enemy combatants and enabling the assault to continue.

Soon afterwards, an adjacent SOTG team came under heavy enemy fire, resulting in its commander being seriously wounded.

Without hesitation, Corporal Baird led his team to provide support.

En route, he and his team were engaged by small-arms and machine-gun fire from prepared enemy positions.

With complete disregard for his own safety, Corporal Baird charged towards the enemy positions, supported by his team.

On nearing the positions, he and his team were engaged by additional enemy on their flank.

Instinctively, Corporal Baird neutralised the new threat with grenades and rifle fire, enabling his team to close with the prepared position.

With the prepared position now isolated, Corporal Baird manoeuvred and was engaged by enemy machine-gun fire, bullets striking the ground around him.

Displaying great valour, he drew the fire, moved to cover, and suppressed the enemy machine-gun position.

This action enabled his team to close on the entrance to the prepared position, thus regaining the initiative.

On three separate occasions Corporal Baird charged an enemy-held building within the prepared compound.

On the first occasion, he charged the door to the building, followed by another team member.

Despite being totally exposed and immediately engaged by enemy fire, Corporal Baird pushed forward while firing into the building.

Now in the closest proximity to the enemy, he was forced to withdraw when his rifle ceased to function.

On rectifying his rifle stoppage, and reallocating remaining ammunition within his team, Corporal Baird again advanced towards the door of the building, once more under heavy fire.

He engaged the enemy through the door, but was unable to suppress the position and took cover to reload.

For a third time, Corporal Baird selflessly drew enemy fire away from his team and assaulted the doorway.

Enemy fire was seen to strike the ground and compound walls around Corporal Baird, before visibility was obscured by dust and smoke.

In this third attempt, the enemy was neutralised and the advantage was regained, but Corporal Baird was killed in the effort.

Corporal Baird's acts of valour and self-sacrifice regained the initiative and preserved the lives of his team members.

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# Second Chance



CH-47 Chinook A15-151 recently landed at her new home at Robertson Barracks as part of the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment's CH-47 training facility project being led by Plant Troop, 23rd Support Squadron of 1CER.

1CER members prepared a new roost to allow members of C Squadron, 5th Aviation Regiment to guide the helicopter into her new permanent position.

A15-151 will now serve as a dual-use training facility, first, for Australian Army emergency responders to practice helicopter crash-rescue drills,

as well as to enable 1 Brigade units to practice drills for air-mobile operations.

This aircraft was originally owned by the United States but taken out of service following damage sustained in Afghanistan.

It was then acquired and repaired by Australian soldiers and returned to active service in Afghanistan under her new name "Second Chance".

Following her decommissioning, Second Chance now gets a third chance, becoming an excellent training aid for 1 Brigade.



ABOVE: CH-47 Chinook A15-151 lands for the last time.

LEFT: WO1 Mikel MacDonald and Sergeant Jason Hoare from Brisbane's Cargo Helicopter Management Unit, and Sergeant Robert Nathan, Corporal Lee Schurmann and Craftsman Tristan Creasey from Townsville's 5th Aviation Regiment say goodbye to "Second Chance".



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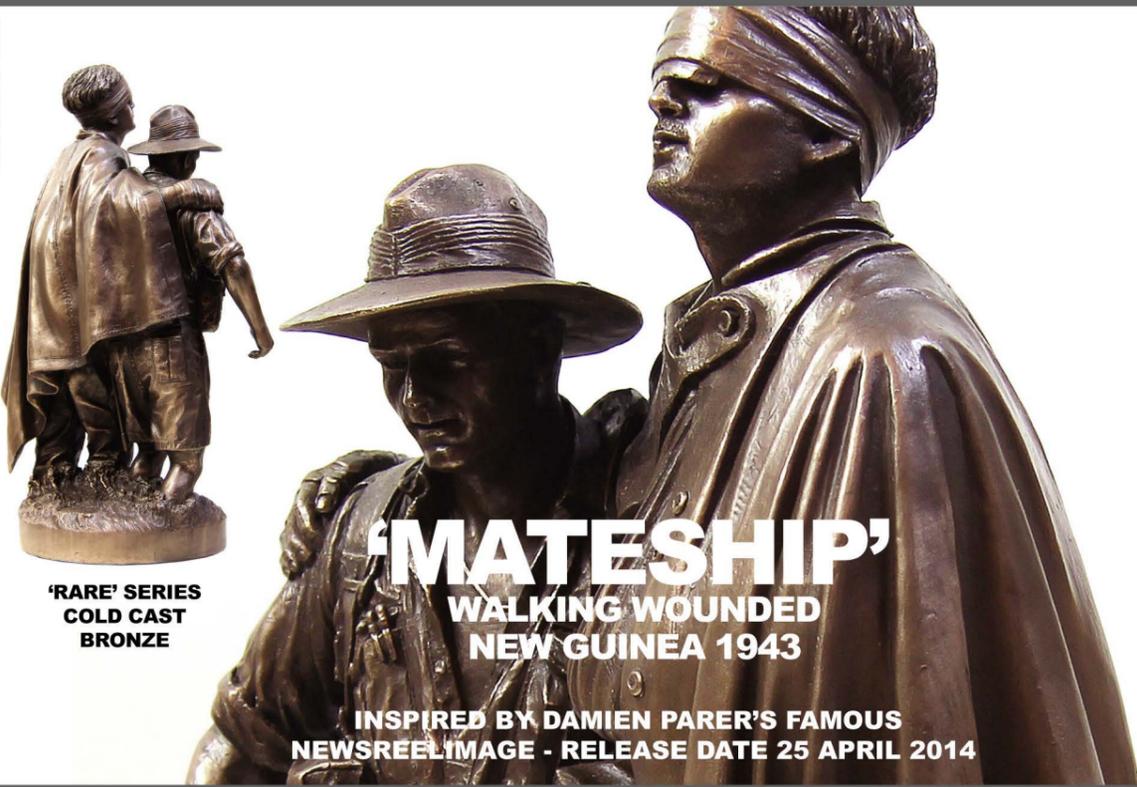


