

ISSUE 55

CONTACT

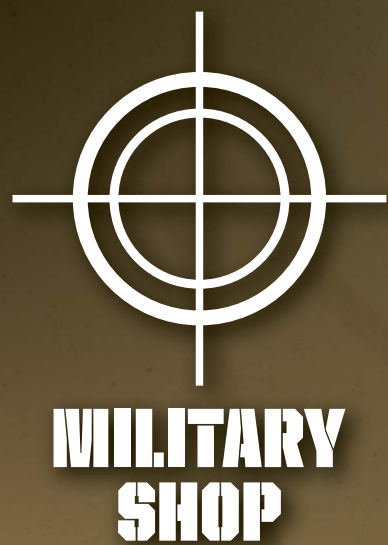
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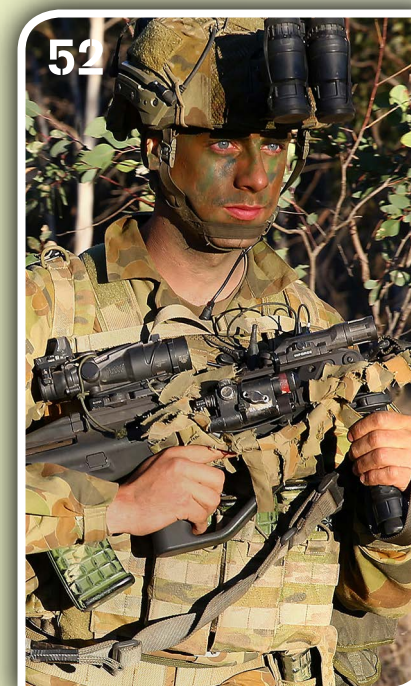
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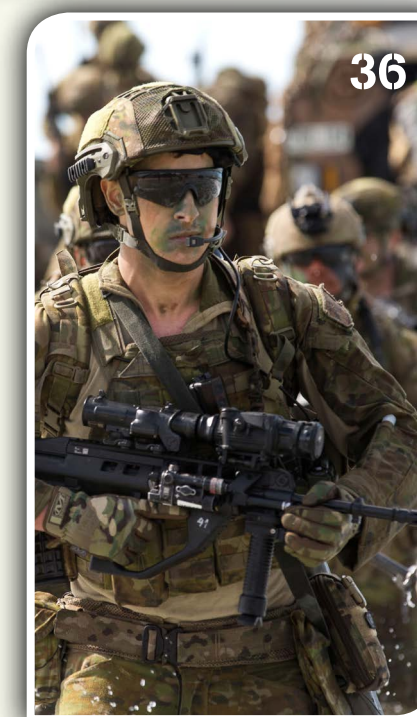
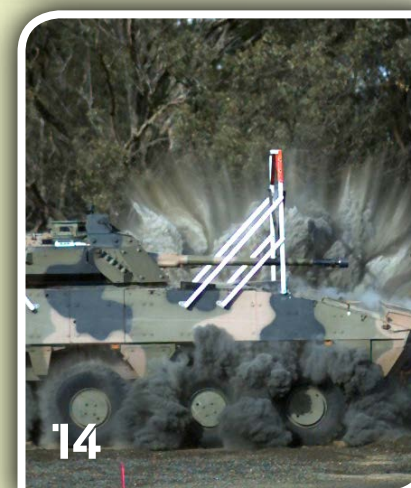
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Issue 55 – September 2017

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I'm writing this on 31 August, the day before publication – and four days after major surgery. I've had increasing back pain for maybe 15 years and it finally got so bad in recent weeks that I was literally unable to walk upright to the kitchen without having to rest when I got there.

I'm not looking for sympathy or anything. I'm telling you this because I recently drew strength and courage through thinking of our wounded soldiers, and finding renewed empathy for their pain.

I'm sure my pain wasn't nearly as horrific as getting my legs blown off – but, to me who had never experienced anything that bad, it was quite literally horrific.

Three weeks ago I was forced to lie on an MRI table for 90 minutes, in a position that couldn't have been better designed to aggravate my pain if they tried. I almost cried. I did shake and quiver, grunt and groan, and shed bucket loads of cold sweat. I even pressed the 'please stop' button once. I also refused to go back for a second scan before surgery.

But what got me through it, what forced me to grit teeth and bear the torture was thoughts of how much worse it must have been for some of our boys lying helpless and in pain on a foreign, hostile field, waiting for that chopper to come, with no 'please stop' button to press.

Their horror I can only imagine – but imagining it helped me get through my own recent torment.

That said, I am very happy to report that Monday's surgery was 100% successful in curing my back pain – so, once I've recovered from the surgical scars, I hope to get out and do a bit more field reporting – reporting such as I did, starting on page 20, with 1RAR.

That visit to 1RAR in June this year was only possible because of the warmth and hospitality of 1RAR, especially their new Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin McLennan, who knew of my health issues and accommodated my visit commensurately. Thanks also to my escort, Private Dan Cunington, whom I wrote about too.

That trip out bush also reminded me that there is no substitute for getting out there and reporting first hand from the field on the great work our Aussie soldiers, sailors and airmen are doing.

But it also reminded me that 'going bush' (especially the getting out there part) is time consuming and expensive. In fact, this whole magazine-publishing 'business' is expensive – and our advertisers, whom I thank wholeheartedly, only cover a small fraction of our costs.

To progress to new heights, **CONTACT** really needs a major sponsor or investor or buyer to inject new life into this ambitious project, which is frankly getting too big to be classed a 'cottage industry' anymore. Truthfully, **CONTACT** has to this point been a labour of love, a passion, a hobby. Now it needs to grow. But, an 'investment angel' or 'shark' is not what we need either. **CONTACT** is not a business in the true sense – it is an institution, an audience, a community – and needs a partner who has the vision to see its true potential and help us realise it.

The danger is that with my back nearly fixed and the temptations of 'a proper job' looming, I fear that **CONTACT** could be doomed unless that major sponsor steps forward to help us expand.

Sincerely,

Brian Hartigan
Managing Editor

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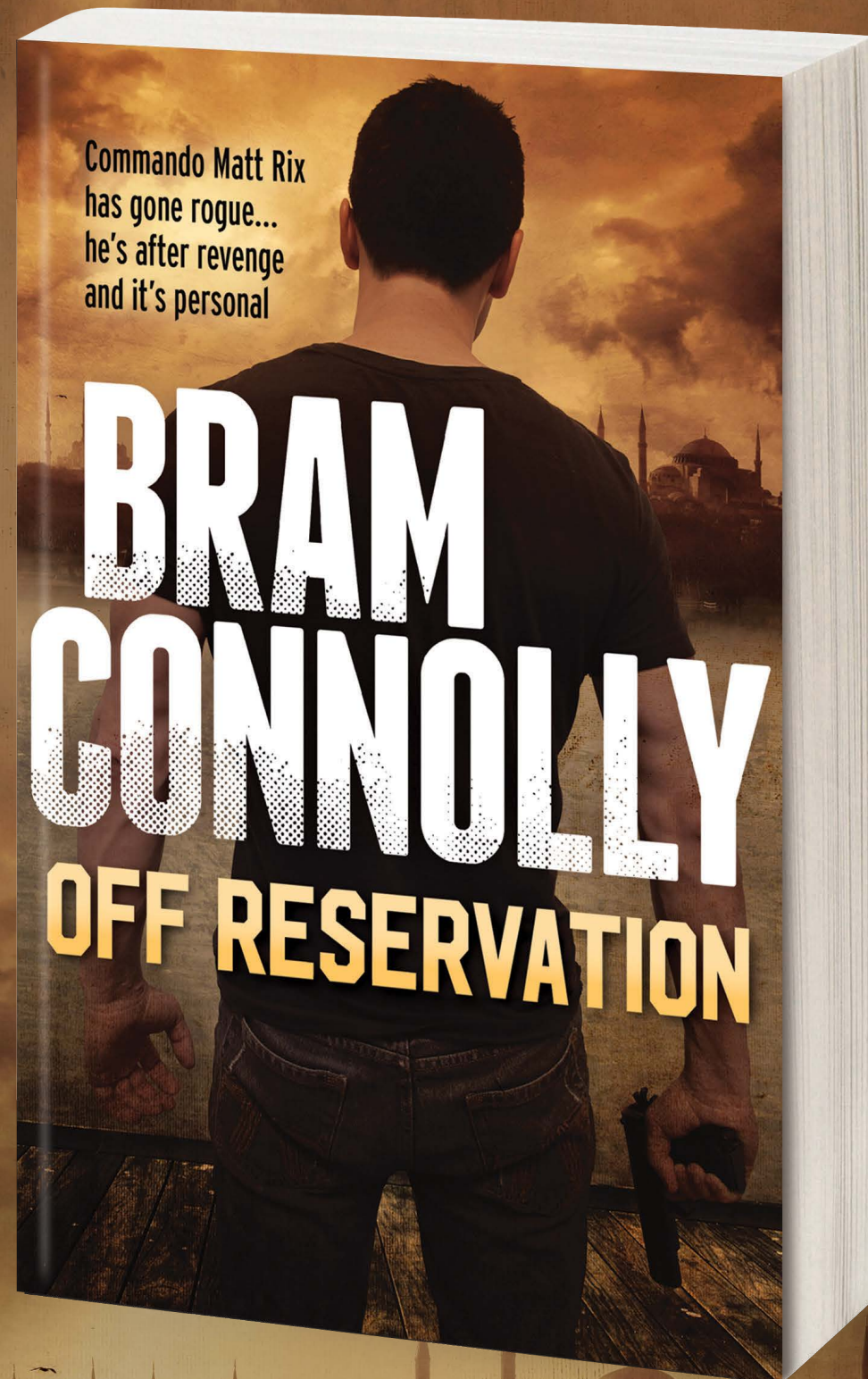
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Got something to say?
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INCOMING

RAPID FIRE

Wow this is really good!!

Jim O, via iPhone after seeing CONTACT 54

Thanks Jim. Pleased you liked it. Tell all your mates - subscribing is free, [here](#) - Ed.

I just wished that I had put all of my experiences down at least once a week. People love to read about things like that. Regards

Ross S, via email after reading [Ian Cavanough's](#) Vietnam stories on our web site

It's never too late Ross. And maybe the foggy memories could be entertaining in their own right - because they are foggy :-) Ed

A friend forwarded your newsletter to me and I found the content extremely interesting. I'm ex-Navy, Vietnam. If possible could you place me on your mailing list. Kind regards

Craig F, via email

Thanks for your feedback Craig. I have added you manually to our subscription list - and happy to do so for anyone else reading this - Ed

Sorry, can't get the subscription to complete my registration. I think our system is blocking it. Can I register please?

Geoff N, via Defence email

Hi Geoff. Yep, sorry about that - DRN does block Mailchimp emails. That said, you are actually already subscribed on our special Defence mailing list - hence why you got the email today. If I'm right in guessing you were actually after the two free ADF Weapons Guides that new subscribers get - you can find and download those free [here](#). Thank you for your interest - Ed.

Our Association recently changed their mail-out vehicle to "Mail Chimp". I have asked our committee for permission to mail out CONTACT's newsletter via Mail Chimp, and have got the OK. Do I have your approval? Cheers

Dick P, via email

Absolutely Dick - go for it. And thank you.

If any other individuals or organisations want to on-forward our newsletters or magazines to friends, colleagues or members, please feel free to do so without asking. And thank you too - Ed.

SPIES LIKE US

I don't know why a Chinese intelligence-gathering ship [spying on Talisman Sabre, as reported [here](#) on the CONTACT web site] is seen as such a big deal? This isn't a new or unique activity!

Since long before the Cold War and beyond, 'opposing forces' have been determining potential threats.

This information is collected by vessels of all Navies, along with aircraft of both sides, ground troops on borders plus satellites and radio stations 'observing' each other.

It's no different to the US and its allies routinely travelling through the international waters of the South China Sea observing Chinese activities.

During the Cold War, NATO aircraft 'tagged' Russian bombers in missions 'testing' reactions. The Russians did the same with USAF, RCAF and RAF aircraft flying off the Russian mainland in the Arctic Sea!

This may be surprising to 'The Great Unwashed' but it's

business as usual for our Defence Forces.

If the Chinese forces weren't there it would be much more surprising! Regards

Wayne J, via email

I absolutely agree Wayne. That's why I didn't give the story the 'beat-up' treatment that the mainstream media did - especially and disappointingly the ABC. That said, 'the great unwashed' do get hot under the collar about this stuff - and CONTACT gets lots of nice reader statistics from it - Ed.

I skimmed through your articles on my mobile as I am away from my computer.

I responded, knowing that you would be aware of intelligence gathering, more to defuse the uninformed. So much of today's media fits that mould - uninformed!

I enjoy reading CONTACT especially the articles about other parts of the ADF. I am affiliated with the RAAF. Regards.

Wayne J, email reply

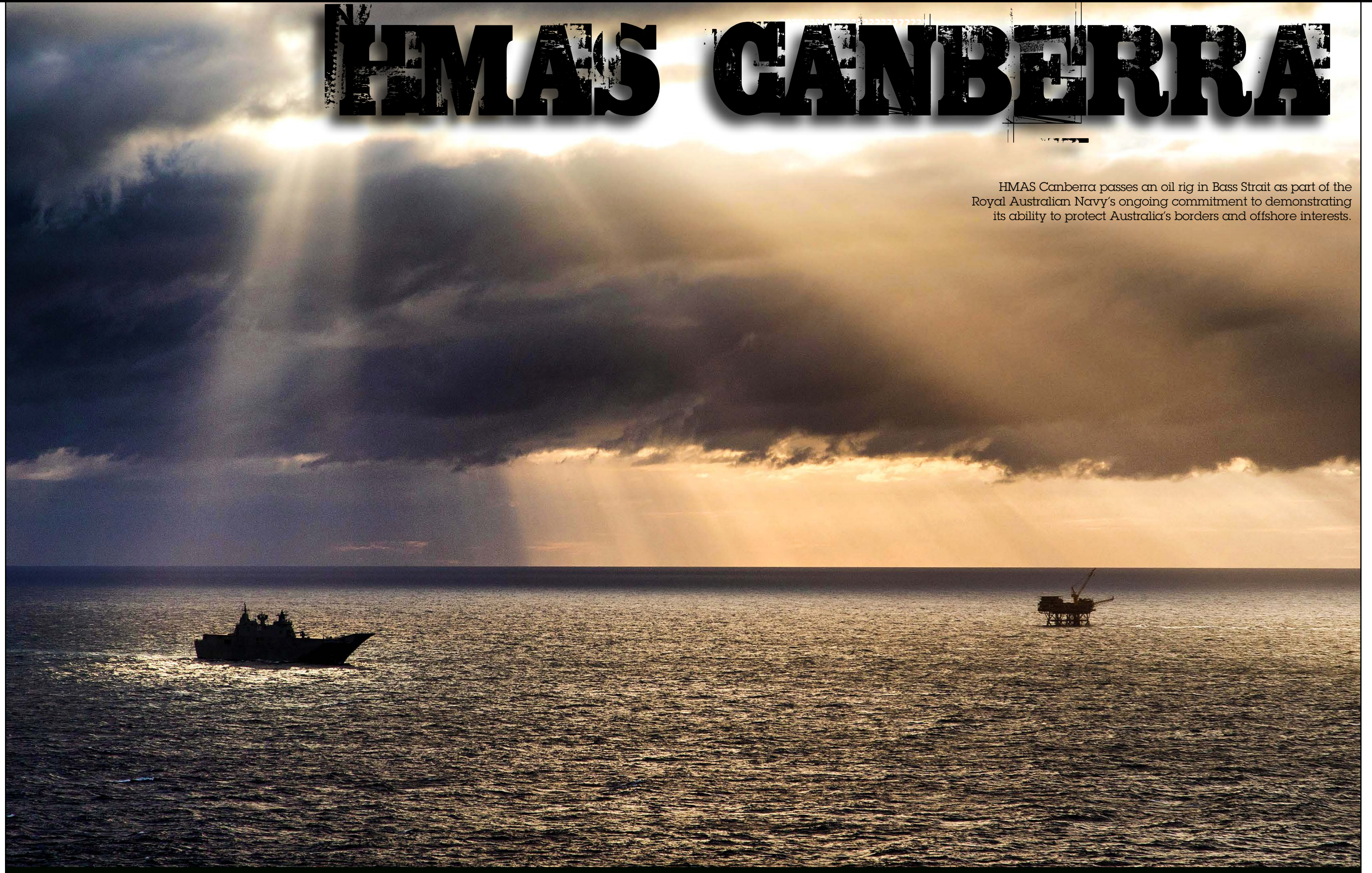
TARGETS UPI

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 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.

