

ISSUE 7 – FEBRUARY 2014

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60



56



48



24



CONTENTS

ISSUE 07 – FEBRUARY 2014

36



28



44



48 COVER STORY
Steadfast Jazz
NATO Response Force
passes ultimate test

56 SOK in action
Afghan special forces

60 MAIN FEATURE
2013 in Review
1st Joint Public Affairs Unit
looks back on a busy year

72 Delayed Promotion
WWII pilot commissioned

74 Desert Rat
Art of War

76 Kiwi in the Gulf
Enjoying pirate patrols

78 Cadet Corner
Kiwi's mark 150 years

82 In Focus
Tips on better pics

20 First Aid
Pre-deployment medical
training

24 Back to the jungle
Marines tackle toughest
Japanese terrain

28 Render Safe
WWII range clearance

36 Southern Katipo
Kiwis host biggest
international exercise

44 Irish Cav shoot
Lighting up Glen of Imaal

12 The Big Picture
Top-End Door Gunner

14 Big Picture Too
Darwin fires CWIS

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**STEADFAST
JAZZ 2013**
NATO Response
Force Tested –
Page 48

NATO photo by Staff
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I met a new character in January this year. An esteemed gentleman by the name of Sir Jeffrey Armiger.

Unlike Sir Humphrey Appleby, his esteemed counterpart in Whitehall, Sir Jeffrey seems to have developed somewhat of a later-life aversion to PR spin and 'bovine excrement' – or BE as he politely refers to it – not long after an unfortunate incident involving a newly acquired MGB Roadster and a large bull.

Sir Jeffrey has agreed (reluctantly, I might add, "because stooping to such things is quite below one's station, my dear fellow") to correspond with **CONTACT** and **COMBAT** magazines whenever he sees sloppy, ambiguous or downright dodgy press releases emanating from the ADF, Parliament House or anywhere else for that matter.

Sir Jeffrey has already brought to our attention the all-too suspicious coincidence of the Australian C-17 departing Australia on Christmas Day only to be declared as "already operating in the Middle East" by our acting Prime Minister, on Boxing Day.

Only days later Sir Jeffrey was back in touch to point out that the ADF's Director General of Air and Space Operations believed the first C-17 left Australia on Boxing Day and our C-17s (plural) did a great job in South Sudan.

Were it not for this heads-up from the esteemed Sir Jeffrey, we at Contact Publishing might not have thought to ask Defence for clarification – officially informed (nearly 24 hours later) that there had indeed been only one C-17 deployed and it did leave on Christmas Day.

Being a non-partisan critic of PR spin and BE, Sir Jeffrey also highlighted a US Air Force assertion that the deployment of a B-52 long-range strategic bomber to Darwin would somehow improve everybody's proficiency in humanitarian aid and disaster relief.

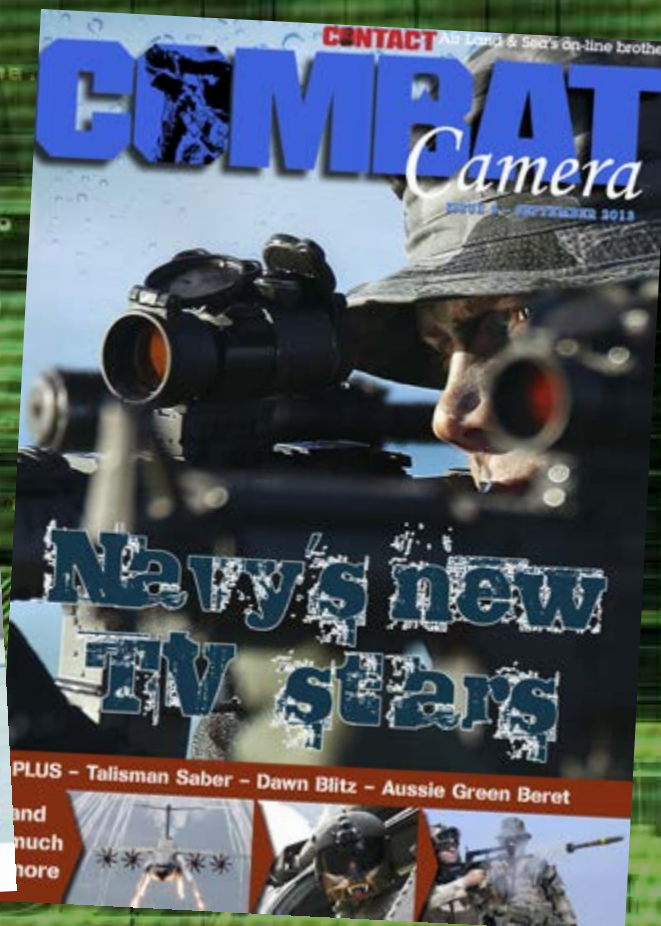
Anyway, Sir Jeffrey Armiger lives – and is a very welcome staff addition at Contact Publishing. So enlivened by his new-found aversion to BE, he is even talking of joining the Facebook community. Stay tuned.

Sincerely,

Brian Hartigan
Managing Editor

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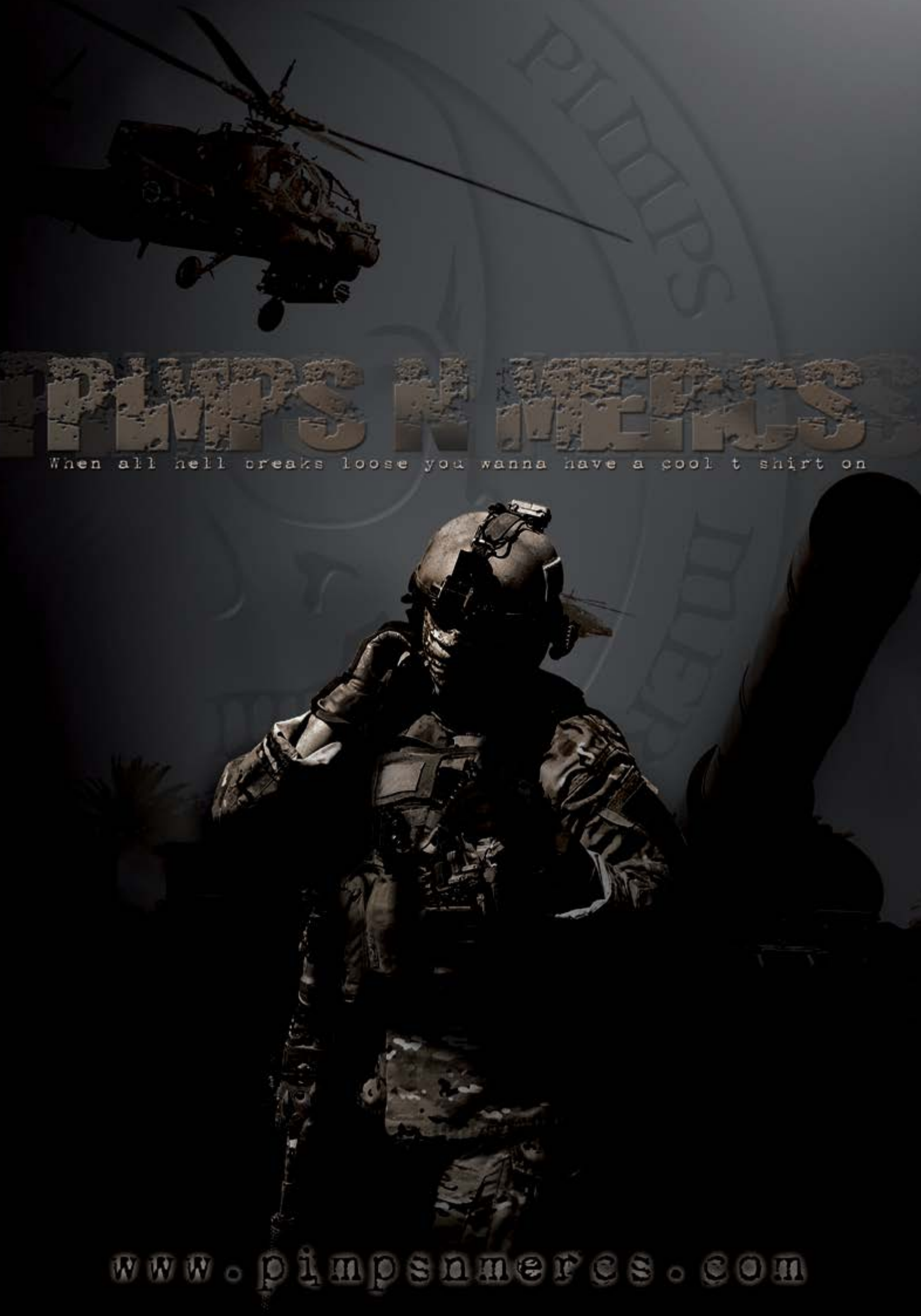
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NEWSIE BITS

Thales Australia has selected Steyr Mannlicher's SL40 grenade launcher as its preferred choice for Thales's new EF88 rifle currently under development for the Australian Defence Force.