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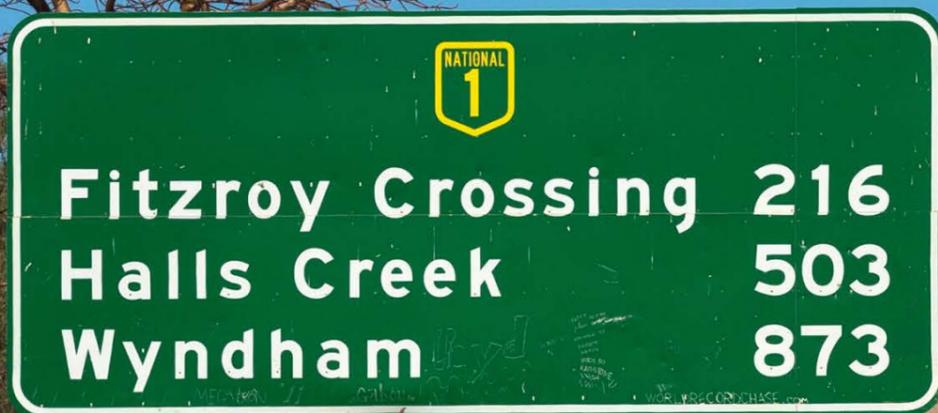


# DEFENDING THE NORTHWEST

## Exercise Northern Shield

Words Samuel Vinicombe – Photos ADF

THE NORMALLY IDYLIC STREETS OF BROOME IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S KIMBERLY REGION WERE TRANSFORMED RECENTLY AS MORE THAN 1000 AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE PERSONNEL DESCENDED ON THE TOWN AND HINTERLAND IN RESPONSE TO A FICTIONAL TERRORIST THREAT





Previous page:

Soldiers from 1 Brigade, usually based in Darwin, work with Western Australia Police in the Broome hinterland.

Photos by Corporals Steve Duncan and David Said.

This page:

Soldiers from the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, participate in a platoon attack at Ellendale Diamond Mine near Derby, Western Australia.

Photos by Corporal Kyle Genner.



**Developed in response to industry and local concerns about the ADF's ability to protect assets and resources in the region, Northern Shield 16 is the second in a series of exercises in Australia's north-west.**

According to Brigadier David Smith, Director General of the Australian Defence Simulation and Training Centre (ADSTC), "The aim of Exercise Northern Shield, is to allow [the ADF] to practice our short-notice deployment capabilities into remote areas of Australia".

Exercise Director Colonel Brett Chaloner said, "The primary purpose of the exercise is

to practice the ADF in the conduct of rapid response to a contingency threat against Australia and the mainland, its territories, or its vital interests".

The execution of the rapid-response capability incorporated elements of Army, Navy and Air Force.

Army's contribution consisted mainly of a Combat Ready Team made up of 250 troops from the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, based in Darwin.

Major Joel Waterhouse, the commanding officer of the CRT, explained that the team was made up of elements from the wider brigade, including infantry, transport,

signalers, logisticians, engineers and artillery.

"They deployed in Bushmaster PMV convoys from Darwin or were flown as a rapid-response capability from RAAF Base Tindal," he said.

"Attached to the RCT were elements of the 1<sup>st</sup> Military Police Battalion, using military working dogs to maximise the team's effectiveness.

"These units were supported by ARH Tiger helicopters, deployed from Darwin on C-17 Globemasters, working in conjunction with S-70 Black Hawks."

Major fleet units from the Royal Australian Navy included the Anzac-class frigates HMAS Ballarat, based out of Fleet Base West and HMAS Newcastle based at Fleet Base East. These vessels operated with the support of the replenishment vessel HMAS Success.

The RAAF focused on rapid response and operations out of RAAF Base Curtin, 40km south of Derby, with support from RAAF Base Tindal in the Northern Territory.

Key capabilities employed included a rapid-response field hospital and deployable air-traffic control tower.





*Clockwise from left:  
Private Alex Coles from the 1<sup>st</sup> Military Police Battalion discusses cordon-and-search activities at a caravan park in Broome with a Western Australia Police officer.  
Sergeant Daniel Treveton, 5RAR, removes an 'enemy suspect' from a cabin during the cordon-and-search operation at the Broome caravan park.  
Western Australia Police officers take the 'suspect' into custody.  
Australian Army military police dog 'Jax' from the 1<sup>st</sup> Military Police Battalion on alert.  
Sergeant Edouard Falkenmire and 'Jax', 1<sup>st</sup> Military Police Battalion, keep watch during the cordon-and-search.  
Soldiers from the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, move to secure the caravan park during the cordon-and-search operation.*

*Photos by Able Seaman Chris Beerens.*



Air-force platforms deployed included an E-7A Wedgetail based, for the exercise, at RAAF Tindal, a KA350 Kingair, C-17A Globemaster, C-130J Hercules, KC-30A multi-role tanker transport, an AP-3C Orion and four F/A-18A Hornets operating out of RAAF Bases Curtin and Tindal.

These platforms were aided by elements of the No 2 Security Forces Squadron on location at RAAF Base Curtin.

Key to the exercise was the strategic nature of the region to Australia's national defence. Broome is the largest town in Western Australia's Kimberly Region and is

a hub for resource and energy projects in the area.

As the nearest regional center and port to the INPEX (\$25 billion) and Browse Basin (\$30 billion) LNG projects – both expected to begin production in 2017 – Broome is a strategic centre in the region and was identified in the 2012 ADF Posture Review as a suitable location for improved ADF access arrangements as a forward operating base.

It was, however, also noted that significant weaknesses and risks had been identified in the force posture in the region. Shortcomings in the ADF's ability

to project capability into the north-west at an adequate level have been reiterated by former senator Alan Eggleston, a strong proponent for an increased ADF capability in the region.

It is notable then that a number of the operations in Exercise Northern Shield were focused on protecting the resource and energy sectors.

Troops from the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, Ready Combat Team conducted exercises around the Ellendale mine, 140km inland from Derby, while HMA Ships Newcastle, Ballarat and Success

patrolled offshore oil and gas facilities.

Brigadier David Smith emphasised the use of the full range of ADF capabilities.

"It speaks volumes, not only for our capacity to be able to deploy these joint forces rapidly in a coordinated manner, but also our capacity to operate across agencies very successfully," he said.

Essential to the success of the exercise was inter-agency cooperation with Western Australian Police (WAPol).