HMAS CANBERRA

HMAS Canberra passes an oil rig in Bass Strait as part of the Royal Australian Navy's ongoing commitment to demonstrating its ability to protect Australia's borders and offshore interests.





Testing to help select the Army's new Combat Reconnaissance Vehicle has finished on schedule. Minister for Defence Industry Christopher Pyne congratulated the two shortlisted contenders, Rheinmetall and BAE Systems Australia, for their involvement in the Risk Mitigation Activity (RMA). The test and evaluation program assessed the vehicles and their support systems across a wide range of criteria, with a particular focus on protection, lethality and mobility. Three phases of user evaluations were conducted by Australian soldiers at Puckapunyal in Victoria and the Mt Bunder Training Area in the Northern Territory – culminating with a blast test to measure crew and passenger survivability against land mines and improvised explosive devices. The final series of blast tests were recently completed on the two shortlisted contenders at the Proof and Experimental Establishment, Graytown, Victoria. To assess their survivability, Rheinmetall's Boxer (above) and BAE Systems Australia's AMV-35 (below), were exposed to simulated mine blasts. Blasts were centred under the wheels and under the belly of the vehicles, and represented a final 'trial by fire'. Defence will buy 225 of the winning vehicle, costing between \$4 and \$5 billion, with the winner to be announced in the first half of next year.

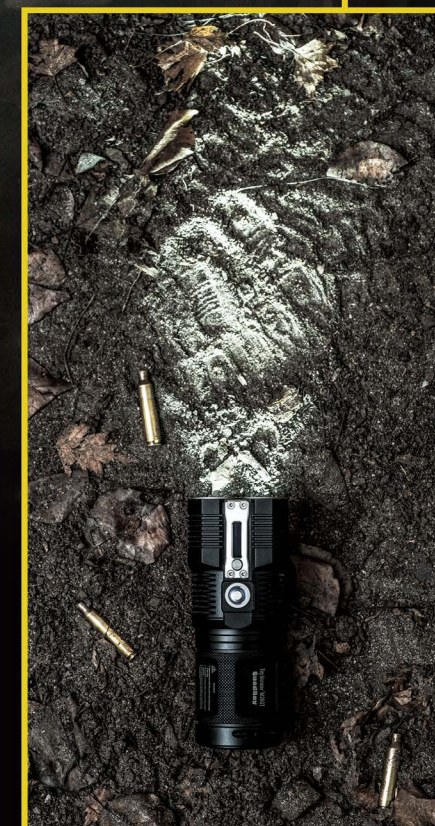


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Mobility Guardian brought more than 3000 personnel from 35 international units to Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, in August to exercise "every skillset in the United States Air Mobility Command".

AMC commander General Carlton Everhart said the ability to move national power to any location was key to the security of the United States.

"Simply put, success requires our total-force team of mobility airmen to work together with joint and international partners and exercising our capabilities together is critical so that when

we are called upon, we can deliver quickly and precisely."

1st Lieutenant Michael McCarthy, a Mobility Guardian planner, said they were trying to challenge mobility airmen to improve skillsets they may not have worked on recently or not experienced at all.

"Unlike the previous AMC Rodeo, which was a competition, Exercise Mobility Guardian is less about showcasing skills but rather creating a comprehensive, realistic and complex training environment," he said.

"This exercise is about developing new skills and

spreading knowledge among airmen as they work alongside their international partners.

"Throughout the exercise, teams will make observations and gather metrics that will be passed to leadership to develop an appropriate picture of capabilities, and compile lessons learnt for areas and units that need improvement."

RAAF participants from 86 Wing were supported by personnel from the Air Mobility Training and Development Unit as well as Army's 176 Air Dispatch Squadron.

SECOND WORLD WAR COMES TO AUSTRALIA

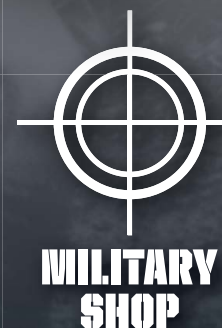
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YET, OVER THE PAST 75, 50 OR EVEN RECENT 15 YEARS SINCE I LEFT THE FULL-TIME ARMY, TECHNOLOGY AND POLITICS, EQUIPMENT AND SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS HAVE EVOLVED BEYOND THE IMAGINATION OF WHOMEVER IT WAS WHO PENNED THOSE WORDS

SO, IN 2017, DOES THE MODERN INFANTRY BATTALION LOOK ANYTHING LIKE THE BATTALIONS OF OLD?

CONTACT RECENTLY VISITED THE THE BIG BLUE ONE – THE 1ST BATTALION, ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT – TO FIND OUT...

The defined role of infantry implies that our 'foot soldiers' are the major combat element of the Army, demanding high standards of mental and physical toughness, esprit de corps, determination and warfighting skills from soldiers and officers alike.

As such, to say that infantry soldiers are fit is an understatement. In fact, outside the realm of 'special forces', there is surely no other collective group of that size who are fitter, tougher and more resilient than an infantry battalion [and I'll come back to size and makeup later].

When I visited 1RAR in June, they had just completed a week of warfighting exercises in High Range Training Area, north of Townsville, which saw the whole group walk/march/patrol more than 100km in the seven days before I got there, interspersed by periods of fighting in both open and urban terrain – followed by another 25km march that culminated in an energy-sapping, adrenalin-pumping, brigade-sized live-fire attack – with enough energy left over to smile and joke on the march off the battlefield.

So who are these people?

Young, for the most part – and smart.

Yes – there's the first big difference between today's infantry soldier and his predecessor.

While entry-level education officially remains at Year 10 minimum, most infantry soldiers today, I was told, have finished Year 12 in school and a sizable number already have university degrees, are studying for a degree while serving or go straight to university when they've done their minimum four-years service.

And there's another difference – infanteering for four years is more and more commonly seen as a 'gap adventure' than a long-term career for young men and women, with only those who achieve promotion in their minimum four years tending to stick around.

And, yes – I did say women.

1RAR currently has seven female riflemen and two female platoon commanders.

But that's not a big deal in 1RAR. Truly.

Commanding Officer 1RAR Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin McLennan said the female infantry soldiers and officers in 1RAR achieved the same physical and mental requirements during basic infantry training as their male colleagues and they are required to maintain



A POTTED HISTORY

The 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment – 1RAR – was officially raised on 12 October 1945 – though at that time it was known as the 65th Battalion of the 34th Australian Infantry Brigade, drawn from elements of 7th Division.

The new battalion's first assignment was to post-war Japan where it guarded the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, among other places, conducted training and played a lot of sport.

In November 1948, the 65th Battalion sailed for Sydney and moved into lines at Ingleburn, where, within weeks, it was redesignated 1st Battalion, Australian Regiment, with Royal assent granted in January 1949.

It wasn't long before the new battalion earned its first battle honours and suffered its first casualties, in Korea in 1952-53, with 34 members killed and 107 wounded.

On return to Australia, the battalion was housed at Enoggera.

1RAR again deployed to Korea in 1954 but, with the war over, the battalion spent its time improving defensive lines and camps, training, parades and sport, before returning to Brisbane in April 1956.

Following a frustrating 18-month campaign in Malaya from November 1959 to October 1961, 1RAR moved to Holsworthy in Sydney and expanded its strength to around 1300 members in a short-lived experiment that saw infantry, artillery, armour, engineers, aviation and logistics brought together under infantry command.

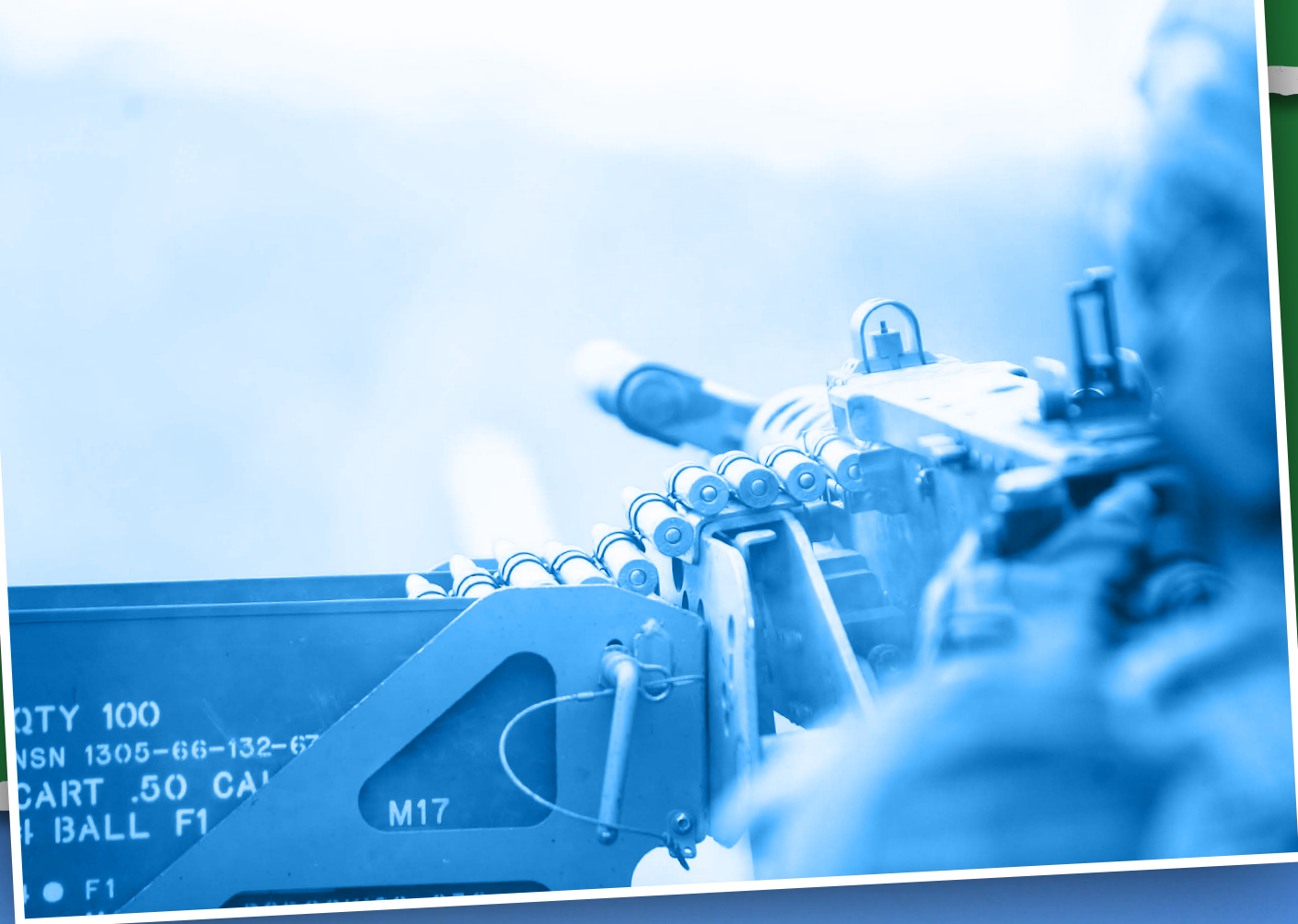
This early combined-arms battle group experiment was abandoned in 1965 and the over-sized 1RAR was split to spawn 5RAR.

Vietnam followed with 1RAR again bloodied in 1965-66 – losing 23 KIA and 130 wounded – and again in 1968-69 – with 31 KIA and 165 WIA.

Shortly after Vietnam the battalion moved to Townsville, where it remains today, and operations in Somalia (1993) and East Timor (2000-01 and 2003) followed.

Since 2003, 1RAR has also deployed many members to Iraq, Afghanistan, East Timor, Solomon Islands and Tonga.





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the same expert skills and fitness as all infantry soldiers and officers in 1RAR.

"I do not perceive them as female infantry soldiers and officers; I view them as infantry soldiers and officers – and, based on their performance in 1RAR, very competent and professional ones," Lieutenant Colonel McLennan said.

And my observations on the ground bear this out, with male and female soldiers sitting around the same brew point, hanging the same shit on each other without fear, favour or ill will.

And, in private conversation, I could draw no male soldier into saying a single bad word about the females in their ranks.

And that was about all that was said or could be drawn on the subject of females in infantry – it was a non-issue – it is now a fact of life.

1RAR is also a shining example of another major and key difference between an infantry battalion past and the infantry battalion of today – technology.

You may remember CONTACT's series on 'New Military Equipment' that started in issue 47, September 2015, authored in part by Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin McLennan who was then a senior officer in Defence equipment procurement – and is now the commanding officer of 1RAR, which is now using the new equipment in the field.

"It was very satisfying to play a part in developing and introducing the significant enhancement in close-combat capability offered by our Army's new equipment," Lieutenant Colonel McLennan said.

"In my view, this equipment has substantially increased the lethality, survivability, mobility, sustainability and situational awareness of our infantry, and all-corps soldiers, officers, teams.

"Indeed, following the rollout of EF-88 and its state-of-the-art ancillaries, Light Weight Automatic Grenade Launcher, Soldier Combat Ensemble, Australian Multi-Cam Uniform and enhanced night-fighting equipment, I can say with confidence that we are the best-equipped Army in the world today.

"Furthermore, I can say with a sense of confidence that our new equipment has the potential to evolutionise how we train and fight such that we can achieve a decisive combat advantage over any adversary.