A new product from the Austrian company, the SL40 has been chosen by Thales after an extensive testing process.

It was designed to integrate seamlessly

with all EF88 variants and can be fitted in seconds by soldiers in the field without any specialist tools, delivering tactical flexibility.

The SL40 is a lightweight (1.025kg), side-opening grenade launcher with a double-action trigger, lever operated safety

catch and 180mm (7") barrel.

Thales is developing the EF88 rifle for Australia's LAND 125 program, with an F90 export range complementing the offering.

The SL40 will also be available as part of the Thales F90 offering.



British Army gets new kit

British troops will benefit from more than £50million (AU\$95million) of new equipment to help them identify targets more clearly.

New night vision and laser equipment will enable soldiers to spot potential threats earlier during day and night operations.

A laser light that can illuminate targets up to 800m away will be provided to all infantry soldiers. Weighing just 244gm, it fits onto the SA80 rifle to give more accurate firing in low-light conditions.

More than 15,000 new lightweight binoculars have also been ordered, as well as 4000 additional head-mounted night-vision systems specifically for the Army Reserve.



Sergeant Brian D. Richardson, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, fires a 7.62mm GAU-17/A six-barrel machine gun from a UH-1Y Venom helicopter during live-fire training as part of Exercise Koolondong 13 in the Northern Territory.

The exercise, from 28 August to 7 September last year, involved about 700 US personnel drawn from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) based in Okinawa, Japan, who had just finished participating in Exercise Talisman Saber, and about 150 Marines currently on a six-month rotation in Darwin plus 150 Australian soldiers from Darwin-based 5RAR.

The exercise provided an opportunity for US and Australian personnel to conduct a battalion-sized live-fire exercise in a remote environment – and helped validate Bradshaw as a venue for exercises of the size and scope.

The exercise featured day and night live-fire training, including light and heavy machine guns, mortars, artillery and aviation-delivered ordnance from US Marine Harriers and Hornets.

In the past two years, about 200 US Marines have been based in Darwin for about six months each year in a build-up to regular rotations of a 2500-man Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF).



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HMAS Darwin's Close in Weapons System (CIWS) is fired during drills off the south coast of Australia. After months of intensive preparation, HMAS Darwin departed her homeport of Garden Island, Sydney, on 19 January for a seven-month deployment. Commanding Officer Commander Terence Morrison and his crew of 220 personnel will relieve HMAS Melbourne on anti-piracy and maritime security patrols in the Middle East Area of Operations. This deployment is Darwin's sixth to the MEAO and the first since her upgrade in 2007-08. It is also the 57th rotation of a RAN ship to the MEAO since the commencement of the Second Gulf war in 1990.

MINIATURE RIFLES



Four iconic Australian rifles recreated in intricate detail. The collection features the Short Magazine Lee Enfield No 1 Mk 3 Rifle, Owen Machine Carbine, L1A1 SLR and the F88 Austeyr.

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NEWSIE BITS

Southern Ice Patrol

Offshore Patrol Vessel HMNZS Otago under the command of Lieutenant Commander Rob McCaw was deep in the Southern Ocean in early December.

Otago was engaged on a fisheries patrol in Antarctic waters.

Sailors, James Drain (below left) and Wilson Finch got an opportunity to practise their survival skills on an iceberg.

CO HMNZS OTAGO LIEUTENANT COMMANDER ROB MCCAW ATTEMPTS TO CHANNEL THE INTREPID EXPLORERS OF OLD.
ROYAL NEW ZEALAND NAVY PHOTO



Dive skills showcased

A 'Merry Christmas' photo of the Royal New Zealand Navy's Operational Diving Team, taken underwater in the Devonport Naval Base swimming pool, got a lot of attention on Facebook before Christmas. How did they do it? The answer was not revealed, but much speculation was delved into across the World.

Regardless, we thought it worthy of another showing. Happy New Year ODT.



Photo by Chris Weissenborn

Stories from the front line

WORLD PREMIERE

THE LONG WAY HOME

BY DANIEL KEENE

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Photo by Australian Defence Force

THE LONG WAY HOME

BY DANIEL KEENE

WORLD PREMIERE



Photo by Australian Defence Force

We shall overcome

Created from first-hand accounts, *The Long Way Home* reflects the Australian Defence Force’s recent experiences on operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and East Timor as well as humanitarian and disaster relief.

As we approach the centenary of the beginning of The Great War, Australia and the world will pause and find their own ways to explore the impact of this war on their lives and minds. The Australian Defence Force has embarked on an historic endeavour with Sydney Theatre Company

to present this major new work, taking the words and experiences of servicemen and women to create a unique, inspiring and unforgettable event.

British director Stephen Rayne and multi-award-winning Australian writer Daniel Keene have shaped a powerful piece of theatre, featuring military personnel recovering from physical and psychological injuries. These servicemen and women will perform alongside professional actors as part of a broader

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Alpha Surgical Company 1st to care

As soon as the Humvee arrived, the Shock Trauma Platoon corpsmen sprang into action, focusing all their energy on saving lives.

Sailors with Alpha Surgical Company, 1st Medical Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, conducted a mass-casualty drill aboard Camp Pendleton, California, on 10 December, as part of the unit's pre-deployment training for Afghanistan with Combat Logistics Battalion 7.

During the exercise the company constructed a 'forward resuscitative surgical system' supported by a shock trauma platoon.

FRSSs and STPs are small, mobile units consisting of enlisted and commissioned sailors who provide trauma care to combat casualties.

The STP receives patients from the battlefield and provides the first echelon of immediate support, with patients who cannot be stabilised by the STP sent to the FRSS for surgery.

"For every drill, the trainers brought in six or seven patients," Petty Officer 2nd Class Leeroy E. Colon, corpsman, Alpha Surgical Company, said.

"Our job is triaging them at the gate, checking to ensure they are not carrying harmful weapons and taking them into the STP to treat their wounds."

It is important for training scenarios to be as realistic as possible in order to prepare medical staff for real-life operations, so role-playing patients wore prosthetics to simulate serious wounds that may be sustained on the battlefield.

Lieutenant Commander Joe L. Pinon, commanding officer Alpha Surgical Company said they had subject-matter experts from Naval Medical Center San Diego and Camp Pendleton come down to help out with the training.

"We also have a training group to give us a realistic experience during the exercise,



STORY AND PHOTOS
BY CORPORAL TIMOTHY CHILDERS, USMC

using the training aids they provided," Lieutenant Commander Pinon said.

Some of the prosthetics used included amputated limbs, shrapnel wounds and even a 'cut suit' containing fake organs, arteries and pumping blood.

"The cut suit enables surgeons to cut open a patient's simulated body cavity," Lieutenant Commander Pinon said.

"It's excellent training for the surgeons, but it is also great training for the sailors, surgical technicians and nurses because surgeons don't work alone.

"The sooner we get these guys working together as a cohesive team, the sooner they will be able to take care of patients better in theatre."

Many of the sailors had never treated actual casualties before, so the training scenarios provided them with a glimpse of the challenges they may face during a real mass-casualty event at war.

First Surgical Company left for Afghanistan in January as part of the last major Marine command to deploy in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



Petty Officer 2nd Class Leeroy E. Colon calms a 'patient' during a mass casualty drill.

Real 'patient' wearing a fake-abdomen 'cut suit'.