Combining urban patrols, room-clearance drills and cordon-and-search drills, the Ready Combat Team troops, with elements





Equipment on display during Exercise Northern Shield 2016 included, clockwise from left:

A C-17 Globemaster III.

Photo by Able Seaman Chris Beerens.

A transportable air operations tower.

Photo by Sergeant Mick Bott.

A tactical air surveillance radar.

Photo by Sergeant Mick Bott.

A Bushmaster protected mobility vehicle.

Photo by Corporal Kyle Jenner.

Adelaide-class frigate, HMAS Newcastle.

Photo by Able Seaman Chris Beerens.



of the military police dog-handling units, combined with WAPol to maximise capability.

This combined capability was used to neutralise a fictional terrorist cell in an urban setting.

WAPol's Sergeant Paul World said such inter-agency training opportunities were extremely important.

"Unless we run these exercises, we don't know where the gaps are, or where mistakes can be made," he said.

In keeping with the ADF Posture Review's recommendation, the exercise

also contributed significantly to the ADF's visibility in the region and was warmly welcomed by the wider community.

Colonel Chaloner made specific mention of the importance of community engagement.

"The response from the local people has been very positive, with many offering to take part.

"The support of the local community and shire councils is very important for this exercise to work."

As part of the ADF's wider strategic capabilities, Northern Shield provided an

opportunity for elements of the force to practice a rapid-response deployment that could be replicated anywhere in the world.

Colonel Chaloner said that while the ADF's priority was to practice its response inside Australia and to threats directly against Australia, the mechanics could be replicated anywhere.

Exercise Northern Shield 2016 culminated with a community-engagement and demonstration day, at both Broome and Derby.

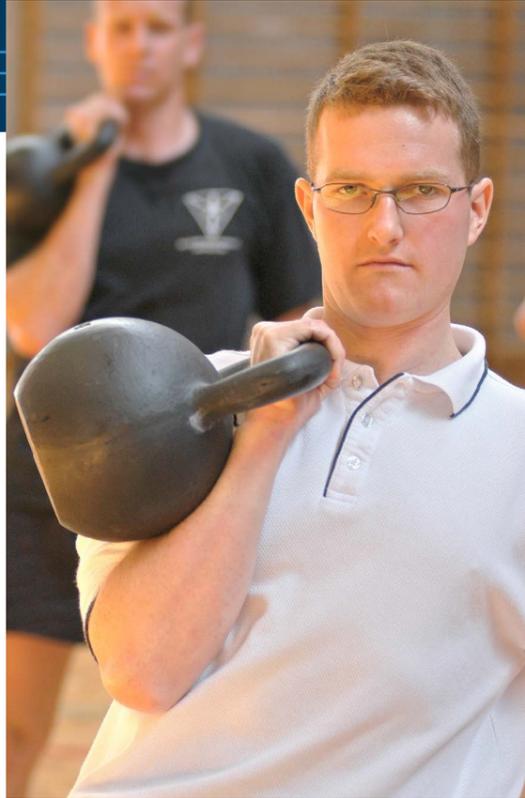
Not only were a variety of elements of the operation showcased for local community

members, the day also included flyovers, military working dog handling demonstrations, examples of section-level attacks conducted by members of 5RAR and hands-on equipment displays.

"It's been an exceptional opportunity to train in Western Australia" Colonel Chaloner said, emphasising the importance of the focus on remote locations and the key infrastructure and resources in the region.

**Samuel Vinicombe is a security analyst and defence correspondent based in Perth, WA**





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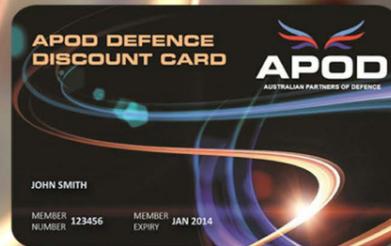
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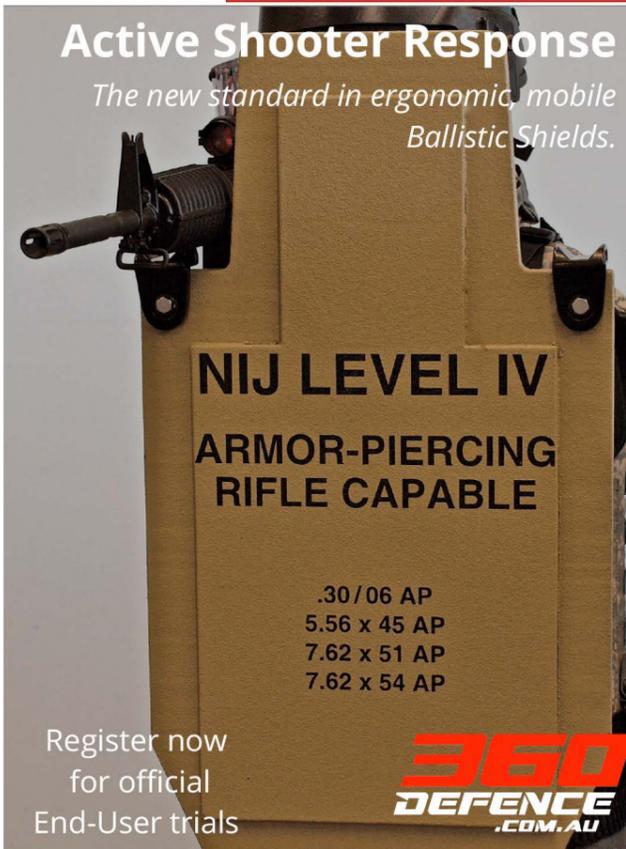
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# TG TAJI

## ROTATION FOUR



As Australians paused to remember more than a century of military service on 11 November, another group of service men and women were preparing to deploy on operations overseas.

Task Group Taji Rotation 4 was formally farewelled with a military parade at Robertson Barracks, Darwin, on Remembrance Day, before deploying to Iraq.

Predominantly drawn from the Australian Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment in Darwin, Task Group Taji 4 represents the Australian and New Zealand Defence Forces' contribution to the international effort to combat the Daesh terrorist threat in Iraq and Syria.

Task Group Taji is a combined Australian-New Zealand military training force located at the Taji Military Complex north-west of Baghdad and is deployed to Iraq to support an international effort to train and build the capacity of Iraqi Security Forces.