"The transformation in a few short years has been profound.

"And, with four major projects valued at well over \$2billion in the pipeline, we are well poised to maintain our decisive combat advantage, enabled by our leading edge in equipment, into the future."

Now, some of you might be thinking, 'well of course he's going to say that – but what do the soldiers think?'



Having been there and spoken to many of them in the field, I can categorically say that the guys with their hands grasped around the trigger guards, their focus fixed through night-vision goggles and their feet sore from all that walking, wholeheartedly agree with their commanding officer – though they express their enthusiasm for the equipment slightly differently.

I met a warrant officer I've known for years, during an admin break at Line Creek Junction, Townsville's impressive urban-operations village and, after 'long-time-no-see' banter, I asked this shooting-guru mate if the new EF-88 was as good as the brochures and hype say it is.

Instantly, his eyes lit up. Not only was this a topic he was enthused about, but this was a weapon he was more than willing to fawn over.

"Man, this is bloody brilliant – check this out..." and proceeded to talk me through, almost breathlessly, all the features he knew I'd appreciate – the scope with its 'proper' range markings and its selectable 1x and 4x zoom ("unlike that stupid doughnut idea we used to have to work around" – highlighting how much things have changed in the short 15 years I've been out) – the foregrip with built-in bipod – the bolt-release catch next to the magazine (which

he thought was brilliant) – the Picatinny rails with so much room for accessories.

As we spoke, we were standing close to where a CO's orders group had just finished, so my warrant officer friend took the opportunity to highlight several weapons that were accessorised different to his – scopes set further forward for customised eye relief, laser aiming devices in different placements, laser range finders, torches, night-vision scopes and thermal-imaging scopes.

Some rifles were also painted in various patterns while some remained the standard matt black. The variety and customisation seemed endless.

Then, just in case I wasn't taking his word for how good the gear was, my warrant officer friend enlisted support from a nearby captain.

Equipment? Eyes light up!

"For me the best bit of kit is the night-vision goggles," he enthused.

"These things are bloody awesome.

"We even have depth perception with these new ones – so much so, I'd have no hesitation sprinting from here to there in the dark and vaulting that fence on the way.

"In moonlight with these things it's like operating at noon on a sunny day – you can see everything – even in the shadows.

"We absolutely own the night right now like never before."

This was bourn out when I later spoke to a soldier who had played enemy the night before, when he told me, "It was totally disconcerting to see how fast IRAR came down on us last night – no hesitation, no feeling for their steps in the dark – it was just like a daylight assault. It was surreal, even scary".

I spoke to other soldiers about their equipment, out of earshot of any officers, giving them the opportunity to 'bag the shit', or whinge about this or that, as Aussie soldiers are infamously known to do.

Not one of them did.

The closest I came was when one soldier said the side-hinged kidney rests on his plastic fieldpack carrier had broken at the lower joint, twice – but this was acknowledged as an initial

design flaw that has since been rectified and replacements made.

Other than that, every soldier reflected the reaction of my warrant officer friend when I asked about equipment – eyes lit up, followed by an enthusiastic rant on their favourite piece – which, most often, started with night vision, closely followed by their rifle.

And, ranting about an awesome rifle is surely the biggest difference between the infantryman today versus almost any-era predecessor.

There was one other time I thought I might get some diggers to have a whinge.

I lobbed into a section harbour in the middle of chow and chinwag and asked for four volunteers to participate in a setup urban assault for a video – with full kit and cam cream etc etc.



Some soldiers told CONTACT they were more accurate at night, thanks to the laser aiming device.

Photo digitally altered to remove distracting background and add the laser beam, which is usually only visible in dust, smoke or mist.



The lights in this photo were red, not white. Red looks poxy in a colour photo, but turns to white in black-and-white.



As expected, there was no enthusiasm – so the seccos were forced to voluntold four blokes to kit up.

The scenario I wanted to set up included another new piece of kit I had been told about – Throwbots – small, plastic, wheeled robots you can literally throw through a door or a window to see what's inside a building before you enter.

To add to the potential for whinging, none of my four voluntolds had even heard of a throwbot, much less thrown or operated one. They didn't even know that their platoon sergeant had been issued with one.

Anyway, we not-so-merry few trudged from the company harbour in the long speargrass, up the road to Line Creek Junction and found a building not being used – and out of eye-line of anyone who might laugh at the boys.

The voluntolds discuss how they might employ the unfamiliar throwbot – and then I tell them the 'best bit' of my requirements.

"Because [this is for video](#) and because I'll want several different angles, you'll have to run through the scenario several times!" I said, fearing the consequences.

And so we spent the next hour or so of what should have been chow time assaulting one little room more than a dozen times.

"Cut. That's a wrap. I've always wanted to say that," I said, hoping my humour would not be mistaken for sarcasm and hoping I wouldn't be lynched.

Their actual reaction was a little surprising – "AAW! Maybe we can do it a couple more times in a different room to see what else this thing can do."

And that's where I left them – enthusiastic, professional, self-teaching.

On my final night out bush in High Range, where I felt completely at home thanks to familiar territory and the warmth of 1RAR's hospitality, I slept in my ex-RAEME, semi-comfy swag on a hilltop overlooking a magnificent, picturesque and serenely quiet valley – while 1RAR and a formidable combined-arms combat brigade crept ever closer through the darkness, unseen but all seeing.

In the morning, another long stomp and the lessons of all recent training culminated in a brigade-sized live-fire attack, with all the new equipment, weapons and brigade assets – and a shit-tonne of ammunition, which saw 'total annihilation' brought down on a hapless enemy.

I've seen live-fire attacks before, but never this close – or this big.

M1 Abrams main battle tanks, M113AS4 armoured personnel carriers, M777 155mm medium guns, 84mm Carl Gustav anti-armour, tripod-mounted .50cal machine guns and 40mm grenade launchers (automatic machine-gun-type and under-barrel single-shot from soldiers' rifles) and literally hundreds of EF-88s, fighting together, orchestrated in a combined-arms team.

The pace, noise and percussion sent adrenaline coursing through my veins – and I was only observing!

There's just no way I can convey the awesomeness of this attack in words – so luckily I had a [video camera](#) rolling!

SIZE AND MAKEUP

Getting back to the size and makeup of Australia's infantry battalions – I might just lay out the facts and figures as Lieutenant Colonel McLennan explain them to me.

"The evolution we are going through right now is, in fact, an enhancement on the revolutionary change to Army we achieved through Plan Beersheba.

"In essence, Plan Beersheba established a unified, consistent force-generation cycle and created 'like' combat brigades – noting the ACR in 7 Brigade won't be complete until around 2018.

"It also forged a much closer relationship between the ARA and GRes reinforcing battlegroups, where the ARA and GRes infantry work more closely than ever before.

"It enabled all soldiers and officers in each combat brigade to share similar combined-arms training and experiences.

"It centralised the command-and-control of Army's specialist logistics (17 Bde), aviation (16 Bde) and engineering/joint fires/intelligence (6 Bde).

"It changed Army's 'unit of action' from the battle/battalion group to the 'combat brigade'.

"Finally, it reintroduced a conventional warfighting, combined-arms focus to Army."

Lieutenant Colonel McLennan said that, going forward, infantry as a corps would see significant further changes to reflect the new realities post Plan Beersheba, with the individual battalions evolving thus...

a. From October this year, 2RAR will transition to a specialist infantry unit responsible for training high-calibre pre-landing forces for amphibious operations. They will not have

rifle companies; yet they will retain security and support-company capabilities. They will also be the only infantry unit with specialist small-boat platoons.

- b. From October 2017, the infantry ground-combat element (GCE) of the amphibious ready element (ARE) landing force will be provided by the ready battlegroup (RBG). The RBG GCE will be certified 'amphibious competent' before assuming 'ready' responsibilities.
- c. By January 2018, 5RAR and 8/9RAR will be equipped with a fleet of organic Bushmaster PMVs, and 6RAR and 7RAR will be equipped with a fleet of organic M113AS4 APCs.
- d. By January 2019, 1RAR will be equipped with a fleet of organic PMVs and 3RAR will be equipped with a fleet of organic APCs – which means that by January 2019, each combat brigade will have one infantry battalion with organic PMVs and one with organic APCs.
- e. From mid to late 2018, the battalions with organic PMVs will also begin to receive Hawkei PMV-L.
- f. The APC-enabled battalions will receive the eventual LAND 400 Phase 3 infantry fighting vehicle.
- g. As the battalions transition, surveillance sections will be reinvested to create larger and more reconnaissance patrols.
- h. DFSW platoons will be renamed anti-armour platoons.

TRANSITION

Lieutenant Colonel McLennan said RAINf's transition was an exciting, dynamic event which would see significant second- and third-order changes to training, equipment and facilities.

"I think it is also important to note that the role of the infantry – 'to seek out and close with the enemy, to kill or capture him, to seize and hold ground and to repel attack by day or night, regardless of season, weather or terrain' – is enduring.

"While it is likely the APC-enabled battalions will routinely command, fight from or with their vehicles, the PMV-enabled battalions will not – they will employ their vehicles to 'close with' their objectives in a protected platform.

"As such, the PMV- and APC-enabled battalions will not be classified 'motorised' or 'mechanised'.

"It's also important to note that all battalions – except 2RAR – will continue to rotate through RBG (ready battlegroup) and operational duties in accordance with the combat brigade force-generation cycle and that a rifle company from the RBG will force-generate to meet ARE GCE (amphibious ready element, ground-combat element) responsibilities.

"All battalions, irrespective of their organic vehicle platform, must maintain expertise in dismounted, airmobile and combined-arms TTPs (tactics, techniques and procedures) and skills."

Yet even these are still evolving.

Lima 'Lucky' Company, 3rd/4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, were embedded in 1RAR for much of the Marine Rotational Force – Darwin's 2017 rotation.



MY ESCORT

I was assigned a driver/escort for my visit to High Range.

Private Dan met me at Range Control in the CO's Landcruiser, which was 'mine' for the next four days. And damn handy it was too, with cigarette lighter to keep my laptop and multiple battery sets charged.

It was hard to tell how old Dan was under all the cam cream, helmet, body armour and chest webbing (another big difference between today's soldiers and yesteryear's) – but, safe to say, he was at least half my age.

Dan eventually told me he used to be a chippie in civvie street before joining the army, which he did because it was pretty hard to find a job that paid well as a chippie.

"My old man and uncle were in 6RAR and reckoned it was an alright job, so I thought I'd give it a go," Dan said, well into our second day together, after I finally convinced him to stop calling me sir.

"And this job is pretty cruisy.

"Sure we work damn hard with all the walking and stuff when we're out here, but aside from that, you're always hanging out with good mates, having a laugh – especially back in base."

Dan's been in infantry for two years, yet still considers himself a 'lid' or newbie, and doesn't expect that to change any time soon.

"We're always learning new stuff."

Dan is very keen to be sent on a deployment – any deployment – but would prefer if it was 'outside the wire' in a 'full-on'

sort of role as opposed to mentoring or the like. He had no delusions about the risks, however.

"I've been 'shot' a couple of times in training, which really brought it home how easily that could happen in the real thing.

"But we'd all rather play for the first-grade team than the B team – but then again, getting picked for any game is better than staying in the training squad the whole time."

I asked Dan about his equipment.

Eyes lit up.

Dan likes his rifle. His only 'complaint' was to wonder how he'd go removing his custom cam paint for a ceremonial parade.

He loved the new helmet too – lightweight and with Picatinny rails on the sides – "way better than the older style, which the Marines are still wearing".

He also loved the new night-vision goggles – light weight, adjustable brightness, brilliant for driving and no flare from bright lights or flashes. He said he could easily run with them and they didn't flop around on his head.

"On a bright night, you can lower the brightness of the NVGs to nearly match the real light, to maintain your night vision and have some extra peripheral awareness out the sides, if you want."

Dan confessed he had never heard of CONTACT magazine.

We didn't speak after that.

...just kidding



Private Dan Cunington and CO 1RAR Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin McLennan at the culmination of a major live-fire assault – and a very long week of intensive training.



EVOLVING TTPs

1RAR has developed and continues to adapt several new philosophies and initiatives that might just raise a few eyebrows in the 'back-in-my-day' brigade.

'Fight light' is a simple yet profound change to the way a typical infantry battalion used to operate (and many still do).

WWI British General John Fuller, who was also a prolific writer on the art of war, said, "The soldier cannot be a fighter and a pack animal at one and the same time, any more than a field piece can be a gun and a supply vehicle combined. The idea is wrong at the start. Yet it is always being repeated."

1RAR is attempting to break that repetitive mould with its 'fight light' philosophy that sees soldiers carrying only the equipment required for the foreseeable future or impending mission and as can be supported by trusted, trained and empowered organic logistic systems.

What does that really mean?

As one soldier told me, "We sometimes march all night, but with no packs and no back armour plates, which will be waiting for us at the form-up point about 6km from the objective".

"We did that the other night and we got to the form-up point ages ahead of the Marines – and when they eventually came in, bending over under the weight of everything they own, there was some load of cursing going on," he said.

"It makes sense. We only carry enough food and water and equipment that we might need on the march and everything else is waiting for us to bomb up before the big attack."

Lieutenant Colonel McLennan said it was a simple and sensible concept, but far from simple in execution.

"Attempting to minimise the soldier's load is not a new endeavour.

"But, while improvements in equipment have reduced the weight of individual items, soldiers have been carrying more and more items of equipment, negating the weight savings.

"So, what we're doing with 'fight light' is taking the load off their backs and only asking them to carry what they actually need for the task at hand.

"We have broken equipment down to 'mandatory equipment', which is always

carried unless specifically ordered otherwise; 'on-order' which is not carried unless specifically ordered and which is held in A1 or A2 echelons until 'called forward'; and, 'ready equipment', which is maintained in ready condition but held in storage.

"This all relies heavily on individual and collective discipline, constantly seeking ways to improve equipment carriage and layout, highly trained fighting and logistics echelons and a high level of trust and mutual understanding between the fighting and the logistic echelons."

Lieutenant Colonel McLennan said a lot of 1RAR's new thinking came down to science.

"Scientist, author and communicator Carl Sagan said 'we live in a society exquisitely dependent on science and technology, in which hardly anyone knows anything about science and technology'.

"Well, the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, has taken Sagan's observation further with the mantra 'we ignore the science underpinning our profession at our peril'.

"Our focus on the science underpinning infantry tactics, techniques and procedures has manifested in professional-development programs that have focused and continue to focus on the science of load carriage, the science of ballistics and terminal effects, the science of signature management, the science of how people learn best, and, the science of creating tactical athletes.

"In each of these areas, 1RAR is taking advantage of the work undertaken by Defence scientists and experts.

"We are not seeking to create scientists, or pseudo scientists in 1RAR.

"Rather, we are seeking to understand as much as we can about our profession, enabling us to fight smarter, not just harder, than the enemy.

"Fundamentally, we are seeking to think deeply about our profession at the tactical level, using this knowledge to be better than any adversary.