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It's a jungle out there

As day breaks, the already difficult activities ahead such as rappelling, stretcher carries and low-crawling are amplified by harsh terrain, exhaustion and something endearingly referred to as peanut butter mud. Steam rolls off the mud-covered camouflage uniforms of Marines soaked in chilly water as they pause for a moment to drink chicken broth in an attempt to revive their senses. These Marines have just started the Jungle Warfare Training Center's endurance course.

A group of infantry Marines attended the basic jungle skills course 6 to 12 January at the Jungle Warfare Training Center, Camp Gonsalves, Marine Corps Installations Pacific, Japan, and completed the culminating endurance course event to gain a better understanding of operating in the jungle environment typical of the Asia-Pacific region.

Sergeant Jacob S Navarro, an instructor with JWTC, said the course was four miles long and required squad-sized groups to negotiate more than 30 obstacles.

"The Marines will have to perform multiple

hasty rappels, wade and crawl through muddy water that is just barely above freezing, and finally, carry a 160-pound dummy on a makeshift stretcher one mile through harsh jungle terrain," Sergeant Navarro said.

These Marines' commanding officer Captain William O Over said operating in the jungle was vastly different from urban terrain. "Simply moving 200m in the jungle can take two or three hours," he said.

"This training is unique to Okinawa, and we want to make the most of our time here. "As the company progresses through the

PHOTOS AND STORY BY LANCE CORPORAL STEPHEN HIMES



These Marines
are getting
a taste of
something
they have
never had
before

endurance course, the obstacles became more unit oriented and less about individual effort.

"It takes teamwork to move a platoon up and down a cliff, so the endurance course provides a great opportunity to build small-unit leaders at the fire-team and squad levels."

Gunnery Sergeant Jeremy C Stover said the unit had only recently received deployment training at Twentynine Palms, California, which focused combat skills for desert terrain.

"The jungle terrain and hasty rappelling training are not readily available at

state-side facilities," Gunny Stover said.

"These Marines are getting a taste of something they have never had before.

"This is a completely different life experience, and accomplishing this course, and even more so this single event, is an incredible achievement."

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OPERATION RENDER SAFE

GROUP PHOTO OF EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL (EOD) TEAMS
FROM COMBINED JOINT TASK FORCE 663 IN HONIARA, SOLOMON
ISLANDS. PHOTO SERGEANT HAMISH PATERSON



BOMBS AWAY



CLEARANCE DIVERS ABLE SEAMAN LUKE WOODCROFT AND ABLE SEAMAN DANIEL BIRD, HMAS DIAMANTINA, PREPARE EXPLOSIVES TO DESTROY UXO LEFT ON THE SEA FLOOR AT THE RUSSELL ISLANDS. PHOTO ABLE SEAMAN MATT DELORAINE

HMAS TARAKAN BEACHED ON RUSSELL ISLANDS. PHOTO ABLE SEAMAN NICOLAS GONZALEZ

RIGHT: ABLE SEAMAN MICHAEL BURGESS AND LEADING SEAMAN AARON GRILLS LAUNCH A MINE DISPOSAL VEHICLE IN RUSSELL ISLANDS. PHOTO ABLE SEAMAN NICOLAS GONZALEZ



HELICOPTER
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BOMBS AWAY

OPERATION RENDER SAFE 2013

Explosive-ordnance disposal (EOD) techniques developed and refined during operations and conflicts around the world were put to good use on an old battlefield towards the end of last year.

EOD specialists from Australia's Army, Navy and Air Force, together with counterparts from the United States, Canada and New Zealand joined together to use their skills and share experience and techniques in removing antique explosive devices from parts of the Solomon Islands throughout November 2013.

Operation Render Safe is a semi-regular Australian-led activity focused on reducing the threat of explosives left strewn across the Pacific in the wake of WWII.

The operation saw a task force of nearly 200 explosive-ordnance disposal specialists and support staff from the ADF, NZDF, Canadian Armed Forces, the United States Navy and the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force destroy more than 12,000 dangerous items.

Commander of the task force Commander Doug Griffiths said the EOD

specialists located more unexploded WWII ordnance in just three weeks than local police uncover in a year.

The 12,164 items located by the task force between 29 October and 3 December ranged from 1000lb bombs to individual hand grenades – any one of which could easily kill or maim an unsuspecting farmer, fisherman or child.

While the ordnance was predominantly US and Japanese, a range of other material was found, including some French and British devices.



SEE THE SUB
IN ACTION



MASTER SEAMAN SHAWN WEST (CANADA), LIEUTENANT BEAU MULRANEY AND ABLE SEAMAN DANIEL BIRD FORM A CHAIN TO TRANSFER 30MM PROJECTILES ASHORE FOR DESTRUCTION. PHOTO ABLE SEAMAN NICOLAS GONZALEZ

ABLE SEAMAN JOSH LOW AND ABLE SEAMAN BROOKE CALLAGHAN RETREIVE REMUS, AN AUTONOMOUS UNDERWATER VEHICLE USED TO SEARCH FOR ORDNANCE OFF TALAGHI ISLAND. PHOTO ABLE SEAMAN NICOLAS GONZALEZ

RIGHT: ABLE SEAMAN MATT DELORAINE AND ABLE SEAMAN DANIEL BIRD PREPARE TO BLOW UXO ON RUSSELL ISLANDS. PHOTO ABLE SEAMAN NICOLAS GONZALEZ



These items were 'rendered safe', usually by controlled explosion either in situ or at the Solomon Islands main explosive ordnance disposal site near the nation's capital, Honiara.

Commander Griffiths said the results achieved by the task force this year exceeded all expectations.

"I understand that the local police deal with around 10,000 items per year, so for us to locate 10,000 items in our first three weeks is a real credit not just to us but also the partnership we have had with the local police and communities," Commander Griffiths said.

"These extraordinary numbers are also a reflection of the high contamination of some parts of the Solomons.

"We are working here with global experts who estimate that some areas in the Solomons have among the worst explosive-ordnance contamination in the world – even more than Laos or Cambodia.

"Given that these items have been here for around 70 years, the assistance we have had from local villages and communities in finding them has been critical.

"For instance, one day we had a Canadian team working in the mountains more than 2km from the nearest logging track while at the same time we had an Australian team working just a few metres from the edge of the airport in the capital.

"In both cases it was information gained from the

local community that led us to those sites."

Commander Griffiths said ships and divers had also surveyed more than 25sq/km of seabed, including 8km of beachfront near Honiara, and numerous channels in the Russell Islands.

Canadian-contingent boss Captain John Natynczyk said the process for clearing ordnance varied greatly based on type, fuze, state, orientation and condition.

"While some ordnance may be safe to pick up and move manually, others may be deemed too unstable and need to be blown in place," Captain Natynczyk said.

"The pieces of ordnance that were encountered on this operation had been deteriorating under the



elements for more than 70 years.

"This creates a more challenging task for our operators than when dealing with new ordnance."

He said the demanding environment gave Canadian Armed Forces personnel the opportunity to test and develop their skills in a scenario that was not easily replicated at home.

"Each EOD operator learned a lot. We also found that our EOD operators are on par with those of our allies."

"Backed by a strong technical background and enforced with flexible problem-solving skills, our EOD operators cleared some of the most challenging

pieces of ordnance of the mission."

Operation Render Safe was not confined to land, with three Australian Navy ships, Diamantina, Tarakan and Labuan working alongside the Solomon Islands Pacific patrol boats during the operation.

For Seaman Luke Ellemor, fresh out of initial training and still completing his competency log book, Operation Render Safe presented opportunities to do things he would never have imagined doing only a year ago.

Deployed to sea for the first time aboard HMAS Tarakan, Seaman Ellemor has filled in as a watch-keeper in

the main operations room, launched zodiacs off an idyllic tropical beach, helped rebuild a school on a remote island and ventured into the jungle with a Canadian Navy EOD team in search of unexploded ordnance.

But the best part, he said, was working directly with the local community.

"After we finished the work on the school, the look on the kids faces when they saw their new classrooms was worth all the work we did in the heat – they were just so happy to see what we had done," Seaman Ellemor said.

Operation Render Safe 2014 will see the ADF and its partners return to Bougainville.