Many of the Iraqi soldiers engaged in the retaking of Mosul in late 2016 were trained at the Taji Military Complex by earlier rotations of the Task Group.

As a training mission the ADF and NZDF troops are not operating in combat roles.

The combined Task Group consists of around 300 Australian Defence Force personnel drawn largely from the Australian Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, alongside more than 100 New Zealand Defence Force personnel.

TG Taji comprises trainers, force protection, support and command elements.

Warrant Officer Class One Jason Robinson (left) is the Sergeant Major of Task Group Taji 4.

# EARTHQUAKE

Little more than 24 hours after a magnitude 7.5 earthquake rocked northern parts of the New Zealand South Island on 14 November, the New Zealand Defence Force had deployed hundreds of personnel, eight aircraft and two ships in support of the whole-of-government response to the natural disaster that killed two people.

An RNZAF P-3K2 Orion surveillance aircraft left Whenuapai within hours of the initial quake to conduct a seven-hour aerial survey of main transport routes and towns from Picton to Christchurch, including inland routes.

Photos taken during the survey showed massive rockfalls in several areas in the upper South Island, with as many as 100,000 land slips eventually estimated.

Acting Commander Joint Forces New Zealand Air Commodore Darryn Webb said it was clear from

the photos that the major route from Christchurch to Kaikoura was impassable, as was the road from Kaikoura to Hanmer Springs and from Blenheim to Kaikoura – in other words, access by land to the popular tourist township was completely cut off, with as many as 1000 tourists in the town.

Four Air Force NH90 helicopters were initially assigned to evacuating the tourists and any residents who wanted to leave, but initial progress was slow on the mammoth task.

Air Commodore Webb said the NZDF had mobilised numerous assets to support the government's response to the earthquake, and had been working with the Ministry of Civil Defence to ensure the lifelines and basic needs, especially to the Kaikoura community, were met.

"Our priority was to evacuate the tourists and residents of Kaikoura who have been displaced



by the earthquake and are now being accommodated at a local marae and various community buildings," Air Commodore Webb said.

"About 5000kg of aid supplies including food, water and hygiene products, as well as jerrycans of diesel, were also flown into the community."

The multi-role vessel HMNZS Canterbury was also dispatched from Auckland to help with the evacuation.

A C-130 Hercules was also tasked.

Eventually, three foreign ships that were in Auckland for the RNZN 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary International Naval Review – including HMAS Darwin – and several aircraft, joined the rescue and eventual resupply of the town.

A convoy of 27 NZDF trucks braved bad weather and risks of further landslides to bring much-needed fuel and supplies to the town four days after the initial seismic event, which was followed by more than 500 aftershocks, many in the 5+ range on the Richter Scale.

**FAST FACTS:**

**Evacuations:** 700 people, four dogs, 7000kg baggage

**Deliveries by RNZAF NH90s:** About 20,000kg

**Deliveries by HMNZS Canterbury:** 13,000kg food, 2780kg fruits and veg, 200kg potatoes, 350kg bread, 6000kg rice, pasta and flour, 300kg blankets, 500kg telecom equipment, 4000kg medical supplies, 10,000kg pet food, 80 portable toilets, 500kg toilet paper, 30 10-litre cans of fuel, two portable pumps and four generators.



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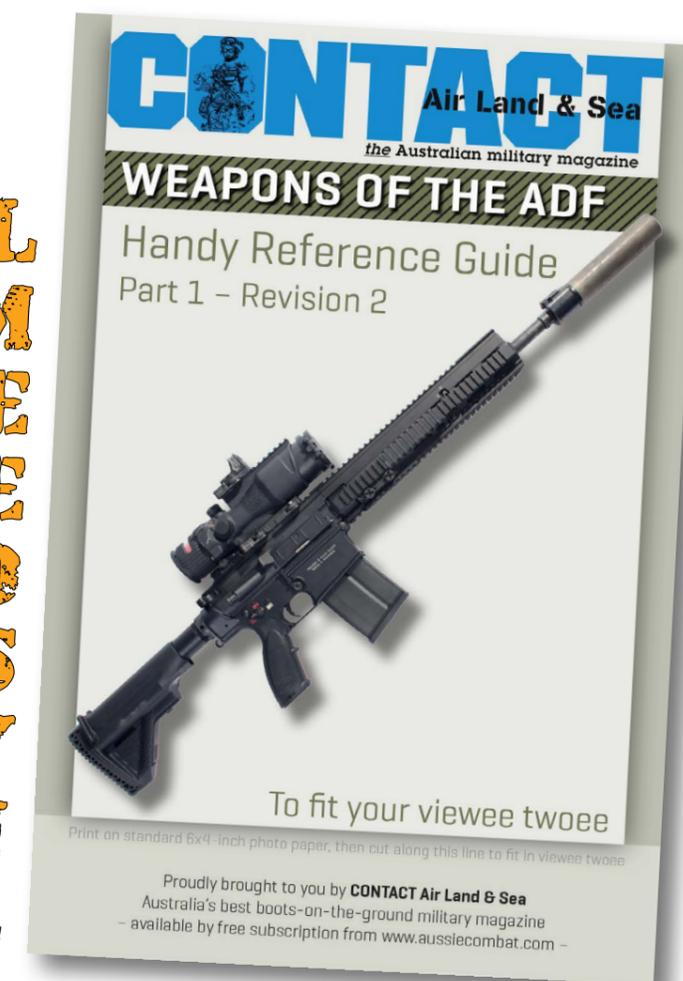
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# Q STORE

## R-TAPE

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## Lieutenant Alec MacNeil DSO

10<sup>th</sup> Battalion 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Trench Mortar Battery, AIF

# SCOTTISH TERRIER

The officer calmly checked the chamber of his revolver as he quickly gave orders to his corporal. His broad Scottish accent delivered the commands in a sharp, no-nonsense manner. "You and the lad's take the tubes and get through to our trenches. Remember they must not fall into enemy hands. I'll be along shortly. Keep the lads together and look after them. Right off you go now"...