"In my mind, this is what professionals do, in any discipline or field – seeking to be better – seeking to be the best – and not being constrained by our past."



Flexibility is a key characteristic of successful modern infantry forces. A global shift is taking place towards asymmetric and intra-state warfare, and troops are much more likely to deploy in urban or complex combat environments, for full-scale conflict, or for anti-insurgency or peacekeeping operations.

In situations like this, it's both strategically, logistically and politically unfeasible to rely upon heavy support. Infantry must be able to quickly and efficiently respond to any threats they encounter – their lives often depend on it.

Swedish defence and security company Saab has been working on a new version of its highly successful and much favoured multi-role weapon system – the Carl-Gustaf M4 (CGM4).

The Carl-Gustaf system has been and remains a heavy-hitting solution to the challenges faced by ground forces. By supporting a range of ammunition types, Carl-Gustaf allows dismounted soldiers to deal with multiple challenges – from neutralising tanks or enemy troops in defile to clearing obstacles and engaging enemies in buildings.

Since the introduction of the M1 models in 1948, the Carl-Gustaf is one of the most reliable and battle-proven weapon systems on the battlefield, used by more than 40 countries – and continuous evolution is one of the prime reasons it remains so effective.

Carl-Gustaf M4 is the latest addition to this long history. Building on the system's already notable flexibility, it offers a higher degree of accuracy, lighter construction and compatibility with future innovations.

Markus Mellquist, head of marketing and sales for Saab's Ground Combat business unit, said weight considerations influenced the company's thinking with the new CGM4.

"One of the main drivers of the M4's innovations is the immense burden today's soldiers face," Mr Mellquist said.

"They need to carry radios, batteries, assault weapons, backpacks and water systems – so any weight we can shave off is going to make a huge difference.

"The CGM4 weighs less than 7kg, making it substantially lighter than its predecessors – the

M2 weighed 14.2kg and the current M3 – in service with the Australian Army – weighs 10kg.

"This reduction in weight was achieved by switching steel components to titanium and improving the carbon-fibre wrapping.

"Each external component has also been carefully examined and redesigned to reduce weight.

"The new design is also shorter, at less than 1m, meaning it's easy to carry and handle in tactical situations.

"The new model can also be safely carried while loaded, enabling users to react faster to threats and tactically relocate when required.

"New rounds, such as the HEAT 655 CS, also allows CGM4 to be fired from confined spaces, such as from inside buildings.

"CGM4 is therefore fully optimised for dismounted soldiers who need a light-weight, high-impact weapon."

Carl-Gustaf M4 also offers the soldier combat flexibility through a unique range of ammunition, including anti-armour, anti-structure, multi-role, anti-personnel and support rounds.

The system is also compatible with a number of sight options including red-dot sights and intelligent sights in addition to the standard telescopic and open sights, allowing further flexibility.

Mr Mellquist said using intelligent sighting systems allowed for instant analysis of situational data, letting the user, in effect, program ammunition to achieve its desired effect.

"This synergy between the round, the system and the individual is one of the next decisive strategic steps forward-thinking militaries could take."

SAAB INTRODUCES THE NEW CARL-GUSTAF M4



It's just another day in the life of a soldier



Exercise Talisman Sabre 2017 (TS17), from late June through most of July, was the seventh time this biennial combined Australian and United States training activity has been conducted.

TS17 was designed to train respective military forces in planning and conducting combined-task-force operations to improve the combat readiness and interoperability between the allies.

The exercise was a major undertaking that involved more than 30,000 Australian, US, New Zealand and Japanese defence personnel, with several other countries observing, focused on the planning and conduct of mid-intensity high-end warfighting.

About 36 warships and 220 aircraft were involved in the month-long exercise – the largest and most complex in the series so far.

TS17 combined a command-post exercise, which incorporated simulated forces and scenarios, with a field-training exercise that saw manoeuvring of large forces in various exercise areas.

TS17 incorporated force-preparation activities, special-forces activities, amphibious landings, parachuting, land-force manoeuvre, urban operations, air operations, maritime operations and the coordinated firing of live ammunition and explosive ordnance from small arms, artillery, naval vessels and aircraft.

The majority of TS17 action took place in Shoalwater Bay Training Area, near Rockhampton on the central-Queensland coast, as well as in the Mount Bundy Training Area, south of Darwin in the Northern Territory, and in seas north and east of Australia.

Personnel and assets also operated from Darwin, Townsville, Brisbane and Canberra as well as from Hawaii, Indiana, Virginia, Colorado and Washington in the USA.

THE BEST LAID PLANS ARE MADE UNDER CAMS

By Captain Anna-Lise Brink

While diggers fought on the front line of Exercise Talisman Sabre, their mission was planned, synchronised and coordinated under cam nets at the 3 Brigade Forward Headquarters at various locations in the Shoalwater Bay Training Area, where the pressure was intense for Australian, US and New Zealand officers and soldiers to make an effective battle plan.

Good decisions at this point were crucial, as New Zealand Army Captain Dale Pyle observed.

"If you don't have good product at this end, then that will result in potentially a bad plan on the front line where it counts the most," he said.

"The more we can get it right here – the more effort we put into it – makes everyone else's life easier down the road."

Once the plan was formed and orders delivered, an around-the-clock team of intelligence, joint fires and effects, tactical air control parties and signals staff coordinated and monitored the battle space, acting on information coming from the field.

US Army Captain Herbert Jockheck said the headquarters experience was frantic at times.

"It's always a challenge to stay up to date with all the reports coming in and integrating those with future plans," he said.

"At times it can be stressful and a bit confusing, but it's definitely fun and more rewarding than it looks from the outside."

Command had to coordinate 11 headquarters and 27 sub-units across 3 Brigade, the US Army, US Marines and the NZ Army.

But 3 Brigade Commander Brigadier Chris Field said it meant they had the joint and combined combat power to achieve their mission.

"Teamwork meant we could learn from each other, but also in an exercise context, advance and close with the enemy in a manner that demonstrated the power of coalition warfighting," Brigadier Field said.

For 3 Brigade, the Exercise Hamel sub-component of Talisman Sabre was important as it was the final hurdle for the brigade's 'ready' certification.

"We've been training for our certification for more than 18 months, so it was a great privilege to see our soldiers step up when we needed their best efforts," Brigadier Field said.

"We needed junior officers and senior NCOs, who will be tomorrow's leaders of the Army, to experience combined-arms planning and warfighting."

"Warfighting is difficult to perfect, so, on each exercise, we seek to improve our systems, our interoperability and ourselves."





BATTLE GROUP CORAL ROAD TO READY

By Corporal Mark Doran

Battle Group Coral's 'road to ready' concluded on Exercise Talisman Sabre when, over six days, it inserted by RAAF C-130 and C17 into the area of operations.

It supported the certification of the Amphibious Ready Element by providing one of the three infantry combat teams comprising the Amphibious Task Group for "D Day" and provided a combat team for 3 Brigade.

As a light-infantry, combined-arms, digitised battle group, augmented by more than 200 marines of L Coy, 3/4 Marine Regt, BG Coral was tasked to conduct numerous offensive and defensive actions, primarily by night, in terrain and vegetation not conducive to armoured or protected-vehicle movement.

CO 1RAR Lieutenant Colonel Ben McLennan said Commander 3 Brigade tasked a battle group that could find, fix and finish the enemy – achieving surprise and concentration of force via joint and coalition fires.

"The enemy commander said they never worked out where BG Coral was," Lieutenant Colonel McLennan said.

"One of the most encouraging aspects of Talisman Sabre was the advanced close-combat skills and behaviours exhibited by the members of the battle group.

"Our men and women are tough and iron-hard, mentally and physically.

"At all stages, the soldiers and officers of the battle group had their eyes up, on target, hands on their weapons and ready.

"I attribute this to Forces Command's emerging combative and combat-shooting training focus."

Another highlight of Talisman Sabre for CO 1RAR was the effectiveness of digitisation

down to combat-team level.

"It's essential if you want to think and act faster than the enemy, which is key to mission success," he said.

"I think the next step is to digitise down to the individual combatant.

"This will be a giant leap forward for the situational awareness and the command and control of all command echelons from divisional to platoon."

Lieutenant Colonel McLennan said another highlight of the exercise was the seamless integration with coalition forces.

"The Kiwis, US, Canadians, British and Japanese brought a richness to the activity and significantly enhanced the performance of all involved," he said.

"Such integration is essential as there is an uncanny trend of us finding ourselves operating and fighting alongside our coalition partners at short notice."

Lieutenant Colonel McLennan said the combined-arms integration achieved in a light battle group was potent.

"Our joint fires teams, engineers, aviators, medical personnel and logisticians transformed the battle group into a formidable fighting force"

He said the final encouraging aspect of the exercise was the superior quality of close-combat equipment each soldier was provided, making 1RAR the best-equipped soldiers in the world.

"Our new weaponry, sights, night-fighting equipment, uniforms, load carriage and body armour allows us to outperform and outlast anyone.

"It's giving us a competitive edge over all adversaries – by day and night."



AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST EVER AVIATION BATTLE GROUP

By Lieutenant Sarah West

More than 500 personnel and 29 helicopters supported the ground-warfare mission during Exercise Talisman Sabre, in the largest ever Australian-led aviation battle group – BG Pegasus.

The conduct of rotary-wing combat missions and air support was a fully integrated international affair, with the responsibility shared by Australia's 1st and 5th Aviation Regiments, the Royal New Zealand Air Force's 3 Squadron and US Army's Aviation Task Force Diamond Head, all serving together in an Australian-led battle group commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Kim Gilfillan of 5 Aviation Regiment.

Deputy Commander of BG Pegasus Lieutenant Colonel Elizabeth Martin, who usually commands the US Army's

2-25 Avn Regt (an assault helicopter battalion of 25th Infantry Division), said watching the members of the international team working together was rewarding.

"Lieutenant Colonel Gilfillan and his team were instrumental in setting the foundation and structure for this multinational battle group," Lieutenant Colonel Martin said.

"The integration of our aviation capabilities to affect the ground force in a challenging fight as a truly combined battle group, was impressive.

"Seeing the pilots, crewmembers, refuellers and staff learning so much from each other – representing their individual countries in unified support of a common mission – was a significant achievement.

"This integration has been reflected at all levels within the battle group, with a fully integrated and combined aviation command and all three countries planning, briefing and flying missions together.

"It has been an incredible experience."

BG Pegasus was a notably diverse battle group, which was reflected not only in the demographics of its workforce, but also in its capabilities – with a broad range of aircraft including ARH Tiger and AH-64D Apache Longbow attack helicopters, NH-90, MRH-90 Taipan, CH-47F Chinook and UH-60M Black Hawk utility helicopters, and HH-60M Black Hawk medical evacuation helicopters – as well as Shadow and Grey Eagle remotely piloted aerial systems.



BY THE NUMBERS

24 medevacs

51 missions

700 sorties

1140 flight hours

1940 soldiers carried into combat

120-person 100nm night-flight over water

469,119kg of freight and equipment moved

590,353 litres of aviation turbine fuel used

US aircraft

4 x AH-64D Apache

6 x UH-60M Black Hawk

3 x HH-60 Black Hawk medivac

3 x Gray Eagle drones

4 x Shadow drones

Australian Army aircraft

3 x CH-47F

5 x MRH-90

6 x ARH

RNZAF aircraft

2 x NH-90



AMPHIBIOUS LODGEMENT LAST HURRAH FOR 2RAR

By Corporal Mark Doran

Exercise Talisman Sabre was action-packed for the members of Battle Group Samichon as they demonstrated Australia's world-class amphibious capability.

Contributing a large part of the pre-landing force and acting as the ground combat element of the Australian Amphibious Force, the battle group conducted an amphibious ready-unit-sized amphibious assault.

Inserting using a combination of small boats, surface assault craft and helicopters, BG Samichon made a near-simultaneous battle group amphibious assault to secure multiple objectives in an uncertain security environment.

The Australian and New Zealand Amphibious Ready Group, consisting of HMA Ships Canberra and Choules and the Royal New Zealand Navy's HMNZS Canterbury, formed the heart of a combined joint-entry operation.

The assault, led from HMAS Canberra, was a significant milestone in the ADF's development of high-end amphibious warfighting capabilities.

More than 600 embarked personnel, mainly comprised of 2RAR, proceeded ashore as part of a flanking force for the US 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

After seizing the sea point of disembarkation, the battle group moved into SWBTA and spent a short time in reserve before heading to the fight.

Commanding Officer BG Samichon Lieutenant Colonel Doug Pashley of 2RAR said he was proud of his team, shifting from joint amphibious operations to joint land combat.

"As one of 3 Brigade's three main manoeuvre battle groups our role was to clear enemy forces from the area of operations," he said.

"As an infantry battalion we are not always the most agile force, but in concert with the Bushmasters and some air-mobile operations, we were able to generate real tempo to pursue challenging targets and opportunities."

Lieutenant Colonel Pashley said one of the battle group's first missions was to clear the key objective of Raspberry Creek or the village south.

"The enemy picture was unclear, but we had assets available such as the US AH-64 Apaches and Australian ARH Tigers of BG Pegasus, which could provide great situational awareness.

"We also used the capabilities of the Australian and US RQ-7B Shadow 200 and the US MQ-1C Gray Eagle [drones] which provided us with more indicators and warnings of enemy activities."

Lieutenant Colonel Pashley said the battle group moved quickly to seize Raspberry Creek after identifying enemy presence was not significant.

"The combat teams were exposed to the challenges of a complex human terrain.

"Our attached engineers also needed to deal with IEDs and we found a bomb factory which needed forensic exploitation."

But the war wasn't over yet. BG Samichon joined the brigade's main effort for the final assault on what turned out to be a well-prepared defensive position with armour, plus troops of 7RAR and the Washington National Guard – with less than five hours notice before stepping off on a dismounted, all-night insertion.

"Our DFSW platoon carried their .50 cal machine guns and ammunition all night to reach the support-by-fire position through some incredibly demanding vegetation and terrain," Lieutenant Colonel Pashley said.

"But, by morning we were where we needed to be and ready for a synchronised assault with the other two battle groups.