SERGEANT CHRISTOPHER ROHWEDER, 20TH EXPLOSIVES ORDNANCE SQUADRON, 6TH ENGINEER REGIMENT, AND SERGEANT HADLEY MUNAMUA, ROYAL SOLOMON ISLANDS POLICE FORCE, LOAD PROJECTILES AT HELLS POINT, HONIARA, INTO A STORAGE CONTAINER TO BE DESTROYED LATER. PHOTO SERGEANT HAMISH PATERSON

ABLE SEAMAN MATT DELORAINE PREPARES PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES (PE 4) TO DESTROY UXO ON RUSSELL ISLANDS DURING OPERATION RENDER SAFE 2013. PHOTO ABLE SEAMAN NICOLAS GONZALEZ



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Around 200 battle-ready troops and 280 tonnes of equipment and vehicles embarked on HMNZS Canterbury in Wellington on 1 November as the first stages of the largest ever multi-national amphibious exercise conducted in New Zealand began to take shape. Exercise Southern Katipo 2013 aimed to test the capability of the New Zealand Defence Force to mount a medium-scale amphibious operation involving its own maritime, land and air assets working side-by-side with coalition partners.



**ABOVE: A ROYAL NEW ZEALAND AIR FORCE NH90.
WATCH: DRAMATIC ENTRY INTO ENEMY TERRITORY.**

BELOW: HMNZS CANTERBURY AT THE PORT OF TIMARU.

BOTTOM LEFT: SOLDIERS AND THEIR PINZGAUER VEHICLES COME ASHORE IN LCMs FROM HMNZS CANTERBURY IN AKAROA HARBOUR.



Three ships – HMNZ Ships Canterbury and Wellington and the French frigate FNS Prairial – and 18 military aircraft including two C-17 Globemasters from the United States were deployed for Exercise Southern Katipo 2013, with up to 2200 personnel from New Zealand and nine other nations involved.

The exercise proper ran from 4 to 29 November, with the primary area of operations centered on the airport and port of Timaru, south of Christchurch, on the South Island.

Commander of Exercise Southern Katipo 2013 New Zealand Army Colonel John Howard each of the services brought specific skills that they generally grew in isolation.

"Through Southern Katipo, we are blending all of those skills on land, at sea and in the air to deliver an effect," Colonel Howard said.

"I believe everyone participating in Southern Katipo will receive an experience that will let them grow professionally.

"The exercise will be like an assault course that everyone knows they have to finish.

"We all know we will have to climb, run, drop, crawl, swing and grab things over the next few weeks to achieve what we have to.

"The challenge will be to find all of the hurdles and work out how to clear them together.

"We have great opportunities here to train for beach assaults and to conduct non-opposed amphibious landings, to parachute in, and to spread out for a whole range of tactical tasks."

Commander Amphibious Task Force Royal New Zealand Navy Captain Jim Gilmour said exercises such as Southern Katipo helped the NZDF prepare for a variety of contingencies and ensure that New Zealand could play its part with other nations to assist its Pacific neighbours, should the need arise.

This exercise's training scenario was set in the fictional south-west Pacific



TOP LEFT: A NEW ZEALAND SOLDIER HOLDS THE LINE IN THE FACE OF CIVIL PROTEST.

ABOVE: KIWI SOLDIERS LIAM HARRIS, WITH HIS DOG XIA, AND RICHARD DOBBIN.



WATCH: URBAN ASSAULT.

BELOW: A LOCAL BOY ALERTS NEW ZEALAND SOLDIERS TO SUSPICIOUS PERSONS FURTHER UP THE STREET IN WAIMATE.



country of Mainlandia, which required intervention from the 'League of Pacific Nations' to restore law and order as political tension between two ethnic groups, the Bekarans and Alpirians, threatened stability.

Evacuation of more than 80 citizens from the port of Bluff aboard HMNZS Canterbury bound for Port Chalmers in Dunedin to escape the political upheaval marked a successful conclusion to the exercise.

Having restored peace and stability in Mainlandia coalition forces withdrew.

Colonel Howard said the coalition had successfully secured the province of Bekara and handed over to Mainlandian forces, both military and police.

"We have restored a level of law and order that has allowed the community to feel safe again," he said.

Commander Joint Forces New Zealand Air Vice Marshal Kevin Short said he was very pleased with how the exercise unfolded, and that the exercises aims were achieved.

"This exercise showed we have made great progress in our amphibious capability and in joint effects," Air Vice Marshal Short said.

"I know everyone involved has gained new experiences and skills, learned much about working with our sister services, and enjoyed operating in the coalition of 10 nations."

Exercise Director Colonel Paul Van Den Broek said one area of the exercise that exceeded all expectations was the volume of community support.

"I've heard stories of locals dropping off baked goods to the soldiers, but my favourite story is the one of an elderly woman walking home with her shopping who tripped over, only to be picked up by six burly soldiers who carried her shopping and escorted her home safely," Colonel Van Den Broek said.



ABOVE: PRIVATE H. GERMAN, CORPORAL J. STEVEN AND LANCE CORPORAL A. JONES FROM AUSTRALIA'S 1ST BATTALION, ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT (1RAR).

LEFT: AUSTRALIAN MILITARY POLICEMAN SERGEANT STEVEN GOVETT AND HIS DOG KIRA.

Australia's commitment includes a contingent of 150 people, with soldiers from the 3rd Brigade's Ready Combat Team and support staff from the wider ADF.

Other participants came from Canada, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Tonga, United Kingdom and the United States.

Australia's Chief of Joint Operations Lieutenant General Ash Power said Exercise Southern Katipo was a valuable opportunity to build ADF, NZDF, and regional militaries' interoperability in planning and responding to regional humanitarian-assistance and disaster-relief contingencies under the Anzac Ready Response Force initiative between the Australian and New Zealand Defence Forces.



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Bright future for Irish Cavalry

Several elements of the Irish Cavalry Corps lit up the Glen of Imaal south of Dublin in a major range shoot just before Christmas.

Mounted and dismounted troops of the corps were exercised by day and night with Scorpion and MOWAG Piranha III vehicles, as well as mortars, opening fire.

As a result of Cavalry Corps training policy in recent years, the multi-skilling of personnel and the procurement of modern armoured vehicles fitted with sophisticated surveillance equipment, the Cavalry Corps has become one of Ireland's primary assets in intelligence,

surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR) operations.

ISTAR links surveillance, reconnaissance and target acquisition systems and sensors and encompasses the collection and management of information and intelligence to provide situational awareness for commanders.

While cavalry is generally associated with their armoured vehicles, all elements of the Irish Cavalry Corps are trained to operate in mounted as well as dismounted roles, enabling them to operate in the most appropriate mode in a variety of environments, from urban streets to thick forest.

PHOTOS BY CORPORAL NEVILLE COUGHLAN





IRISH DEFENCE
FORCES YEAR IN
REVIEW 2013

Such flexibility is vital to allow the cavalry squadrons, as the brigades main reconnaissance asset, to penetrate cover, establish contact with third parties and carry out reconnaissance missions that are either beyond the capability of routine infantry patrolling or are in areas that are inaccessible by vehicles.

Another standard role – which would be considered highly unusual for us Aussies – is to see Irish Cavalry elements employed on urban streets escorting armoured vans delivering cash to banks.

In the 1980s the Irish Cavalry Corps received the CVR(T) or Scorpion light tank, with two variants of the MOWAG Piranha III –the Close Reconnaissance Vehicle (CRV) and Medium Reconnaissance Vehicle (MRV) – entering service in 2008.

Ireland retired its fleet of venerable Panhard AML 90 armoured vehicles earlier last year (featured in COMBAT Camera issue #4).



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*A Polish Leopard II on the charge. Corporal Madis Veltman
Estonian Army*



and all that jazz



The crew of a Polish Wolverine APC practice bugout drills during live-fire exercises at the Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area, Poland. NATO photo by Staff Sergeant Ian Houlding British Army



American and Ukrainian soldiers protect an American headquarters during Exercise Steadfast Jazz



A Slovenian army tactical air controller calls for close air support. NATO photo by US Army Sergeant AM LaVey



WATCH NATO TV REPORT



Multinational forces conduct complex and highly integrated operations on land, sea and in the air over northern Europe during Exercise Steadfast Jazz 2013

Exercise Steadfast Jazz concluded successfully on 8 November last year after two weeks of intense multinational joint military training in locations across Europe.