Alexander MacNeil was born in the sleepy hamlet of Munloch, Scotland on 27 August 1892. He was a good smart lad with an adventurous streak. He was no slouch in the classroom either and enjoyed school and developed a passion for maritime engineering. While in the latter part of his schooling, he served his compulsory cadet training with the local Seaforth Territorial Force where he served for three years.<sup>1</sup>

On leaving school, Alec started work in the ship-building industry as a boilermaker's assistant. His first job was in one of the great engineering works on the River Clyde. Although a willing worker, he yearned for adventure and soon found work on a freighter plying the overseas trade routes.

On these voyages, Alec found time to get into shape. A regular exercise program soon transformed him into superb physical condition. In 1912 he found himself in Australia and decided to stay for an indefinite period. He secured a position with the Adelaide Steamship Company, at its Port Adelaide repair works.<sup>1</sup>

With the onset of war, Alec felt it was his duty to return to Scotland and enlist in his old unit, the Seaforth's. To do this he would need to pay his own passage, which at that point in time was beyond his means. He immediately offered his services to the Royal Australian Navy but was turned down as they had been inundated with eager young volunteers. Alec felt he had no other option but to enlist in the AIF.<sup>1</sup>

Alec was allocated regimental number 746 and became part of D Company of the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion which was being formed at nearby Morphetville. He was a good, competent soldier and his previous military service obviously came to the fore, being promoted to lance corporal in October 1914.<sup>2</sup>

On 20 October 1914, the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion marched proudly to the docks where the Troopship *Ascanius* awaited to take them to Europe, or so they thought.

Instead of the mud of France, it was the sands of Egypt that greeted the Aussies and their Kiwi cousins. It was here that they were to hone their skills and prepare themselves to take on the Hun. In January 1915, Alec elected to relinquish his stripe and return to the rank of private.<sup>2</sup> But the Hun would have to wait, as the AIF would first tackle the Turk at a place called Gallipoli.

Alec stormed ashore at ANZAC Cove as part of the covering force. During that mad first day, confusion reigned, many of the soldiers became separated from their parent units and fought with any body of troops they could find. Alec and a few others from the 10<sup>th</sup> spent four days cut-off from the main body, fighting in an advance post. The gallant little band repelled attack after attack by the determined Turks and only withdrew when their food and ammunition was all but exhausted.<sup>1</sup>

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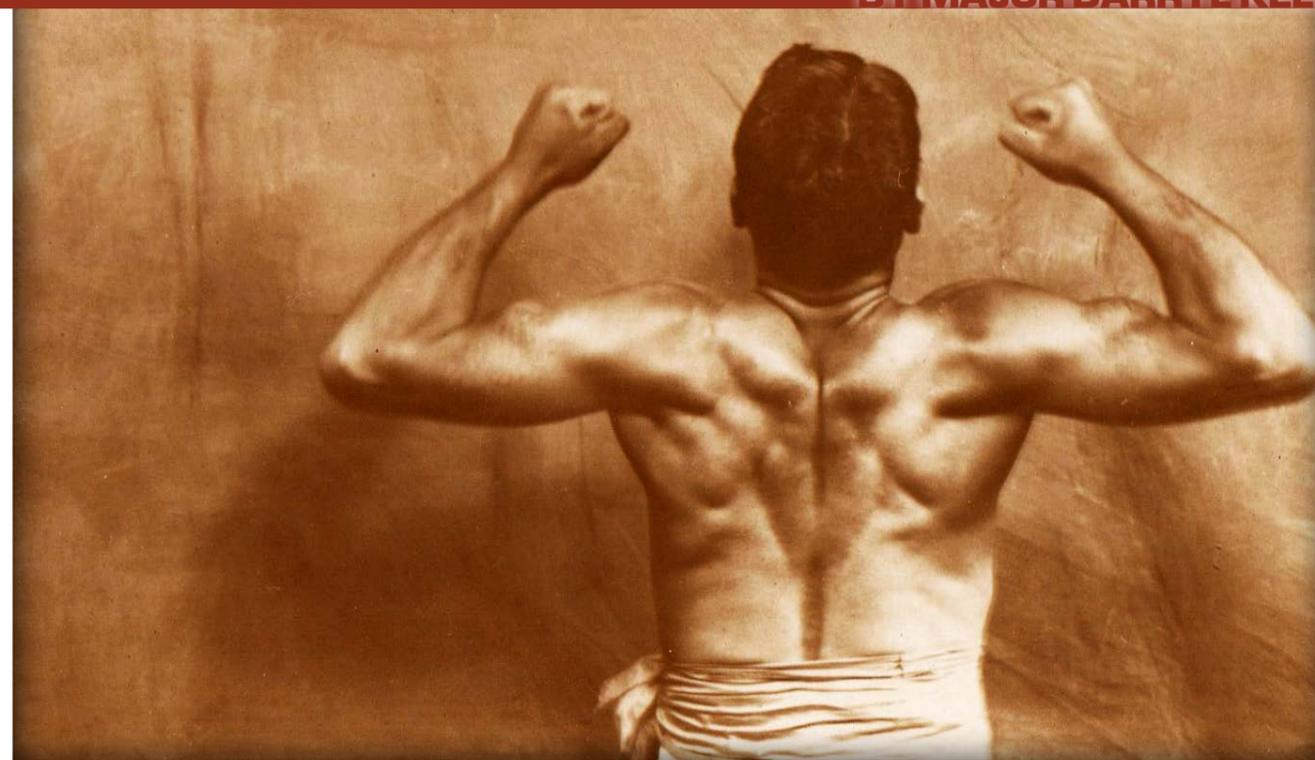
Alec MacNeil fought a good fight for the entire campaign. As with thousands of other on the peninsula, however, dysentery took its toll. But there was an unwritten law among the Diggers – "if you can stand and walk, then you can stand and fight" – so Alec remained at his post and fought on. One day Alec was in an area known as Montgomery's Sap when suddenly a bullet slammed into his left shoulder. Luckily the projectile was partly spent and only penetrated about an inch into the flesh. Alec decided that the wound didn't warrant medical attention and simply squeezed the bullet out.<sup>1</sup>

On 1 July, Alec was promoted to corporal and, halfway through August, promoted to sergeant.<sup>1</sup>

Following the evacuation from Gallipoli, the AIF returned to Egypt to lick its wounds and take stock. Alec received a commission on 16 March 1916 and sailed with the 10<sup>th</sup> bound for France and finally, a crack at the Hun.<sup>1</sup>

On 14 June, Alec had returned from patrol and just made his verbal report to his company commander, when suddenly it was like someone had stuck a red hot poker into his stomach. A piece of shrapnel had hit him in the right breast pocket, shattered his pipe, deflected against his notebook and travelled down into his abdomen.