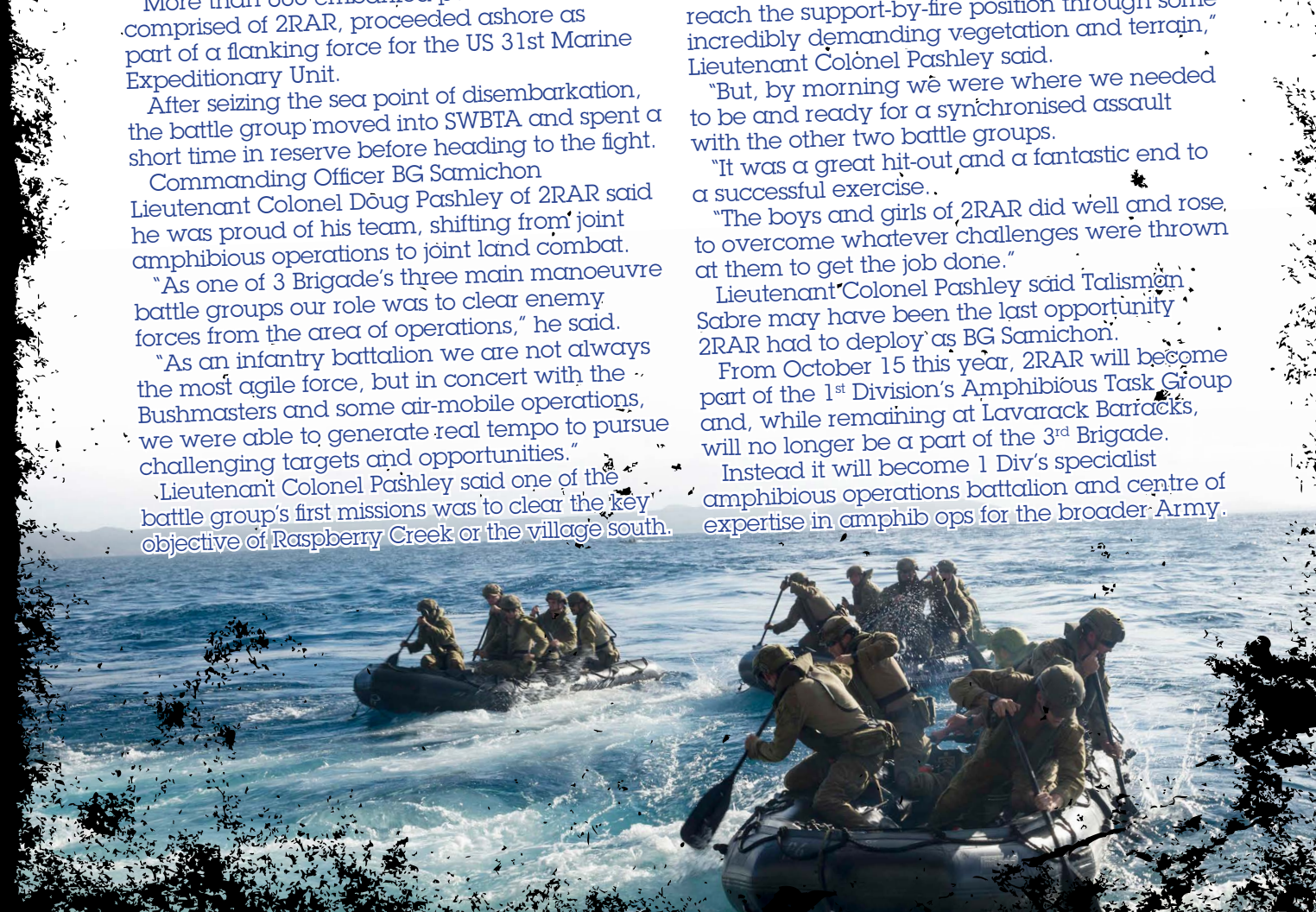
"It was a great hit-out and a fantastic end to a successful exercise."

"The boys and girls of 2RAR did well and rose to overcome whatever challenges were thrown at them to get the job done."

Lieutenant Colonel Pashley said Talisman Sabre may have been the last opportunity 2RAR had to deploy as BG Samichon.

From October 15 this year, 2RAR will become part of the 1st Division's Amphibious Task Group and, while remaining at Lavarack Barracks, will no longer be a part of the 3rd Brigade.

Instead it will become 1 Div's specialist amphibious operations battalion and centre of expertise in amphib ops for the broader Army.



NORTHERN FORCES 5RAR PLAY WITH MARINES

By Corporal Mark Doran

5RAR soldiers began their part in Exercise Talisman Sabre with a show of force on June 25.

Dubbed Battlegroup Tiger for Talisman Sabre 17 Field Training Exercise-North (TS17 FTX-N), 5RAR conducted an airborne insertion into Mount Bunder Training Area supported by MV-22B Osprey tilt rotor and UH-1Y Venom and AH-1W Super Cobra helicopters from the Marine Rotational Force-Darwin (MRF-D).

Before insertion, assaults by the Venom and Cobra made short work of an enemy platoon armed with Stinger missiles and heavy machine guns.

When Mount Bunder airfield was finally secured, more Australian and US troops were delivered by US Marine Corps C-130 Hercules, to prepare for the next combat mission.

Officer commanding D Company Major Jamie Smith said the first 5RAR platoon cleared nearby key terrain while the company headquarters linked up with special forces elements nearby.

"We were fortunate to have the MRF-D in Darwin as it has given us opportunities to familiarise ourselves with the Osprey," Major Smith said.

"It's important for us to work with the US marines, and we are also responsible as good hosts to make sure they get the most out of their training in Australia.

"At the same time we need to ensure our soldiers become fully engaged with them and the unique capabilities they bring.

"During this exercise we've seen increased interoperability while working under the command of a US marine regiment, which is completely different from working with an Australian brigade.

"We're discovering new ways we can work harder together."

A 5RAR section 2IC, Private Zachary Casey, said training with the marines inspired both forces to improve.

"They definitely know their roles and have some amazing equipment and aircraft, especially the Osprey," Private Casey said.

"It has been exciting to learn about their vehicles and the drills on the different weapons systems they use.

"If we need to deploy on operations with the marines we will have a greater understanding of each other's capabilities."

A 5RAR section commander, Corporal Ilaseri Ravetali, said the marines and soldiers learnt a lot about each other's tactics during TS17 FTX-N.

"We've found there are different ways to complete a successful mission," he said.

"The marines are smart and use their recent experiences and tactics they employed during fighting in the Middle East.

"When it comes to urban warfighting, they use many lessons they learnt during the Battle of Fallujah.

"Their tactics are different from ours and, as a small-team-tactics commander, I have taken a lot of what I have learnt from them on board and shared it with my section."

Corporal Ravetali said the soldiers and marines formed great friendships during the Marine's rotations in Darwin.

"There are no language barriers and they are good people," he said.

"They like us and we like them and we train side-by-side for about six months each year, so we are always mingling and sharing knowledge."



LOCAL KNOWLEDGE NORFORCE CHIPS IN

By Corporal Mark Doran

Vigilance was the key for Norforce during the northern component of Talisman Sabre.

Regional Force Support Unit (RFSU) soldiers from four Norforce squadrons joined with Australian and US Special Forces to be the eyes and ears of the bilateral exercise at Mount Bunder Training Area.

They supported 5RAR and Marine Rotational Force-Darwin as they conducted airborne insertions and patrolled to contact in the mid-intensity high-end war fighting activity.

Officer commanding Kimberley Squadron Major Chris McGlashan said the RFSU soldiers played the role of an unconventional Indigenous partnering force.

"The RFSU soldiers, who normally have a surveillance and reconnaissance role in remote areas, were trained in more foundation warfighting skills, or infantry minor tactics, for the exercise," he said.

"They took to the challenge with enthusiasm and were responsive to the training.

"Trainers found the integrated unit of Indigenous and non-Indigenous reservists and full-time soldiers easy to work with and said they had a high level of trainability."

Norforce is a unique capability in the Army because it employs soldiers from its own area of operations to draw on their local knowledge, and because, along with special forces, are some of the only units to regularly conduct operations on Australian soil.

Major McGlashan said the Norforce soldiers on TS17 were drawn from the Centre, Darwin, Arnhem and Kimberley squadrons.

"We deployed many of our junior members to give them this training experience," he said.

"Apart from doing their normal role as sensors within the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability, they were up-skilled to participate on the periphery of special-forces raids and direct actions."

Private Corben Clyden, Kimberley Squadron, said he enjoyed the Army lifestyle and the opportunity to learn new skills.

"The training here was different from our normal Norforce role and we learnt new ways to conduct surveillance and report on enemy activities," Private Clyden said.

"I especially enjoyed the night patrols and looking for the enemy locations."

Private Clyden said it was important to him to be a member of Norforce as an Indigenous Australian.

"It is an opportunity for me to be a role model for the younger generation and show them the experiences Army can offer as a soldier within an RFSU," he said.

"I also get to use my traditional skills to track people or find water and food."

"When I am working in my local communities I can also use my contacts from Aborigine to Aborigine - to find out more information for Norforce."

Private Shane Darling, a member of Darwin Squadron, said TS17 was an eye-opening experience with excellent training opportunities.

"I would like to do more of this as we learnt skills we don't normally learn with RFSU," he said.





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SECOND

Words and photos by Corporal Max Bree, ARMY newspaper



Singleton range appears from the darkness in the blue light of the Army's new night-vision devices as sections from each battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment battled for the coveted Duke of Gloucester Cup in August.

Rifle and machine gun fire breaks an eerie 2.30am silence at the urban-ops training facility as a fireteam suppresses enemy forces hiding in a darkened building.

A second team stacks up next to the entrance and places a breaching charge, while laser dots

from their mates' night-aiming devices dance over the building in search of targets.

An explosion tears the door away and soldiers move in to clear out the enemy.

Shouting and gunfire continue as soldiers move through the building's many levels, engaging enemy they easily see through the blue-tinted light of their night-vision equipment.

A pair of captured enemy are moved to a second-floor outdoor area to be searched as the section posts security and continues the mission.

TO NONE

2RAR dominates Duke of Gloucester Cup



They will soon be back at their defensive position, after sunrise, to continue digging and putting out barbed wire.

Central NSW sunshine was never going to be much use to this year's DoG Cup competitors after activity OIC Major Russell Thomas, a US Army officer posted to the School of Infantry, saw the Australian Army's latest night-fighting equipment.

"I thought it would be a great opportunity to let the soldiers use the equipment and put a different twist on the event," Major Thomas said.

He and lead planner WO2 Dwayne Kent designed this year's competition to test soldier skills during limited visibility.

"You have a marked advantage over an adversary at night," Major Thomas said.

"It's easier to surprise an enemy and amass combat power in ways you can't during the day.

"But to operate in that environment you have to be comfortable doing all things at night.

"I wanted to see how well these soldiers could do that."

Competitors were first lulled into a daytime routine with combat shooting, live-fire attacks and DFSW accuracy contests on the first day.

They were then kept awake with four full nights of complex operations, dealing with challenges such as urban assaults, a chemical-warfare lane, quick attacks and observation-post duties.

"We definitely wanted to make fatigue a factor," Major Thomas said.

"The soldiers still moved between 80 to 100km during the competition but the fatigue, the difficulty in finding sleep, made it every bit as tiring as putting on a pack and continually stomping around in the woods."

Dusk-'til-dawn night ops tested sections over five days, and sunrise brought little relief, with soldiers 'digging-in' at a defensive position during daylight hours.

Leading the lads from 2RAR was sniper and four-time DoG Cup veteran Corporal Liam Kiernan.

"In past years it was ops during the day and you'd be digging all night, but this year they turned it on its head," Corporal Kiernan said.

"It depends on the enemy picture, but we often operate at night because it gives us an advantage."

Corporal Kiernan said operations were definitely made easier by the new night-fighting equipment, which many soldiers hadn't used before.

"I rate them pretty highly," he said.

"I doubt we could have worked as well as we did if we had the older ones."

"Because they're so light, we didn't fatigue as much and you get really good clarity through the optics."

"We were also lucky to have the extra luminance of a full moon."

He said things started to get tricky when the section arrived at a 'forward operating base' around midnight to help organise a local security force.

"We had to train them and provide security while locals were being inquisitive and insurgents were probing."

"Then things escalated and we had to use population-control techniques."

Such complex and relentless night missions quickly took their toll on competing sections also testing how well they managed fatigue.

"It got pretty hard to focus on what you were doing – you had to be careful not to drift off into your thoughts," Corporal Kiernan said.

"It was a bit of a shock, but the boys knew it was only going to be for a week, so they put in hard and made sure things were done to the best of their abilities."

Despite long-running rivalry between battalions, Corporal Kiernan said competitiveness didn't really kick in until the end.

"There's always a little bit of rivalry, but whenever I'd go for platoon orders, I'd chat to the other secs and they all seemed pretty relaxed."

"It wasn't until the last morning on the obstacle course where the guys really set out to beat the other teams."

"We thought we'd done well in a few things but were never 100 per cent sure."

"We were feeling pretty nervous until the ceremony and the boys were very excited when the winners were announced."

Apart from the overall title, 2RAR also picked up trophies for best foundation warfighting and best overall shooting, with Corporal Kiernan named best individual soldier and best section commander.



Sir Arthur MacDonald Trophy, best section foundation warfighting 1 st – 2RAR 2 nd – 1RAR 3 rd – 3RAR	Royal Ulster Rifles Trophy, best falling plate shoot 1 st – 6RAR 2 nd – 8/9RAR 3 rd – 3RAR	Ghurkha Trophy, best section overall shooting 1 st – 2RAR 2 nd – 5RAR 3 rd – 1RAR
<h1>DUKE OF GLOUCESTER CUP</h1>		
OSCMAR Trophy, best endurance 1 st – 1RAR 2 nd – 2RAR 3 rd – 8/9RAR	1 st 2RAR 2 nd 1RAR 3 rd 7RAR 4 th 3RAR 5 th 8/9RAR 6 th 6RAR 7 th 5RAR	DSM Roche CSC Memorial Cup, best individual soldier 1 st – Cpl Liam Kiernan, 2RAR 2 nd – Pte Tom Florence, 2RAR

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Training for combat in urban environments is routine for Australian or New Zealand soldiers who recently passed on some of their knowledge to Iraqi soldiers who will soon face Da'esh.

Soldiers from the Iraqi Army's 53rd Brigade recently completed an urban combat training course with trainers of Task Group Taji Rotation 5 on Operation Okra.

Task Group Taji is a combined force of 300 Australian and 106 New Zealand Defence Force personnel.

Aussie instructor Lieutenant Andrew Pham said Iraqi soldiers understood the value of urban-combat training, particularly because the primary battle-space in Iraq has been in urban environments such as Mosul.

"Urban combat training is an essential skill that will increase the Iraqi Security Forces capability to defeat Da'esh," Lieutenant Pham said.

"This course has focused on company-sized operations to assault and defend positions in urban terrain.

"This includes manoeuvring to the objective using concealment, using support by fire, and breaching methods."

Throughout the course trainees were instructed on technical components of urban combat including how to manoeuvre tactically and safely through densely built-up areas and how to engage the enemy at close range.

Also instructing on the course was Corporal Zachary Dawes who said it was a rewarding

URBAN SKILLS



CONTACT VIDEO

experience to be able to pass on tactical training that would have a real impact on combat operations.

"Some of the more technical key skills and drills I was able to pass on included how to tactically move around corners, down hallways and up stairways," Corporal Dawes said.

"The Iraqis were very happy to learn from us and they had no problems putting the lessons into practice."

These soldiers – about 1300 of them – are heading to the front line after graduating in late August.

This latest batch of graduates brings to more than 26,000 the total number of Iraqi troops trained by Task Group Taji.

Commander Joint Forces New Zealand Major General Tim Gall said this graduation was a significant milestone for our combined training mission in Iraq and a significant contribution to the continuing fight against ISIS.