About 6000 personnel from 28 NATO member nations as well as three-partner nations (Sweden, Finland and Ukraine) trained together in a combined multinational setting.

Aside from exercising the military forces of each country in close cooperation with allied forces, Exercise Steadfast Jazz 2013 seconded as a certification shakeout for NATO's rotational on-line Response Force.

NATO Response Force is a quick reaction force of up to 13,000 troops that can be deployed anywhere, in different configurations, to perform a wide range of missions at short notice.

Joint Force Command Brunssum Headquarters successfully met a host of demanding training objectives and was officially certified to lead potential NATO Response Force missions in 2014.

Commander Joint Force Command Brunssum, General Hans-Lothar Domrose said that as the ISAF mission in Afghanistan wound down, NATO's challenge would be to maintain the cohesiveness and compatibility it has achieved through 12 years of warfighting.

"Exercise Steadfast Jazz was an important step in building and maintaining that high level of effectiveness and interoperability," he said.



A Ukrainian BTR-80 APC at the Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area, Poland, during a live-fire phase of Exercise Steadfast Jazz. NATO photo by Staff Sergeant Ian Houlding British Army



Private Bartokomies Kamionka from Poland's 12th Mechanised Brigade stands guard through rain and cold. NATO photo by Staff Sergeant Ian Houlding British Army



A Polish Wolverine crewman takes a defensive position during a live-fire phase of Exercise Steadfast Jazz. NATO photo by Staff Sergeant Ian Houlding British Army

"NATO Response Force is the 'tip of the spear' in terms of our ability to respond to an emerging crisis, which is why realistic and demanding exercises like Steadfast Jazz are essential in maintaining and enhancing the effectiveness of allied deployable forces."

General Philip Breedlove, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, said the multinational soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines he saw in action during the exercise demonstrated an exceptionally high level of skill and prowess.

"The opportunity for troops from 28 different member nations, along

with Alliance partners, to train and operate together is invaluable," General Breedlove said.

"Steadfast Jazz is what NATO is all about – our ability to defend ourselves together with a high-level of skill and effectiveness."

While headquarters staffs wrestled with 'big-picture' operational challenges, forces deployed in the sea, land and air honed their abilities to work together in a comprehensive multinational environment.

Naval vessels deployed in the Baltic Sea, aircraft took to the skies of central Europe, and land forces participated in a live

exercise in western Poland.

The exercise culminated in a firepower demonstration attended by senior NATO officials, members of the diplomatic corps and invited observers from Russia and China.

The Steadfast series of exercises are part of NATO's efforts to maintain connected and interoperable forces at a high-level of readiness, with 17 exercises in the series held across 14 different countries so far.

General Domrose said he was fully satisfied that NATO's combined joint force had met all of its training objectives.

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40 SAs on Iron Moon

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AustraliaPHOTOS BY CORPORAL BRIAN HARTIGAN
ARMY NEWSPAPER UNIT 1999

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has approved the appointment of General Peter Cosgrove as the 26th Governor General of Australia.

The 2001 Australian of the Year served in the Australian Army for 40 years, retiring as Chief of the Defence Force in 2005.

He won the Military Cross with 9RAR in Vietnam in 1971 and in 2000 was made a Companion of the Order of Australia for his leadership of INTERFET (where both photos were taken).

General Cosgrove will take over from Quentin Bryce in March.



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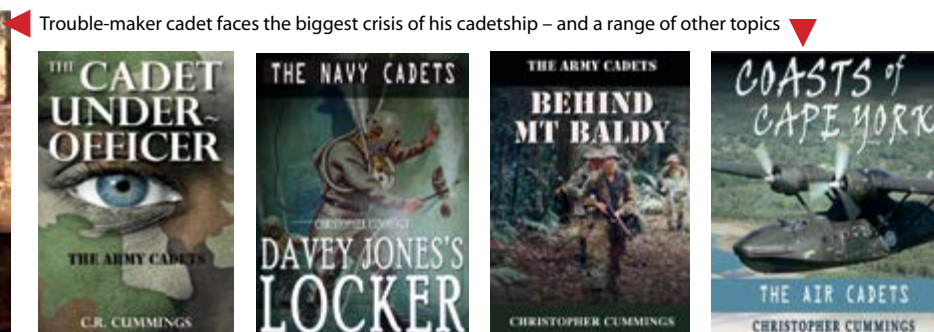


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SPECIALIST CONNOR MENDEZ
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OPAL VAUGHN

Afghanistan's 1st Company, 6th Special Operations Kandak (SOK) conducted a US-mentored security operation in Bati Kot district, Nangarhar province on 10 January.

During the clearing operation designed to disrupt insurgent activity in the Charhar Deh and Meshwani villages, the commandos discovered a weapons cache with five AK-47s, one rocket-propelled grenade launcher with six rounds and two sniper rifles.

In the past, insurgents have used Bati Kot to smuggle weapons and ammunition and to launch attacks along the province's Highway 7, a spokesman for the commandos said.

District Governor Haji Ghalib said he believed that operations such as this conducted by the commandos were integral in assisting with security efforts in the area, and he hoped they would continue.



HIGH ON THE HOG *for Christmas*



PETTY OFFICER BRADLEY MARTIN CAN'T BELIEVE SANTA FOUND HMAS MELBOURNE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ARABIAN SEA, WHILE THE CREW TOOK TIME OUT FOR A SLAP-UP BUFFET LUNCH AND A GAME OF CRICKET



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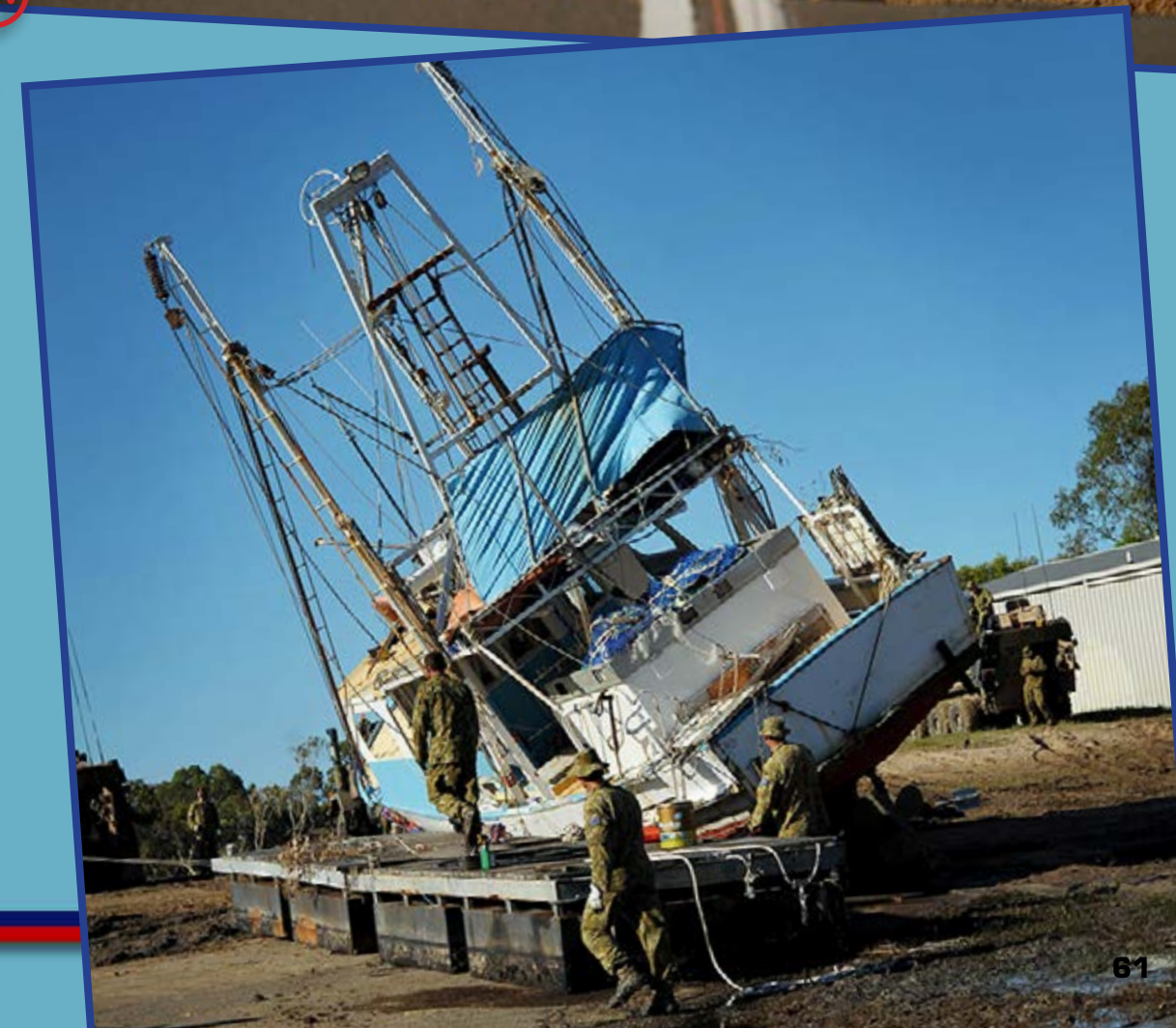