As the doctors worked to stem the bleeding, Alec would not allow them to put him under anaesthetic, even when they had to remove portions of his stomach.<sup>3</sup> As they operated,



Lieutenant Alec MacNeil DSO was a proud soldier who worked hard on his physical fitness.

they found pieces of the pipe, paper from the notebook and pieces of khaki cloth embedded in the wound. His injuries were serious enough to warrant his evacuation to England.

He was determined to return to the front and badgered the doctors until they reluctantly agreed, even though the wound was still open. Alec got back in time to participate in the final stages of the Pozieres and Mouquet Farm battles.<sup>1</sup>

In January 1917, Alec was seconded to command the 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Trench Mortar Battery. The battery was armed with the new and exciting 3 inch Stokes mortar. This weapon could throw a 10.5 pound, fin-stabilised bomb out to an effective 750 yards. Each of the projectiles was filled with the deadly explosive, Amatol. A good crew could provide sustained fire of six to eight rounds per minute and, in an emergency, fire a 'sausage string' of 10 to 11 rounds in succession, with all the rounds in the air before the first one impacted on the target. It was such a closely guarded secret that none of the deadly Stokes weapons had yet fallen into enemy hands.<sup>1,4</sup>

In the early hours of 6 May 1917, the AIF was locked in battle at Bullecourt. Alec had four tubes deployed forward, tasked to keep the enemy bombers at bay. The battle raged throughout the morning and Alec kept the tubes firing. But now under an intense artillery barrage, the enemy were closing in on the Australian front line. The situation was well and truly in doubt. One of his crews was in danger of being cut off and captured. They were trying to drive the enemy back with Mills bombs<sup>5</sup> and also by throwing mortar bombs at the enemy by hand.

Suddenly, it was if hell had opened its doors. Heat and flame erupted and a pungent burning smell filled the air. This was the Australians' first exposure to a horrifying new weapon known as a flammenwerfer (flamethrower). The terrified Diggers reeled in horror as the flames licked towards them. Sizing up the situation, Alec ordered the mortars to be withdrawn to a safer location. He gave a quick set of orders to one of his junior commanders, 24-year-old Corporal Emanuel

Hockey to withdraw the mortars and crews. Alec said that he would stay behind and cover their withdrawal.<sup>1,6</sup>

Alec started firing his pistol as the grey clad figures surged towards him. Pulling the pin on a Mills bomb, he hurled it towards the enemy and smiled as he heard screams when it exploded. Suddenly a German lunged at him with a bayonet. Alec side-stepped and dispatched the Hun with a well aimed shot. He continued to hurl bomb after bomb, until his stocks were just about exhausted. A German, armed with a flammenwerfer, appeared from around a bend in the trench. As he went to fire, Alec let go with a Mills bomb, which exploded in front of the Hun killing him instantly. Alec then decided to pull back and made good his escape. As Alec weaved his way through the shattered trenches, he picked up an abandoned Lewis Gun and thrust it over his shoulder.<sup>1</sup>

On arriving to the safety of the Australian trenches, Alec gathered the remnants of his men.

"Right, we're going to launch a counter-attack and drive these buggers back!" he said.

The men quickly checked their weapons and within seconds they were off, following the commander towards the enemy. Alec was firing the Lewis Gun in short bursts from the hip as he advanced. A second flammenwerfer came into play and Alec soon dispatched it in a similar fashion to the first. His Diggers were giving a great account of themselves too and were halting the enemy advance with a flurry of Mills bombs.

Then, as the supply of bombs ran short, the enemy again gained momentum and started to encircle the gallant force. Suddenly a small force under command of Captain James Newland<sup>7</sup> from the nearby 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion arrived.

"Can you use these, mate?" Newland said to Alec, dropping two boxes of bombs at his feet. With this inject of men and bombs the Diggers soon regained the initiative and forced the Germans back beyond the old front line.<sup>1,6</sup>

# CLOSE BUT NOT CLOSE ENOUGH

## Australians recommended for the VC but not awarded

BY MAJOR DARRYL KELLY



### Notes

- 1 Reveille Article "Bullecourt Horatius" by E.A. Roberts MM, August 1, 1932
- 2 National Archives of Australia, B2455, WW1 Service Records, AWL MacNeil
- 3 Interview by author with Mr Ron Croft
- 4 Wikipedia - Stokes Mortar
- 5 Mills bomb is a form of hand grenade.
- 6 Bean CEW, The Official History of Australia in the War 1914-1918, Volume IV, Australian War Memorial, 1936
- 7 Newland had been recommended for the Victoria Cross for his previous gallantry and was severely wounded in this action
- 8 AWM 28, Recommendation Files for Honours and Awards, AIF, 1914-1918
- 9 Author's Collection
- 10 AWM A554 Alexander MacNeil DSO
- 11 Reveille Magazine article, Nov 1932
- 12 Reveille Magazine article, Nov 1940

For his actions, Alec MacNeil was recommended by two separate battalion commanders for the Victoria Cross. Unfortunately, this was relegated to the Distinguished Service Order.<sup>8</sup>

As Alec had suffered the strain of his actions at Bullecourt, it was decided to send him to England for further training where he was posted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Training Battalion. After attending the Southern Command Bombing School at Lyndhurst where he achieved a distinguished pass as a bomb thrower, he was then posted to the school as an instructor.<sup>2</sup>

Alec's experiences at Bullecourt, especially in the use of the Lewis Gun in the advance of an attacking party, so impressed him that he lobbied the commanding officer of the school to have this taught to future classes as a valuable new tactic.<sup>1</sup>

His time at the school allowed Alec to again hone his fitness, which had diminished a little during his time in the trenches.

Although an outstanding instructor, Alec missed the sting of battle and requested to be returned to front line service. He sailed for France on 13 June 1918 and, as he crossed the channel, he felt good about going back.