"Although ISIS extremists have been expelled from Mosul they still control slivers of territory in areas such as Tal Afar and Hawija," Major General Gall said.

"Our training mission is helping the Iraqi Army generate more capable fighters to liberate these areas from the control of this terror group."

The most accurate shooters from the 53rd Brigade were also partnered with specialist Australian and New Zealand Defence Force instructors from Task

Group Taji to hone their marksmanship skills.

Selected soldiers were trained as part of an advanced marksmanship course that was designed to hone and develop long-range shooting techniques.

Senior instructor Australian Major John Crockett said the course was aimed at introducing and qualifying students on long-range rifles and using them with precision to neutralise enemy targets at varying distances.



"These soldiers have been hand-picked from across the Iraqi Army's 53rd Brigade," Major Crockett said. "Our focus is on making them more accurate, confident and capable as marksmen."

"The interaction between the Iraqi soldiers and our instructors has been really positive which makes this much easier to achieve."

Throughout the course students were taught key marksmanship principles and how to use their weapons effectively, including how to accurately gauge distances to targets.

Instructor Corporal Daniel O'Connor said the Iraqi soldiers were very enthusiastic about the course and acted on their instructors' feedback.

"Our instructors come from across the Australian and New Zealand Army and there is a lot of experience we are able to pass on to our Iraqi partners," Corporal O'Connor said.

"The Iraqi soldiers adapt quickly to training and you can see they really like working with us."

"These soldiers may be using our training in combat operations against Da'esh in the near future."



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GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS!

In the last article I outlined the basic considerations for getting started with running if you are a reluctant runner.

In this article I want to outline a simple training plan to get you started and also look at some methods to keep you motivated and your training on track.

The first 4 weeks

For the purposes of this article I am going to assume that your first goal as a non runner with an interest in the ADF is to complete a 2.4km BFA in a reasonable time.

For ease of calculation in the example I've used 12 minutes as the goal but of course you'll need to adjust for your own goals.

Also, while we are talking about a 2.4km run here, the principles can be scaled up for a 5km or 10km goal.

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Monday	Jog 0:30 seconds Walk 1:00 minute x 10 intervals	Kettlebell swings x15 Rest 0:45 x 8 intervals	Run 1:00 Walk 0:30 x 10 intervals	Kettlebell swings x15 Rest 0:30 x 10 intervals
Wednesday	Row 250m/Bike 500m Rest 1:00 x 6 intervals	Jog 1:15 Walk 0:45 x 8 intervals	Row 500m/Bike 1000m Rest 1:30 x 4 intervals	Run 2:00 Walk 0:30 x 8 intervals
Friday	Jog/Walk 1.6km 6:00/km pace	Row 2000m or Ride 5km as fast as possible	2 x 1.2km jog/run with 4:00 rest 5:30 pace	Row 2000m or Ride 5km as fast as possible
Saturday		2.4km run 6:00/km pace		2.4km run 5:45/km pace

As you can see the aim of the program is to start out nice and slow with short intervals of running mixed with rest and some progressively longer runs up to your target distance.

The program has a mix of running and cross training to minimise impact on your legs as you build up tolerance for running.

The pace of the runs should start out fairly well controlled and if you feel you want to push your aerobic capacity in the early stages you can work harder on the kettlebell swings, rowing and cycling.

The next 4 weeks

Extending this pattern for a further 8 weeks we start to include some long, slow, distance runs up to 5km.

So with a program like this how can you make sure that you are completing the right distances at the right pace?

This is where modern technology steps in. These days there are a wide range of apps for smart phones that allow you to track time, distance, pace and even heart rate if you have a transmitting chest strap.

You can also buy a dedicated fitness watch like the Garmin Fenix 5, like I did – and am writing reviews on to justify the outlay.

These fitness trackers and apps can keep track of all your training data in one spot online or download it to your computer, and it can be very helpful to monitor

motivation to continue training when things get a bit tough.

More sophisticated apps and trackers can be programmed with training programs and remind you when it is time to train.

They can also analyse your training on the fly and provide feedback about your progress.

Personally, I found over the past several months that the feedback from the Garmin Fenix 5 was a constant reminder to train and the data provided made it much easier to track my training and adjust it for steady progress.

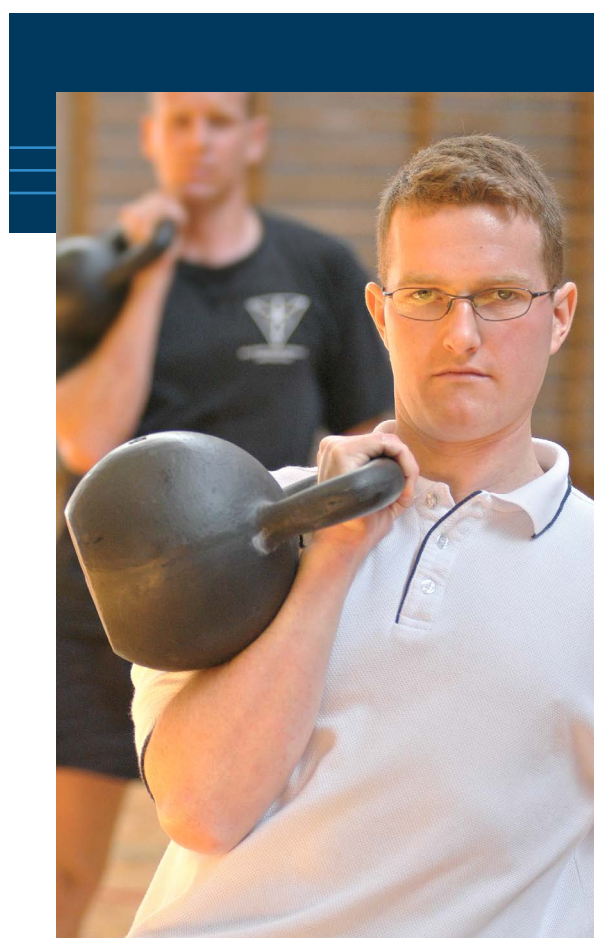
I ended up doing several runs of more than

10km over fairly hilly terrain without dying and improved my 5km run times from over 30 minutes at the start to a shade under 25 minutes recently.

I won't be winning any marathons, but overall my aerobic fitness improved dramatically and I found the process far easier than previous attempts to improve my running.

Follow Don's running career in the next issue of **CONTACT** on 1 December – or find Don's military-focused fitness articles on our web site, [here](#).

	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Monday	Run 2:00 minutes Walk 1:00 minutes x 6 intervals	Kettlebell swings x 20 Rest 0:45 x 6 intervals	Run 3:00 Walk 0:45 x 5 intervals	Kettlebell swings x20 Rest 0:30 x 8 intervals
Wednesday	Row 250m/Bike 500m Rest 0:45 X 8 intervals	Run 4km 6:15/km pace	Row 500m/Bike 1000m Rest 1:00 X 6 intervals	Run 5km 6:15/km pace
Friday	2 x 1.6km run with 5:00 rest 5:30/km pace	Row 3000m or Ride 6km as fast as possible	3 x 1.2km jog/run with 3:00 rest 5:00/km pace	
Saturday		2.4km 5:30/km pace		2.4km 5:15/km pace



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These are honest, real-world observations of a watch I bought from my own hard-earned coin. This watch was definitely not a freebie and I am not being paid for these reviews.

AN ONGOING PRODUCT REVIEW

GARMIN FENIX® 5X

I'd like to say that this is a truly comprehensive review but the number of features on the watch and the amount of data it collects would make that run for pages and I don't think I've even scratched the surface of its capabilities.

I should say this early – unfortunately I don't think this watch is great for most military purposes – based almost entirely on the battery life of the watch.

While the Fenix 5X is a marvel of technology, it is limited by the watch form factor and compromises in battery life had to be made.

In watch mode with only occasional GPS use you can get about a week out of the battery.

But, in full GPS-tracking mode, the battery is only good for about 24 hours.

And, there is no real option to recharge it while it is on your wrist. It can be charged from a portable power pack but the connector is directly under the watch, against your skin.

Apart from that limitation, it would make a fantastic operational watch as it provides a back-up GPS and has modes for tactical navigation, a barometer, an altimeter and a compass.

To be fair to the 5X it is not designed specifically with military operations in mind!

OTHER DOWNSIDES?

To be honest not very many that I can think of.

For smaller individuals the 5X may be a bit bulky.

Garmin do make two smaller versions – the Fenix 5 and the even smaller 5S – but they lack inbuilt mapping and, for me, that is the greatest feature of this watch for developing military fitness.

I did occasionally run into issues where the directions feature was a bit slow and



needed a minute to catch up, and it also suffers from the same gremlins that all computers do that cause it to freeze and need a restart from time to time.

But overall it was very reliable.

As alluded to before, for really long adventure races, multi-day hiking and military operations you would need to take a portable USB power pack, but day-to-day it never ran out of battery as long as I threw it on the charger every few days.

For anyone looking to develop a high level of military fitness I would highly recommend getting your hands on one of these.

More to follow – next issue.

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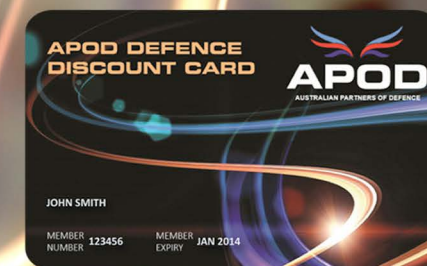
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MULTI-TOOL REALITY CHECK

Second best is nothing to strive for, so, to trump the multi-tools that preceded it, the Center-Drive by Gerber had to be real, tough, innovative – and it is.

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To go with the launch of this great tool, Gerber has produced a slick video advertisement campaign that aims to shed light on the false premise consumers have been sold to date – that their 'multi' tool (commonly referred to in the civilian world as a leatherman, regardless of brand) can actually do real work.

The new Center-Drive from Gerber delivers real capability through the three basic tools users use most – the driver, the blade and the jaws.



It also employs new patented one-thumb opening technology and a specific collection of additional tools that users will actually use on real-world jobs – all on a USA-made, military-grade platform with a lifetime warranty.

View the Centre-Drive overview video [here](#) and a longer 'Reality Check' video [here](#) – or visit Center-Drive.com

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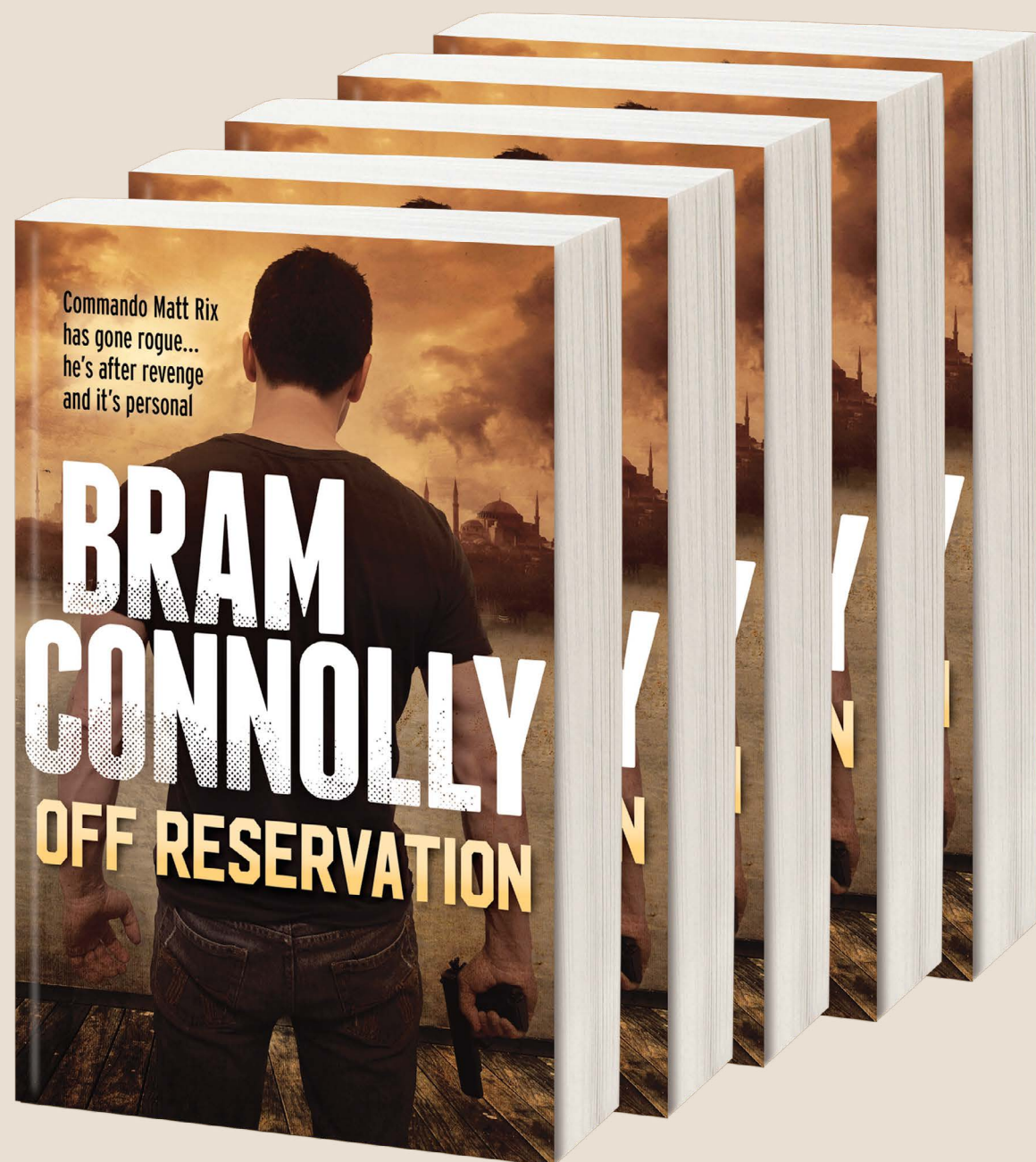
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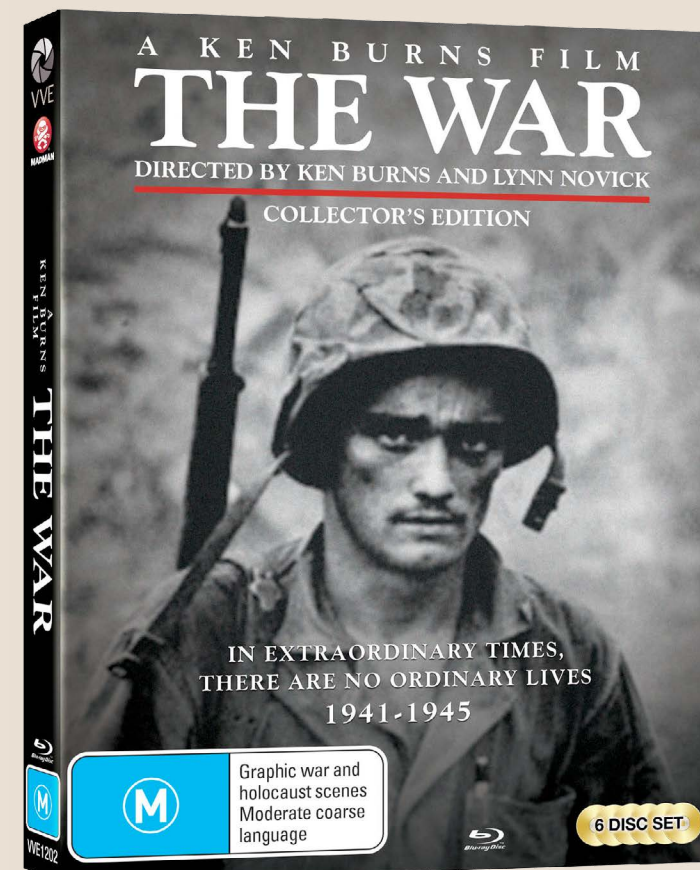
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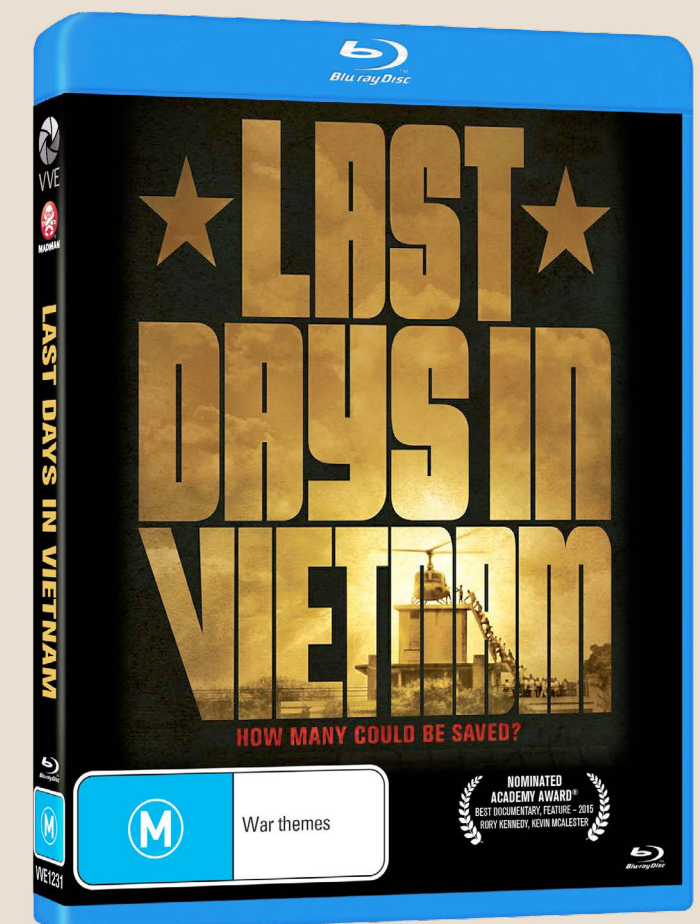
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Insightful and moving, thrilling and educational, both titles explore US involvement in major military conflicts that changed the course of history and both will be released for sale through **ViaVision.com.au** on 5 September 2017.