Australia's Artillery Training and Advisory Team – Two at Camp Alamo, Kabul, enhancing the capability of their counterparts in the Afghan National Army's School of Artillery. Established in 2010, the school is now considered autonomous, reflecting the hastening transition to Afghan National Security Forces control across the country. Photo by Corporal Christopher Dickson. View video by Sergeant Brent Tero.

Captain Matthew Dobney and Captain Nicholas Trotter discuss plans to move a temporary bridge into place at Bundaberg, Queensland after elements of the Australian Army's 7th Brigade were deployed to the flood-affected region on Operation Queensland Flood Assist II. The ground force conducted various tasks within the area in conjunction with the local council, emergency services and other organisations to restore Bundaberg's essential services and logistics channels including the construction of a temporary bridge to reconnect the main supply route. Photo by Corporal Janine Fabre. Watch videos by Corporal Ray Vance.



Bravo Battery, 1-9 Field Artillery from Fort Stewart Georgia, USA, conducted intensive training and fire-missions to support operations in Uruzgan province, Afghanistan. The gunners, based out of Forward Operating Base Hadrian in Deh Rawud district, were tasked with providing offensive support to Combined Team Uruzgan missions using M777 A2 Howitzers, firing high-explosive, illumination and GPS-guided Excalibur rounds. Photo by Captain Jesse Platz. Watch video by Leading Seaman Andrew Dakin.



1st Joint Public Affairs Unit – 2013 in Review

PHOTO BY CAPTAIN JESSE PLATZ
WATCH VIDEO BY LEADING SEAMAN ANDREW DAKIN



A group of mortarmen serving in Afghanistan in March were the first mortar element from the 7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (7RAR) to deploy to a war zone since Vietnam. A section of nine soldiers provided a combat-ready, offensive-support capability for about 400 personnel of the 7RAR Task Group and remained on constant standby to react to short-notice fire missions. 7RAR's Mortar Platoon was re-raised on 27 January 2011, following the delinking of 5/7RAR in 2006, and had not seen operational service as an independent mortar element since the battalion's tour of Vietnam in 1968.

PHOTO BY MAJOR CHRIS LINDEN
WATCH VIDEO BY LEADING SEAMAN ANDREW DAKIN



An RAAF C-17 flies past two Mi-17 helicopters from the Afghan National Army's Kandahar Air Wing (KAW) preparing to depart Multi National Base - Tarin Kot. The Uruzgan-based 4th Brigade of the Afghan National Army 205 Corps took major steps in perfecting its logistic-resupply and casualty-evacuation capabilities by using helicopters from the KAW.

PHOTO BY CORPORAL MELINA YOUNG
WATCH VIDEO BY [UNKNOWN]



Musician Jade Slater, Corporal Roxanne Moxham and Leading Seaman Tracy Kennedy stand at attention during the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing in Ypres, Belgium, on ANZAC Day.

PHOTO BY CAPTAIN J ELLUL
WATCH VIDEO BY PETTY OFFICER PHILLIP CULLINAN



The Australian led Artillery Training and Advisory Team marked the successful completion of its mission with a transition ceremony at the Afghan National Army's School of Artillery on 1 April when the school became fully autonomous.



1st Joint Public Affairs Unit – 2013 in Review



Flying Officer Will Drewitt-Smith interacts with Afghan children during a dismounted patrol in Tarin Kot, Afghanistan. Airfield Defence Guards from 1 and 2 Airfield Defence Squadron were responsible for base security at Tarin Kot until its closure later in the year.
Photo by US Army Sergeant Jessi Ann McCormick.
View video by Leading Seaman Andrew Dakin.



VIEW VIDEO BY CORPORAL RAY VANCE . PHOTO BY LEADING AIRCRAFTMAN OLIVER CARTER



Afghanistan wasn't the only active deployment area for Australian personnel during 2013. In May, Sergeant Hamish Paterson visited South Sudan and Sinai.
ABOVE: Chief Joint Operations Lieutenant General Ash Power boards a UN helicopter during a visit to Australian personnel deployed on Operation Aslan in South Sudan.
LEFT: Sergeant John Saunders, Corporal Adam Hanley, Corporal Natasha Senior and Sergeant Adrian Cocker are an Australian team of clerical and pay staff responsible for administering Australian soldiers, sailors and airmen in the Sinai as part of a Operation Mazurka.



Many members of the Townsville-based 3rd Brigade deployed to the Townsville Field Training Area from 9 May to 1 June for the brigade's Combined Arms Training Activity (CATA) in the leadup to the major biennial exercise, Talisman Saber.

1st Joint Public Affairs Unit – 2013 in Review

PHOTO AND VIDEO BY SERGEANT MICK DAVIS



Thousands of people from around Australia converged on the small town of Yungaburra on the Atherton Tablelands in north Queensland for the opening of the Avenue of Honour on the banks of Lake Tinaroo. The Avenue of Honour is dedicated to the memory of those men who gave their lives serving their country during the war in Afghanistan. The project was the inspiration of the Chuck family following the loss of their son Ben as a result of a helicopter crash in Kandahar province, Afghanistan in 2010. From its modest conception, based on a small government grant, it grew through public support, donations and enthusiasm to become a major national monument dedicated to the memories of the soldiers lost in the conflict. It is one of the few monuments of its type outside of Canberra. Family members and friends of those who are honoured travelled from all parts of the country to be there for the dedication of the memorial. The Memorial Wall was officially unveiled by CDF General David Hurley and Victoria Cross winner Ben Roberts-Smith.

Australian and US special forces successfully cleared an objective at the Urban Operations Training Facility at Shoalwater Bay Training Area during exercise Talisman Saber 2013. Talisman Saber, from 15 July to 6 August, was a US-led Australian-supported exercise conducted primarily in Australia to improve combat training, readiness and interoperability between the armed forces of both countries, across a wide spectrum of military activities. Approximately 21,000 US and 7000 Australian Defence Force personnel were involved in the exercise, alongside other Australian-government agencies including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, AusAID, Australian Federal Police and the Australian Civil-Military Centre.

PHOTO BY SERGEANT MICK DAVIS
VIDEO BY ABLE SEAMAN LEE-ANNE MACK



VIDEO BY SERGEANT MICK DAVIS AND CORPORAL BILL SOLOMOU
PHOTO BY CORPORAL JAKE SIMS



Corporal Cameron Baird MG was repatriated to Australia in July after becoming the 40th (and hopefully last) Australian soldier killed in action in Afghanistan.



A load team prepares to hook a freight container to a US Army CH-47 Chinook at Forward Operating Base Hadrian during the FOB's final 'deconstruction'. Hadrian, closed in June, was the last coalition FOB in Uruzgan. Photo by Corporal Mark Doran. Video by Corporal Chris Moore.

1st Joint Public Affairs Unit – 2013 in Review



The last Australian Army CH-47 Chinook helicopter left the Middle East Area of Operations in September. Rotary Wing Group 8 departed Afghanistan after operating two Chinooks out of Kandahar Airfield for four months. Australia sustained two Chinooks at Kandahar as part of an American Aviation Task Force since 2006, operating during summer months. Photo by Petty Officer Phillip Cullinan. Video by Corporal Chris Moore and Petty Officer Phillip Cullinan.