His old commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Wilder Neligan of the 10<sup>th</sup>, welcomed him with open arms. He admired the fiery young lieutenant for his dedication to duty and capacity to command. He gave Alec a 'special compliment' by placing him in charge of the trench mortars with carte blanche approval as to their employment for the upcoming attack at Merris.

The attack was a classic example of effective fire support with medium guns and field guns, along with mortars, machineguns and rifle grenadiers working in unison. Alec had seven Stokes mortars under his command and they fired more 1500 rounds in support of the operation.

In an extract from the CO of the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion's notes, he stated, "I wish to put on record the brilliant work accomplished by LT A. MacNeil DSO in fighting his Trench Mortars".<sup>9</sup>

He was also to contribute significantly at a later battle around Lihons. His actions were rewarded with a Mentioned in Despatches.<sup>2</sup>

Following the end of the war, Alec decided to remain in England and terminated his position with the AIF on 3 February 1919.

He found work again in the shipping industry, this time as an assistant manager of a shipbuilding and repair company on the Clyde. He married and the couple had two daughters Julia and Rosemary.<sup>11</sup>

Alec did not find solitude in the marriage, however, and the couple parted. Alec decided to return to Australia in 1922 and settled in Sydney.<sup>1</sup> He took on a soldier-settler block in an area known as Beauty Point.

Alec worked for a time as a representative for an American firm called Colex but, because of federal government tariff regulations, the company ceased its Australian connections.

Alec was a man of principal and never shirked his responsibilities. He worked hard and regularly cabled money back to England to help provide for his two young daughters.

It was during this time that Alec became involved in the Returned Services League, holding down committee positions in both the Sydney and Mosman branches.<sup>11</sup>

He was a regular at the Cutty Sark Hotel in the harbour-side Rocks district. This was a well-known pub frequented by 'old salts' who'd plied the seven seas.

It was here he met Gwen Croft and her two children Ron and Faye. Gwen's husband travelled Australia in search of work and the couple had slowly drifted apart with Mr Croft now residing permanently in Victoria.

Alec idolised Gwen and the kids and the family moved in together. Alec was again a man of high principles and the couple occupied separate rooms and he never partook of alcohol in the house. He tended to Gwen's and the children's needs and the relationship developed more out of respect and companionship than anything else. The kids came to love the man they dubbed 'Uncle Mac' and were amazed at his energy and stamina, even though his war wounds at times came back to haunt him. Mac would exercise daily and the kids would try and copy his skipping routine, which he did every morning.<sup>3</sup> Young Ron said that 'Uncle Mac' was a great bloke - good, clean and as straight as a die.<sup>3</sup>



Above: Lieutenant Alec MacNeil's original ribbons, miniature medals, ANZAC Lapel Badge and other accoutrements.  
Below: 'Uncle Mac' with Ron Croft.

One day, Alec was troubled after reading a letter from overseas, and became very withdrawn.

He arose early one morning and dressed in his best suit. He slowly walked down to the wharf and caught the ferry across to Circular Quay. As he walked along King Street he could see the woman and the two young girls bundled up in coats. He walked up and took off his hat, "Hello lassies" he said and bent down and held out his arms to the two young girls - his daughters.<sup>3</sup>

That night he told Gwen of the meeting. But, even though he loved the girls dearly, he could not go back - not now.

As war clouds re-gathered over Europe, Alec pondered thoughts of re-enlisting, but his war wounds preclude his serving again in uniform. He was thrilled though to learn that his eldest daughter Julia was serving in the Auxiliary Territorial Service back in Scotland.<sup>12</sup>

As the Japanese began to highlight their intentions in the Pacific, Alec confided in young Ron - "Laddie if the Japs invade, then I'll kill all the family rather than see them become slaves". This was a sobering thought for a young fellow of 13 to comprehend.<sup>3</sup>

In July 1943, Alec awoke early and roused young Ron, now 17 from his bed.

"Come on young fella - we're off."

"Off where?" Ron asked, still rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

"You're off to enlist" Mac replied.

At least Ron was given his choice of service in which to serve. He chose the Navy.<sup>3</sup>

Alec MacNeil was a man amongst men. His character was sound, his bravery unquestioned, his commitment and responsibilities to those around him undaunted.

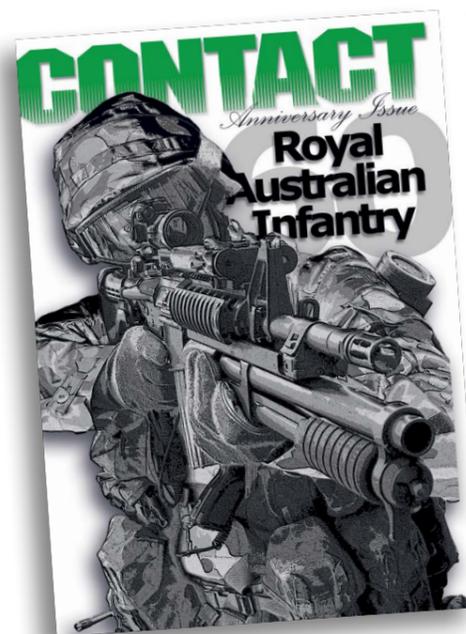
This gallant old soldier died in 1973.



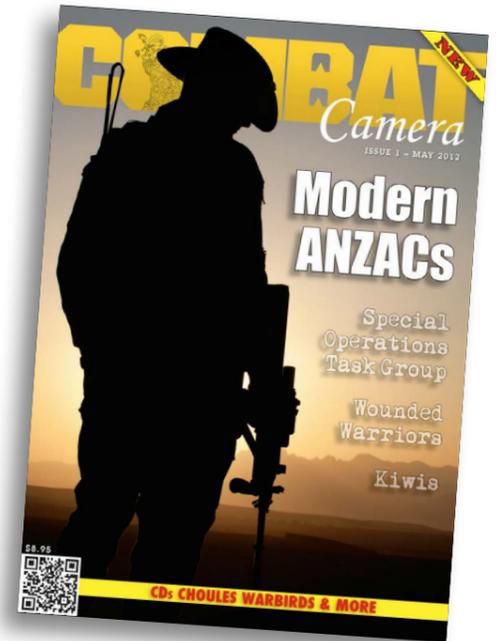
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## Best in NSW



Cadet Jordan Booth wins the Jock Evans Award for Best Cadet in NSW 2016. A quote from her nomination sums up a dynamic performer...

