



EXERCISE CHONG JU

FIREPOWER DEMO

Exercise Chong Ju is an annual live-fire exercise designed to give the Army's next generation of combat leaders a taste of the combined affect of air and land assets ranging from Abrams tanks to F/A-18s on the battlefield.



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The annual firepower exercise held at Puckapunyal on 1 and 2 May this year is a key component of the Combat Officer Advance Course, but also allows opportunity for other spectators, including ADF, visiting foreign military members and media to witness a wide spectrum of capabilities including Abrams, ASLAVs, M113A5s, Javelin anti-armour missile, 81mm mortars, M777-A2 155mm Howitzers, F/A-18 Hornets and ARH Tiger helicopters pummel a well-placed enemy position.

The M777 Howitzers provided artillery support from about 6km away while two Abrams tanks and two Tiger helicopters from 1st Aviation Regiment provided fire support from very, very close to the corralled audience position.

Also from the air, but comfortably removed from the audience, three F/A-18s provided close air support, strafing enemy positions and dropping 1000-pound bombs.

The scenario involved an attack on an enemy position with friendly forces breaching natural and man-made obstacles to move through to clear the objective, followed by a withdrawal and reorg in anticipation of an enemy counter-attack.

Commander of the School of Armour Lieutenant Colonel Stuart Cree was pleased with the opportunity to give future commanders an insight into ADF capabilities.

"What they get from this exercise is seeing the affects of a combined-arms team firing on enemy targets with all the consequences of fire and movement, and gaining an appreciation for all the things that need to be done to synchronise those effects onto the enemy," Lieutenant Colonel Cree said.

"This activity goes to the very heart of foundation warfighting. We are here to train our soldiers who are in the field training for war, and we are training the next generation of combat commanders for foundation warfighting."

Exercise Chong Ju was named after a battle in North Korea on 29-30 October 1950, in which 200 Australians from 3RAR, supported by American tanks and aircraft, took on an up-to-600-strong North Korean tank brigade, and captured a North Korean defensive line blocking the United Nations advance north.

During the brief but fierce battle and counter attacks, Australian forces lost nine killed in action (including the



commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Green) and 30 wounded, while inflicting 162 KIA and 10 captured on the North Koreans. Eleven enemy tanks and

two self-propelled artillery guns were also destroyed. The battle is considered a text-book example of a successful combined-arms attack.

PERFORMING UNDER PRESSURE

Corporal Brodie Naunton found himself under intense pressure on 1 May with Mother Nature fighting against him while nearly 300 pairs of eye bored into his back.

Corporal Naunton, currently posted at the Australian Army's School of Armour, was the 'number one' on a Javelin anti-armour missile team scheduled to fire the expensive weapon during Exercise Chong Ju.

Being number one on the Javelin meant Corporal Naunton was tasked to pull the trigger, after carefully locking the system's heat-seeker sights onto a target about a kilometre away.

However, as Corporal Naunton stepped onto the battlefield, in front of nearly 300 spectators, he found the battlefield was already ablaze and his target was lost in a haze of smoke and heat.

Yet, despite the pressure, Corporal Naunton called on all his training and a steady hand to lock on to the 'enemy tank' before firing the rocket – and, yes, hitting it.

"I had a lot of trouble figuring out which heat signature was my target. It turned out it was actually colder than everything else around it," Corporal Naunton said.

"There were a lot of people putting a lot of pressure on me today, so I'm very happy that I actually hit the target."

Corporal Naunton is currently posted to the Australian Army's School of Armour as a section commander at Bin Bah Troop, but is actually an infantryman and will probably get posted back to an infantry battalion next year.

He said he was enjoying his current posting and would recommend it to anyone.

"Being posted to a training unit is definitely good for family time. It's good to be able to plan my year around what's going on at work.

"I do have to say the Army can put a lot of pressure on families, but, I'm pretty lucky in that I've got a wife who copes quite well – and I'm still loving the job.

"I've done a lot of things that a lot of people wouldn't even dream of doing. So in that aspect, I have quite a good job."