Special Air Service Regiment (SASR) troops prepare to secure the bridge of the bulk carrier Double Providence during maritime counter-terrorism training as part of Exercise Iron Moon, held off the coast of Exmouth, north-west Australia, in September. Photo by Corporal Christopher Dickson. Video by Warrant Officer Class 2 Rob Nyffenegger.

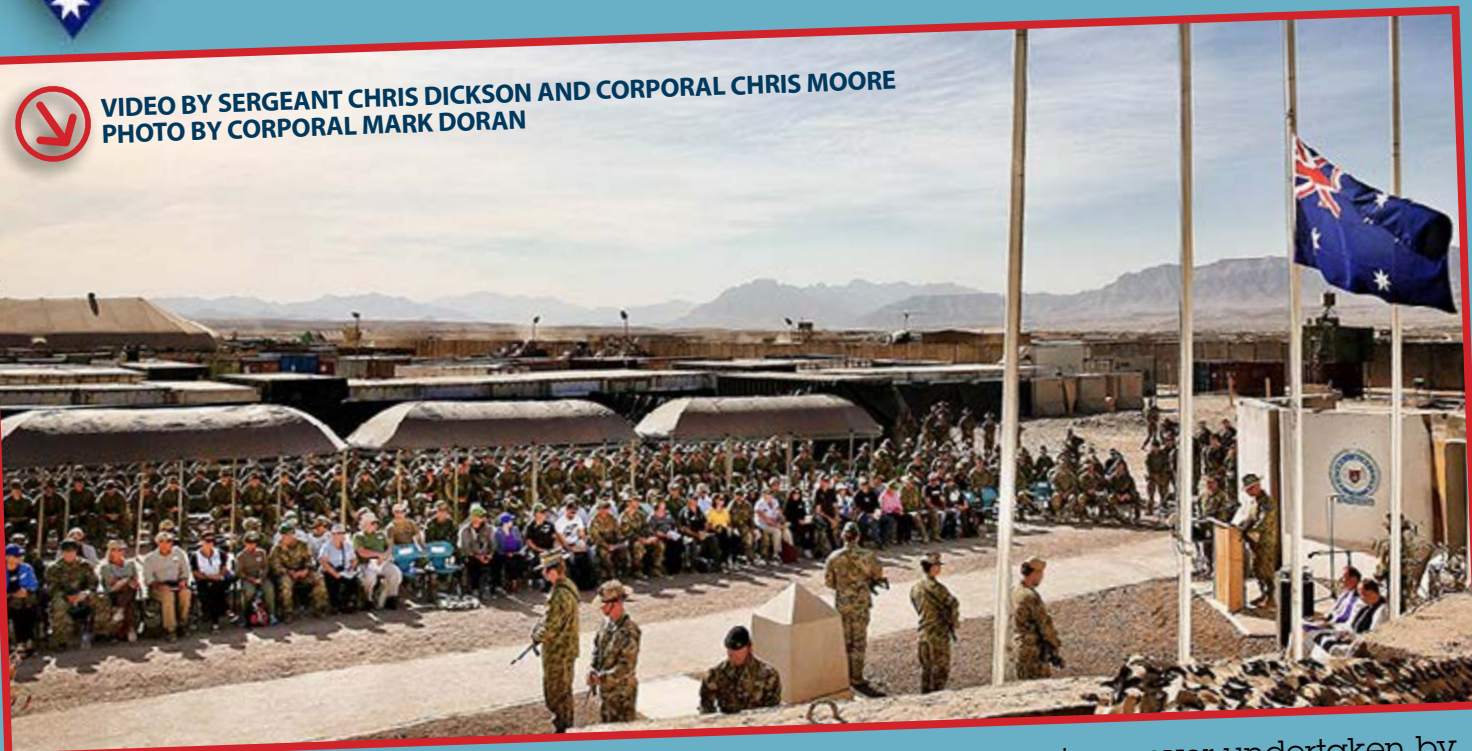


PHOTOS AND VIDEO BY CORPORAL CHRIS MOORE

ABOVE: Leading Aircraftman Matthew Kristic on patrol near Tarin Kot. RIGHT: Army combat engineer Sapper Callan Chapman searches a cave. Members of Security Force 2, based at Multi National Base - Tarin Kot, conducted a screening patrol through a nearby village in October. The patrol comprised RAAF Airfield Defence Guards, army engineers and a military working dog team. Their mission was to sweep through a series of small caves on the outskirts of the village searching for unexploded ordnance and other items of interest, and to interact with locals. Airfield Defence Guards, responsible for the physical security of MNB - TK, conducted regular patrols through Tarin Kot and the immediate area.



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VIDEO BY SERGEANT CHRIS DICKSON AND CORPORAL CHRIS MOORE
PHOTO BY CORPORAL MARK DORAN

In what was surely one of the most moving and magnanimous gestures ever undertaken by the ADF, family members of Australian KIAs were taken to Multi National Base – Tarin Kot on 2 November to participate in a commemoration ceremony for the fallen.



PHOTO BY CORPORAL JAKE SIMS
VIDEO BY CORPORAL JANINE FABRE

It was an almost traditional end to the year with elements of the ADF despatched for cleanup-assistance operations in a natural disaster zone – this time in the Philippines.



PHOTO BY CORPORAL CHRIS MOORE
VIDEO BY WO2 ROB NYFFENEGGER

One of the last people to leave Multi-National Base - Tarin Kot on 15 December was Leading Aircraftman Noel Klæhn who was keen to send a message home before leaving. The last Australians left Tarin Kot four days after Afghan National Security Forces officially assumed control of the base, on 11 December.

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Late promotion

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At 93-years-old, WWII Spitfire pilot Ken Wright proved it's never too late to give up on a dream of promotion in the RAAF.

Just before Christmas last year, Mr Wright was brought to Canberra on a pretext, but, rather than being inducted as a life member of the RAAF Association, however, Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Geoff Brown had a bigger surprise for the old-timer.

Winding back the clock – then 22-year-old Flight Sergeant Ken Wright had applied for commission, passed the tests and celebrated with his colleagues at the officers mess.

Six days later, with his promotion not yet officially ratified, Flight Sergeant Wright was on his 20th mission, undertaking photographic surveillance in an unarmed Spitfire over northern Germany when he was fired on by a Messerschmitt 109.

"I had turned on my camera and started the run when an Me109 appeared in my rear vision mirror," he said.

"I had no guns and no training in fighter tactics, so I guessed 'one is up the creek without a paddle'.

"I made an evasive move and his burst hit one wing, leaving one aileron flapping in the slipstream. But I was still able to hold the plane level.

"Eventually he fired again and this burst strafed the cockpit, caused me a lot of shrapnel injury and destroyed much of my instruments – and I could smell petrol.

"So, I decided I had to bail out before being shot again, or burnt to death in an explosion.

"I remembered my escape drill although I had never jumped before – undo the harness straps, turn the aeroplane upside down as there were no ejection seats, and fall out.

"As I floated down my adversary circled, and I can remember wondering if he would shoot, but he apparently decided I would be caught very easily.

"In fact, I met him shortly after I was captured and he shook my hand and said 'one day we'll be friends'."

Flight Sergeant Wright was interred at a number of stalags before escaping three years later, just in time to join US forces at the Elbe on Victory in Europe Day.

With the war in Europe over, forces beginning to demobilise and his promotion paperwork lost, Flight Sergeant Wright

was told to forget about his promotion and, while he pursued it no further, it remained at the back of his mind for the next 60-odd years.

Then, on the aforementioned family outing to Canberra in December last, Ken Wright found himself made up as an honorary flight lieutenant in the modern RAAF.

Presenting the honorary rank to Flight Lieutenant Wright (Retd) in front of family and friends, Air Marshal Brown said he felt it was important to remember the contribution of past members who helped shape the air force of today.

"The values demonstrated by Flight Lieutenant Wright during his service mirror those held by the modern Air Force," Air Marshal Brown said.

Flight Lieutenant Ken Wright (Retd) was surprised and visibly moved by the unexpected honour.



Main photo by Petty Officer Rick Prideaux, digitally altered by COMBAT Camera

Heavy Metal

Desert
Rats'

historic
year

Photos Corporal Ross Fernie RLC

Artist Anna Redwood and 7th
Armoured Brigade commander
Brigadier James Woodham
admire the Desert Rat

Under the guidance of a British war artist, metalsmiths from 2 Close Support Battalion constructed a sculpture to commemorate the last Afghan deployment for 7th Armoured Brigade – The Desert Rats.