*"CDT Booth was honoured with the nickname War Dog by a member of 1/19RNSWR who was DS'ing on our activity. CDT Booth, is slight in build, gentle mannered and filled with humility. A robust name like War Dog would seem most unlikely at first glance.*

*However, all members of 1/19 were so impressed with her charm, commitment, drive, energy, grit, courage and team spirit shown throughout the 3 days - putting other members of her section to shame, that they felt she personified the military war dog - cute on the outside, loved by all, yet driven, determined, controlled and professional on the inside. I would hate to see her bite!*

*Well done Cadet Booth.*

## Three little words

BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL CHRISTOPHER HOLCROFT

During the Centenary of Anzac, how does the rising generation of Army Cadets fathom what took place four generations ago?

One way is to go with a set of current and past Army Engineers and other Army Cadets and walk the battlefields of Gallipoli. The second is to research a VC winner from the campaign and see exactly where his actions took place.

Cadet Under Officer (CUO) David Neilson from 13 ACU Toowoomba was one of eight Army Cadets from around Australia selected to travel to Turkey and Gallipoli to tour the ANZAC's spiritual home.

Before departure, CUO Neilson researched how Lance Corporal Leonard Keysor won his Victoria Cross during the Battle of Lone Pine in August 1915.

On his return to Australia, CUO Neilson wrote an essay about



Read Cadet Under Officer David Neilson's Gallipoli-tour essay here.

his trip and research, in which he noted Keysor wasn't actually employed as a rifleman at Lone Pine but as someone who would pick up the grenades thrown into Australian trenches and throw them back.

"Lance Corporal Keysor's main role wasn't to fight, but to lob grenades into the Turkish trenches," CUO Neilson said.

"Over the course of 50 hours,

under fire, Keysor darted through the trenches, taking Turkish grenades and lobbing them back.

"Lance Corporal Keysor met each of the Army's values of courage, initiative, teamwork and respect."

After his VC research and battlefield tour, three words will mean so much more for CUO Neilson from now on - Lest we Forget.

## WA cadets on UK visit

BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL (AAC) MICHAEL JENKIN

A contingent of 18 Australian Army Cadets (AAC) from Western Australia went to the United Kingdom on a three-week exchange program this year, on Exercise Southern Cross.

This challenging program has been operating since 2004 between the WA AAC Brigade and the Surrey Army Cadet Force.

ON even years, a party of Australians travel to the UK, while the favour is returned in odd years when members of the Surrey Army Cadet Force come to Perth.

Contingent Commander Captain (AAC) Andrew Hayes said Exercise Southern Cross provided an outstanding youth development opportunity to senior cadets.

"The exercise combines cultural visits, a two-day tour of the battlefields of Flanders and the Somme and an arduous two-week annual camp," Captain (AAC) Hayes said.

"The battlefield tour gave cadets an outstanding insight into the sacrifice and devotion to duty displayed by the original ANZACS, especially since this year marks the 100th anniversary of the battles at Pozieres and Fromelles.

"Following the cultural activities, the cadets travelled to Chickerell Camp in Weymouth on the south coast of England to work with cadets from the Surrey Army Cadet Force, on adventurous



Cadet Lance Corporal Jayden Butler on UK drill lesson.

activities including canoeing, abseiling, rifle shooting and a three-day field exercise."

CAPT (AAC) Hayes said apart from the opportunity to learn new skills, the exercise offers Cadets an outstanding opportunity to broaden their teamwork, leadership skills and initiative.

"This exchange program is one of the few that exists between Australian Army Cadets and the Army Cadet Force.

Planning has already started for the return visit to Australia by the Surrey Army Cadets in 2017," he said.

## WA FOE

Recognising more than seven decades of youth development service, the rare and ancient Freedom of Entry privilege was granted by the City of Greater Geraldton to No 711 Squadron of the Australian Air Force Cadets at a ceremony on Sunday 2 October 2016.

Freedom of Entry acknowledged the Air Force Cadets ongoing support for the City of Greater Geraldton, including the annual ANZAC Day parade and other ceremonial events, as well as its considerable service to young people.

711 Squadron were first awarded Freedom of Entry to Geraldton in 2013 on the grounds of outstanding support to youth development.

This year's formal request to enter the city was made at Edith Cowan Square on 2 October by Flight Lieutenant (AAFC) David Power, Commanding Officer of No. 711 Squadron.



An impressive 40 cadets and seven staff marched in the parade, including a detachment from 718FLT drum corps.

As part of the ceremony, cadets and staff were stopped on their march by Police Sergeant Peter Gerada, who in-keeping with tradition, requested they show their authority to enter the city.

Following the challenge, parade members formally saluted the citizens of Greater Geraldton.



## Bindoon Challenges Army

Australian Army Cadets from across Western Australia took part in the annual field exercise at Bindoon training area, north-east of Perth, from 24 September to 2 October 2016.

The annual youth development activity saw more than 700 cadets participate in a range of activities encompassing minor team sports, adventure training and non-combat related military skills aimed to develop abilities in leadership, navigation and teamwork.

Australian Army Cadets are encouraged to develop new skills and face new challenges that will help define them for the future.

Australian Army Cadets is a leading national youth development organisation with the character and values of the Australian Army, founded on strong community partnership, fostering and supporting an ongoing interest in the Army.



Photos by Leading Seaman Bradley Darvill



Above: Regional Cadet-Under-Officer Sam Elias enjoying the annual field exercise in Bindoon training area, north-east of Perth.



Left and top: Cadets complete challenging physical activities.

## SA flying experience

While an RAAF F/A-18 pilot flew high-speed passes over Mount Panorama for the start of this year's Bathurst 1000 V8 Supercar race, Air Force Cadets from 6 Wing (South Australia and Mildura) were doing their own flying over Parafield Airport north of Adelaide.

During the 6 Wing General Service Training Camp (GST) at RAAF Base Edinburgh in October, cadets from squadrons throughout SA got the opportunity to fly a pilot experience flight – or PEX.

In all, 38 cadets and three staff took the opportunity to fly a Tobago TB10, and were awarded certificates by service provider, Flight Training Adelaide.



Leading Cadet Princia Menezes, 601 Sqn (Keswick Bks) prepares for her flight.



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