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CLOSE BUT NOT CLOSE ENOUGH

Australians recommended for the VC but not awarded

BY MAJOR DARRYL KELLY

Lieutenant John Patrick Tunn AM
9th Battalion AIF

TUNN OF COURAGE

When'er a noble deed is wrought,
When'er is spoken a noble thought,
Our hearts in glad surprise,
To higher levels rise.

*Extract from Santa Filomena
by Henry Wodsworth Longfellow. 1807-1882*

John 'Jock' Tunn was born in Glasgow, Scotland, to parents John and Catherine Tunn, on 8 July 1892. Young Jock was educated at St Mungo's Academy¹ where he was an above-average student. His first taste of military life came when he joined the local Territorial unit, known as the Left District, where he served for a year.²

Around 1910, Jock's father decided to move the family to Australia in search of a better life. The Tunn's settled in Brisbane, where Jock worked firstly as a cabinetmaker and later undertook studies in accountancy. With the onset of the First World War, Jock was still studying and, in 1916, he was working as a clerk in the State Government Insurance Office.¹

A man of middle height and stocky build, Jock presented himself for enlistment in the AIF on 19 May 1916. He was allocated as a reinforcement to the 9th Battalion, which was the first unit ashore at Gallipoli. He completed his initial training in Brisbane and on 17 November 1916 boarded the troopship Kyarra bound for England. During the voyage, Jock was temporarily appointed as a VO/corporal for the voyage.² His modest unassuming nature made him a natural leader among the troops.¹

Kyarra docked in Plymouth on 30 January 1917, and Jock reverted to the rank of private.¹ Jock completed his training and, in late May, embarked for the trip across the channel to France. He was officially taken on strength of the 9th Battalion, which was deployed around the village of Ribemont, on 28 May.¹

In August 1917, Jock was detached to the 1st Australian Division Headquarters for special military-police duties. Later that month he was promoted to lance corporal and his second stripe came through on 20 October.

Just before Christmas, Jock had a stint in hospital suffering diarrhoea and malaria.² Later that month, he returned to the battalion as a section commander.

Jock was able to take a couple of stints of leave. The first was 10 days in Paris at the end of January and, following a brief return to the battalion, in London at the end of February 1918.²

The German offensive of 1918 had the allied forces reeling. In late April, the 9th was in action around Meteren. On 23/24, the 9th and their sister battalions counter-attacked. As they advanced, the enemy opened up with everything they had to try and break up the assault. Jock's company, which was on the left of the advance, suffered heavy casualties from enemy machine guns. The guns were sited on the high ground and were sweeping the approaches with a tremendous volume of fire. Jock could see that if contact wasn't maintained, then the attack would falter. He rallied his few remaining soldiers and pushed to the left, trying to make contact with the company. Enemy fire was devastating but, thanks to Jock's determination, he was able to re-establish the unbroken line with the company, and the advance continued.

Later, as the 9th consolidated its newly gained position, Jock went forward and continuously patrolled the area in front of his position, thus allowing his section to dig-in. In doing this, he was under heavy machine gun and rifle fire.

For his actions, Jock was recommended for a decoration, but the submission was not successful.³

Jock's leadership potential was rewarded on 20 May 1918 when he was commissioned in the field to second lieutenant and, the following month, sent to the 5th Army School to undergo officer training. He rejoined his battalion a month later.²

The Flanders village of Meteren was still in enemy hands following the great German push of April 1918. Several attempts were made to recapture the village, all of which were unsuccessful. The 9th Scottish Division was to launch an all-out attack on 18 July in a final attempt to oust the Hun once and for all. The 9th Battalion was to assist by capturing the smaller village of Le Waton, about two miles south of Meteren.³



Wounded men of the 9th Division being evacuated from Meteren, 18 August 1918. Photo from the collection of the Imperial War Museums.

Jock had briefed his men on the offensive plan. They were to be on the right flank of the attack and were required to breach the wire that protected approaches to the village. It was hoped that the preceding artillery barrage would have cut the wire and provide a safe passage. If not, they would use their wire-cutters and cut their way through.

As his blokes readied themselves in the trench, they went through final preparations. One of the men, Corporal Norman, did a final check of his rifle, then took out a Mills Bomb from his haversack, pulled the pin and slid the bomb into the grenade launcher fitted to the end of his rifle, ready to be fired. Norman went through his part in the attack in his mind – to use his grenade launcher to take out any troublesome pockets of resistance the platoon may strike.⁴

The Diggers stood ready in the trenches. Jock looked at his watch and counted down the seconds. Then he heard the shrill shriek of the whistle signalling them to go over the top. As Jock led his platoon forward, he could see the troublesome wire lying all-but intact just ahead. As he looked around, Jock urged his men to keep up. Corporal Norman was just off to one side and moving forward in a slow jog. As they hit the wire, Jock looked for a suitable breach so as to maintain the momentum of the advance.

As the platoon weaved its way through the remnants of the wire, they tended to bunch up slightly. Jock looked around just in time to see Norman trip over a troublesome piece of the entanglement. As the Corporal hit the ground the live bomb fell out of the launcher releasing the firing lever as it came free. Jock Tunn who was about 10 yards away, saw the bomb smoking on the deck, he knew he had less than seven seconds before the bomb went off in the middle of his platoon. He lunged for the bomb and grabbed at it. As he went to pick it up, his hand caught something which forced the grenade from his grip.

He made a second grab for it and, as he caught hold of it, the bomb exploded ripping of his right hand and forearm. Shrapnel speared off into both legs and a piece caught him above the right eye. As he was in a stooped position, his body had sheltered the remainder of the platoon from the blast.⁴

Jock was evacuated to the battalion aid post, where the medical officer, Dr Greeves, worked to stem the flow of blood. Once Jock was stable, the doctor made arrangements to send him to a casualty clearing station. Under the watchful eye of an Aussie sentry, four German POWs carried the wounded officer further to the rear.⁴

The next morning, Jock was examined by another doctor, Major Bell,⁴ who decided to re-dress the wounds to Jock's legs. As he went to remove the bloodied shell dressings, Jock tugged at the doctors sleeve – "Can I have a whiff?"⁵

After the doctor dressed Jock's legs, he said "That will be enough for one day!" But, Jock looked at Bell and said "Well doctor, you might as well do the rest while you're about it!"⁴ The doctor smiled and went about dressing the shattered arm and the wound above the eye.

Jock was moved firstly to the 30th General Hospital in Calais, then carried aboard the Hospital Ship Princess Elizabeth bound for England.⁴

His shattered arm was operated on and the stump was cleaned up as best they could. Jock's courage and determination that carried him through the war now carried him through his recovery.

The Commanding Officer of the 9th Battalion recommended Jock for the Victoria Cross but as he was not in actual contact with the enemy, his recommendation was downgraded to the awarding of the Albert Medal "For gallantry displayed in saving life".¹ It was one of only three Albert Medals awarded to members of the AIF.⁶



CLOSE BUT NOT CLOSE ENOUGH

Australians recommended for the VC but not awarded

Lieutenant John
Patrick Tunn AM
9th Battalion AIF



Jock returned to Australia where he was again employed at the State Government Insurance Office. He also resumed his studies and qualified as an associate of the Federal Institute of Accountants. He married his sweetheart, Mary Sherman at Saint Brigid's Catholic Church in Red Hill, Brisbane.¹ The marriage produced two sons and two daughters.¹

Jock's appointment to the AIF was officially terminated on 20 March 1920.²

His courage and determination again came to the fore and his disability never held him back. He became president of the Indooroopilly Bowling Club, choirmaster of the Indooroopilly choral society and, despite the loss of one hand, an occasional organist at his local Catholic church. He was also a foundation member of the Limbless Soldiers' Association of Queensland and drafted the constitution of its provident society. He was later an insurance advisor for the Hibernian Association of Queensland.¹

Jock Tunn secured a new position with the Queensland Probate Insurance Company, which later became the Equitable Life Assurance Company and, in 1935, became a manager within the firm.¹ In 1946, he joined the National Mutual Life Association.¹

As a result of gas exposure during the war, Jock's health began to deteriorate. He decided to try a drier climate and the family moved to the outback town of Dalby, where he ran a newsagency from 1947-1951 – and became president of the local bowls club.

However, his health continued to deteriorate and he was forced to return to Brisbane to be nearer to medical treatment. He again returned to work for the State Government Insurance Office.

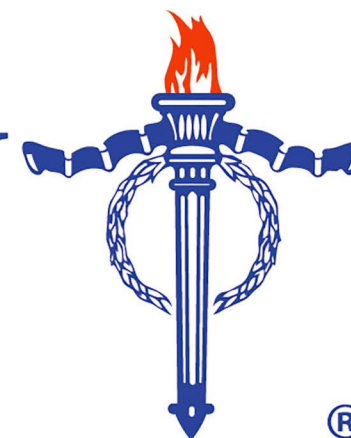
By 1955 Jock's health was severe enough that he was classified as totally and permanently disabled due to his war injuries – but died in the Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital as a result of asthma, on 12 October that year,¹ and was laid at rest in the Toowong Cemetery, Brisbane.

Jock's son, Paul, served in WWII with the Royal Australian Air Force.

Notes:

1. Australian Dictionary of Biography, online edition – Australian National University
2. National Archives of Australia, B2455, WWI Service Records – J.P. Tunn 9th Battalion AIF
3. AWM 28, Recommendation Files for Honours and Awards, AIF, 1914-1918
4. Reveille Article – John Patrick Tunn – Winner of Albert Medal
5. A whiff of anaesthetic
6. The other two Albert Medals were awarded to Sergeant David Coyne and Captain William Geake

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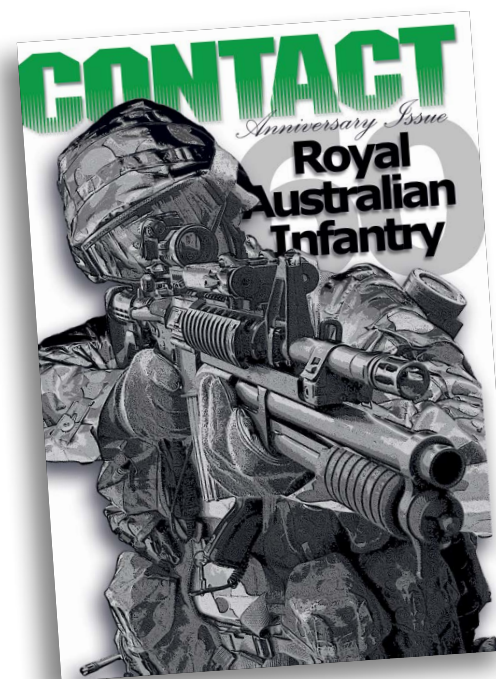
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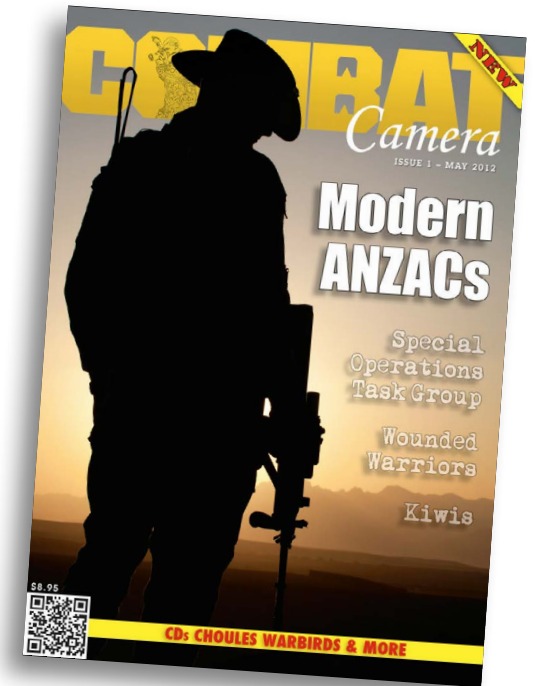
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MAIL INCLUDED

Chief of Army CADET TEAM



The Chief of Army Cadet Team Challenge 2017 winning team with Chief of Army Lieutenant General Angus Campbell – from left Cadet Lance Corporal Kodi Delaney Leech, Cadet Lance Corporal Lachlan McGee, Cadet Sergeant Jack Morton, Lieutenant General Campbell, Cadet Under Officer Mahala Karan, Cadet Under Officer Travis Mahon, Cadet Under Officer Kurtis Sankey, Cadet Corporal Riley Pryor, Cadet Corporal Alistair Matthews, Cadet Corporal Oliver Lindsay-German and Regimental Sergeant Major-Army WO Don Spinks. Photos by Sergeant Brian Hartigan.

By Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Holcroft

South Queensland's team leader for this year's Chief of Army Cadet Team Challenge, Cadet Under Officer Mahala Karan, believes good preparation helped get her team into the winner's circle.

Cadet Under Officer Karan, 17, from 12 Army Cadet Unit's 13 Battalion based in South Brisbane/Gold Coast Region said her 10-member team had three weekends consolidating and expanding their cadet knowledge at Enoggera Barracks before heading to Puckapunyal in Victoria, to compete against teams from all over Australia.

"We had selection for the Cadet Team Challenge involving activities like first aid, navigation and quick-decision exercises over three weekends," Cuo Karan said.

"These definitely prepared us for most of the Challenge – except when we arrived in Puckapunyal, it was so cold."

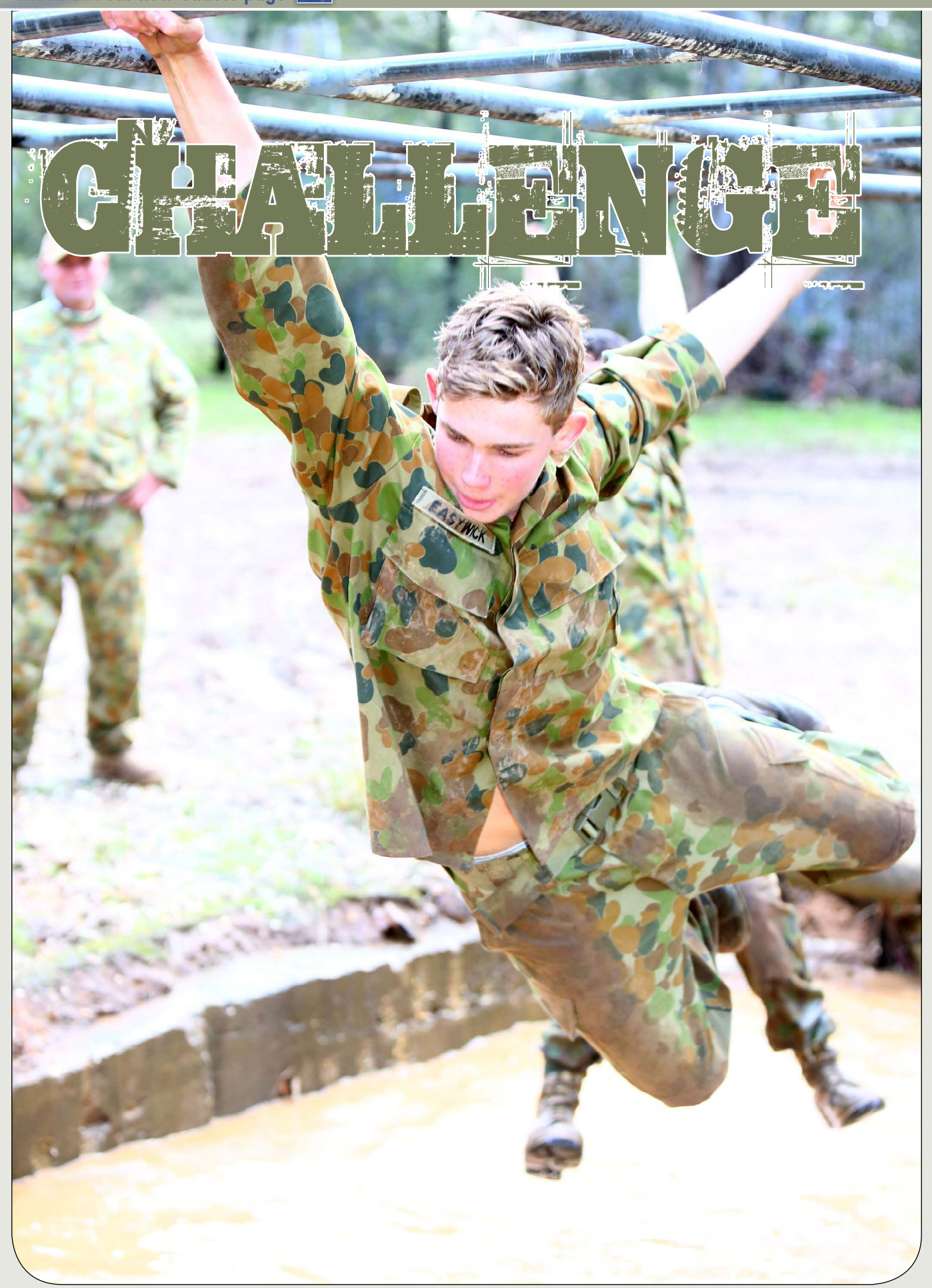
Cuo Karan said she and other teams from northern climes were issued puffer jackets to help/try keep warm throughout the event.

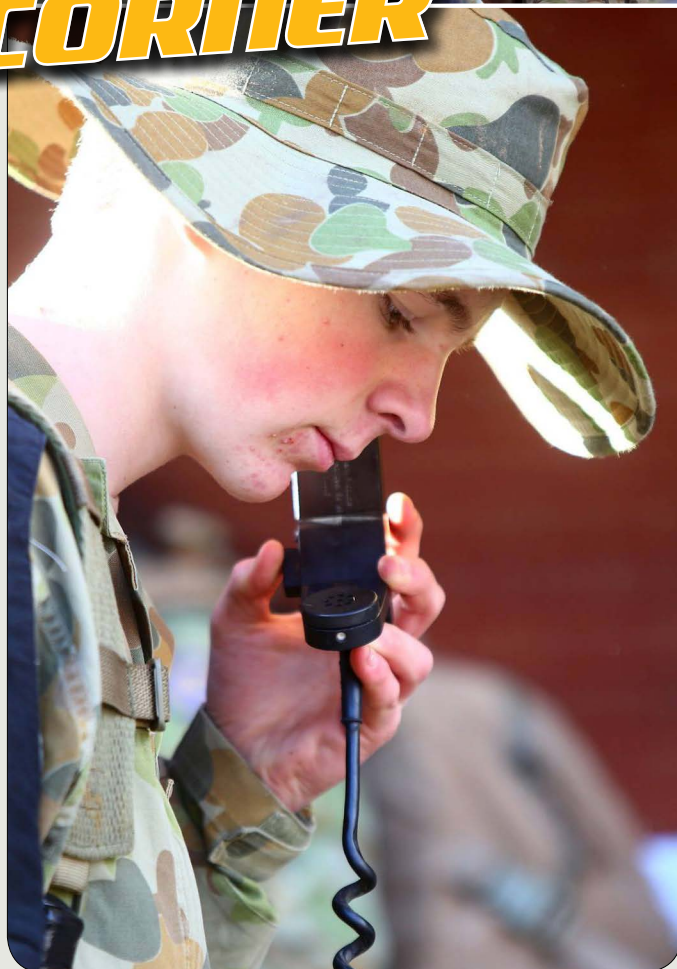
"One of the other first things we noticed was how formal and proper the other teams were and we then realised we were in a serious competition," Cuo Karan said.

Nine teams representing each Australian Army Cadet Brigade and Battalions from around Australia vied for their most significant annual award at the Puckapunyal Military Area over a gruelling two-day, three-night event in inhospitable weather.

The CACTC cadets were assessed on a range of skills including field navigation, firearm handling, shooting (WTSS) and knowledge, use of radios, first aid and patient management, obstacle courses, field engineering, water obstacle, leadership and problem solving.

Cadet teams each comprised 10 young men and women and were drawn from units across their State or territory.





The cadets underwent rigorous military-style training in their units before their participation in the Challenge.

"My team found the navigation event one of the hardest parts of the Challenge," CUO Karan said.

"We had just come off the obstacle course and the water activity and were quite exhausted.

"Sitting down to do a written exam for navigation was then very challenging."

Chief of Army Lieutenant General Angus Campbell reviewed and presented awards at a parade of more than 500 cadets – including the participating teams from the CACTC and cadets from across Victoria (part of the Victoria AAC Brigade) who were also at Puckapunyal participating in separate courses and promotions camp.

CUO Karan said that when it was announced on parade that her team had won the Challenge it was 'quite a surreal moment' for her.

She listened to the bulk of the teams being named as Bronze winners and thought how 'insane' it would be if her team won the top prize.

"Cadets from Victoria took out the Silver award and then it all turned crazy when it sunk in how our amazing team had actually won the challenge," CUO Karan said.

"It was phenomenal to shake the Chief of Army's hand and realise our hard work had paid off."

The 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 Australian Army.

There are around 16,000 Army Cadets ranging in age from 13 to 18 years in around 220 units across all States and territories of Australia.

During the parade, Lieutenant General Campbell presented awards to the participating teams of the CACTC – as well as to students of merit from the Victoria AAC Brigade courses camp:

Junior Leader Course student of merit:

Cadet Corporal Jake Morrow, 30 ACU

Senior Leader Course student of merit:

Cadet Corporal Marlice Wessels, 305 ACU

CUO/VO student of merit:

Cadet Sergeant William Phillips, 312 ACU

Instructor of merit:

CUO Mark Thornton, 305 ACU

Signals CSE student of merit:

Cadet Lance Corporal Jackson Kompler, 37 ACU

First aid and navigation Course student of merit:

Cadet Corporal Joni Grundy, 301 ACU

Robotics Course student of merit:

Cadet Lance Corporal Cailum Mazzanti, Beaconhills College ACU.



In July, Air Force Cadets from throughout South Australia and Mildura gathered at RAAF Edinburgh for the rare privilege of an air experience flight aboard a C-130J Hercules transport aircraft from No 37 Squadron, which is based at RAAF Base Richmond, in NSW.

All cadets received a standard RAAF safety brief and PAX (passenger) brief before embarking, and were monitored by staff and the two loadmasters in flight.

The aircraft was cleared to go coastal offshore not below 500 feet, south of Adelaide, giving the cadets a unique view of the southern coastline and its ancient limestone cliffs.

After the first two groups of about 50 each flew, two further groups went up – a total of about 250 cadets and staff given this rare opportunity.

The cadets experienced the excitement of an 'engines-running offload', just as they do for ADF troops on exercise or during operational deployments.

Leading Cadet Jeremy Swain, a 14-year-old member of No 609 Squadron (Warradale Barracks), describes the experience...

"On the day, groups of about 50 cadets went on a one-hour flight which took them around Outer Harbour and up to Glenelg before returning to RAAF Edinburgh.

"Inside the cargo hold it was very loud and cadets had to make sure they kept their earplugs in.

"During the flight the loadmasters opened the rear cargo ramp which gave an epic view of Adelaide.

"The pilots also let cadets come up into the cockpit for a look.

"We all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves but, after the flight, were happy that we could hear each other talk again."

LCDT Swain has just completed Basic Stage in the AAFC home training curriculum, achieving a Distinction for both Aviation and Aircraft Recognition, and gaining a Distinction for Basic Stage overall.

Pilot Officer (AAFC) Paul Rosenzweig, 6 Wing Public Affairs & Communication Officer, said "These air-experience opportunities complement the aviation studies the cadets undertake as part of their home-training curriculum, and the other flying opportunities such as pilot experience flights".

"As part of their introduction to the AAFC, all Cadets are offered at least one opportunity to actually pilot an aircraft (under the supervision of a qualified flying instructor) in their first year of joining," he said.

"Formal flying training courses for gliding and power are also offered during the school holidays, where Cadets as young as 15 years (for gliding) and 16 years (for power) – the minimum legal ages – can learn to fly an aircraft solo."

Story and photos by PLTOFF (AAFC) Paul Rosenzweig



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ARMY NAVY RAAF

Radio recce



Two Air Force Cadets from No 6 (City of Adelaide) Wing were interviewed on community radio on 24 July and borrowed an Army saying to describe their time in the Australian Air Force Cadets – 'time spent in reconnaissance is never wasted'.

Interviewed by Fiona White on Radio Adelaide's "Service Voices" regarding their service to the community and career aspirations, it was only the second time Cadets had been interviewed for the program.

Alex Barrott-Walsh from No 619 (City of Onkaparinga) Squadron, currently aged 18, is looking to a career in the RAAF.

Alex enlisted in the Air Force Cadets in November 2011 and, during his 6 years of service so far, has completed the Proficiency Stage of the AAFC home training curriculum, and has qualified for the Single Gold Rifle Badge through completion of the .22 Firearms Training Elective. In addition he has completed a residential

promotion course and gained promotion to Cadet Corporal (CCPL), and is a Silver Award participant in the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award.

Eric Symons from No 601 Squadron (Keswick Barracks), currently aged 17, is considering a career in the RAN.

Eric joined the Air Force Cadets in August 2013 and through completion of residential promotion courses has risen to now hold the rank of Cadet Flight Sergeant (CFSGT). He too has completed Proficiency Stage and is firearms qualified, and in addition has gained the prestigious ADF Cadets Adventure Training Award. In addition, he is a Gold Award participant in the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award.

In their interviews, these young men described how their service in the Air Force Cadets was helping them prepare for a career in the Australian Defence Force – saying, "time spent in reconnaissance is seldom wasted".

You can hear the interview [here](#).

Viet Vets Day

A contingent of South Australian Air Force Cadets from No 603 Squadron, AAFC (Berri), last week supported the 2017 Vietnam Veterans Commemoration Service held at Vaughan Terrace in Berri.

This year, the local commemorative service also formed part of the Vietnam Veterans Associations of Australia National Conference.

Cadets mounted a Catafalque Party for the service led by Cadet Corporal Owen Parry, who joined the AAFC in April 2014 and is currently the Assistant Training Officer for the squadron.

Commanding Officer of No 603 Squadron, Warrant Officer (AAFC) Jonathan Sutton said, "The cadets did an excellent job and represented our unit well, receiving many



Berri Barmera Mayor Peter Hunt, LCDT Ashleigh Minnis, CCPL Owen Parry, VVAA Riverland Branch President Max Binding, LCDT Michael Powell, LCDT Ross Anderson and Tony Pasin MP.
Photo supplied by 603 Squadron.

comments from ex-servicemen and women, including Australian Navy personnel who were present, and all the local community representatives".

The service was conducted at the Post-World War 2 Veteran's Memorial on Berri's Historic Riverfront, facing the River Murray.

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