Successful portrait artist Anna Redwood was invited to Afghanistan by 7 Brigade after they saw her earlier work for the Royal Regiment of Scotland.

In 2013, 7 Brigade celebrated its 75th Anniversary and its final tour of Afghanistan as an armoured division before re-rolling as infantry this year.

As well as painting portraits of individual soldiers in theatre, Anna thought it would also be good to mark the brigade's time as an armoured division in no more fitting way than to create a substantial sculpture made from parts salvaged from damaged or destroyed brigade vehicles.

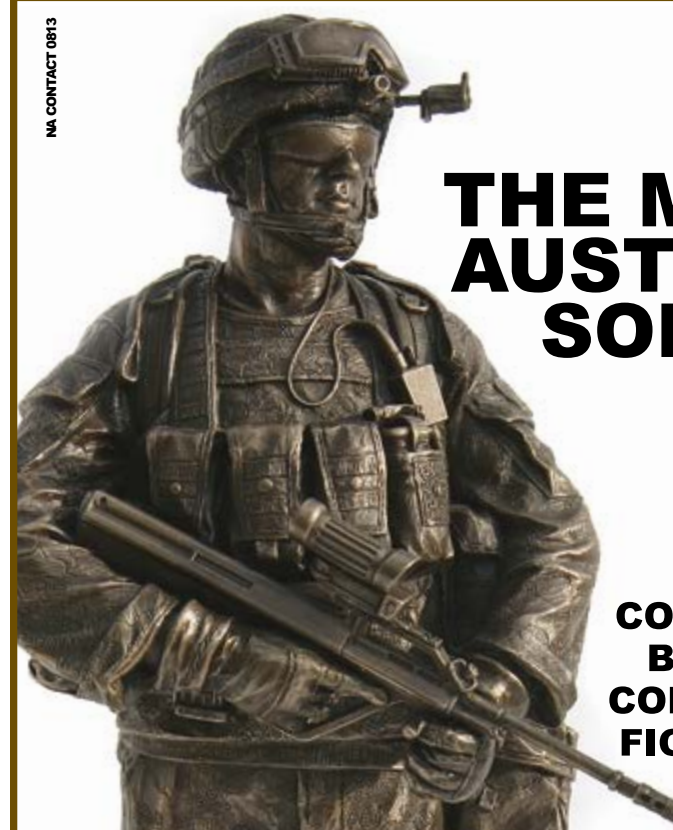
Staff Sergeant Lee Murray, 2 Close Support Battalion, who oversaw construction of the new desert rat, which stands at more than 10 feet tall and weighs more than half a tonne, said it was challenging to build something on that scale.

"We are very pleased with the outcome and it will be a great memento for the Desert Rats of Op Herrick 19," he said.

Following 7 Brigade's tour at Camp Bastion, the desert rat moved to Hohne, Germany, and will eventually settle in the UK when the brigade relocates in 2015.



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Kiwi landlubber at home on Pirate Patrol

Darin Kauwhata, from New Zealand's largest and highest inland town of Kaikohe, has no doubts about the career choice he made when he joined the Royal New Zealand Navy.

He is now doing a job he loves and working with close friends on board the frigate HMNZS Te Mana during its current deployment on counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden.

Leading Electronics Technician Kauwhata, 25, is responsible for the command and weapons systems on board the ship.

LET Kauwhata is also the ship's fire-control operator, which involves bringing the five-inch gun and other weapons systems to bear on potential targets.

In his leadership role on the ship LET Kauwhata provides guidance, mentoring and supervision to 'newbies' on the ship.

Building up a team among fellow crew members is something he really enjoys.

"Shipmates may be strangers at first, but it isn't long before they become lifelong friends," he said.

"Coming together and working as a team to get a job done is amazing.

"This deployment makes me feel that we as a unit are doing our part, building relationships with other navies.

"It has been one big highlight and something I will never forget."

Leading Electronics Technician Darin Kauwhata onboard HMNZS Te Mana as a German Lynx passes by.



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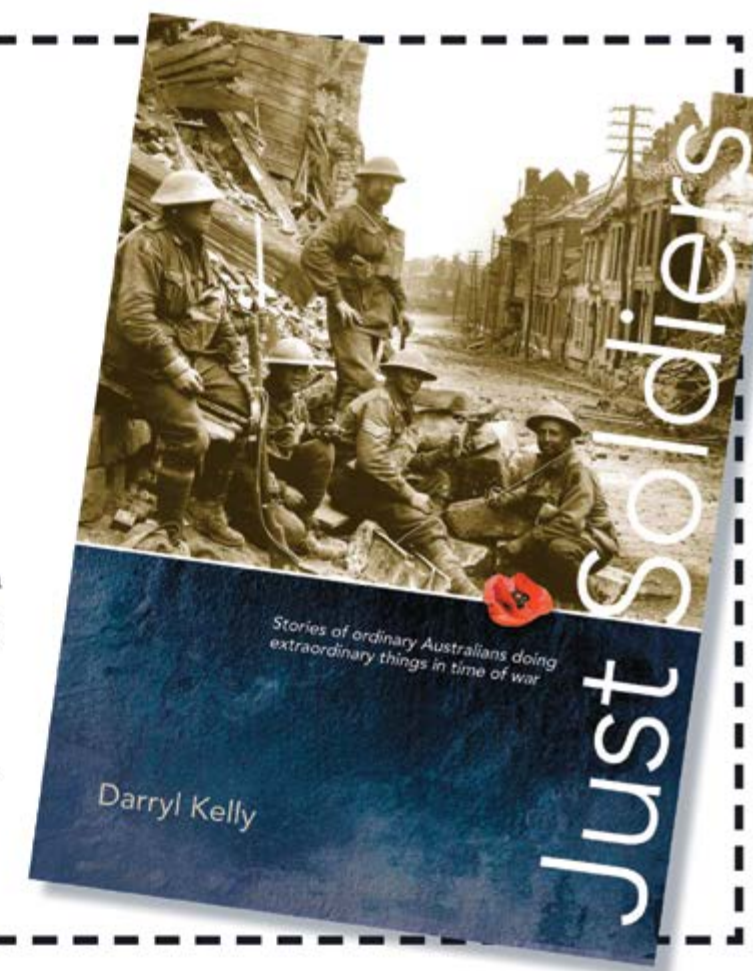
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JUST SOLDIERS: STORIES OF ORDINARY AUSTRALIANS DOING EXTRAORDINARY THINGS IN TIME OF WAR

by Darryl Kelly

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

Available at all good book shops or www.anzacday.org.au





Frosty start to anniversary

In 2014 New Zealand Cadet Forces celebrate their 150th anniversary having kicked off in 1864 with the Dunedin High School Cadet Unit, now Otago Boys' High School.

Cadets in New Zealand have been through many phases – even 'benefiting' from a period of compulsory military training in the lead-up to WWI when every male aged 14 to 21 was required to undergo military training.

In 1962, with voluntary cadet numbers peaking at about 55,000 (larger than the NZ Defence Force of the day), the government decided to disband the cadets altogether, because they were too large to

administer and cost too much to fund. But, through community lobbying and the establishment of an ongoing parent-support-committees model, the cadets survived, officially known since 1971 as the New Zealand Cadet Forces.

Today NZCF, with around 3400 members, is a modern organisation with training that includes foot drill, rifle drill, GSK (general service knowledge), radio procedure, marksmanship, physical training and first aid.

Adventure-based training including bushcraft, weather reading, survival training, instructional technique and leadership are also undertaken. Cadets are not members of NZ

Defence Forces, but enjoy Defence support for authorised activities such as NZCF promotional and instructional courses and exercises.

To mark their 150th Anniversary in style, about 1200 cadets – roughly half of whom getting a bonus free flight on an RNZAF Hercules or B757 – converged on Waiouru Military Camp in the middle of the North Island for Exercise Cadet150 from 24 to 30 January.

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

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



Despite being on the North Island in summer, Waiouru produced overnight temps as low as -2C – which did little to dampen enthusiasm or banter around the lines.



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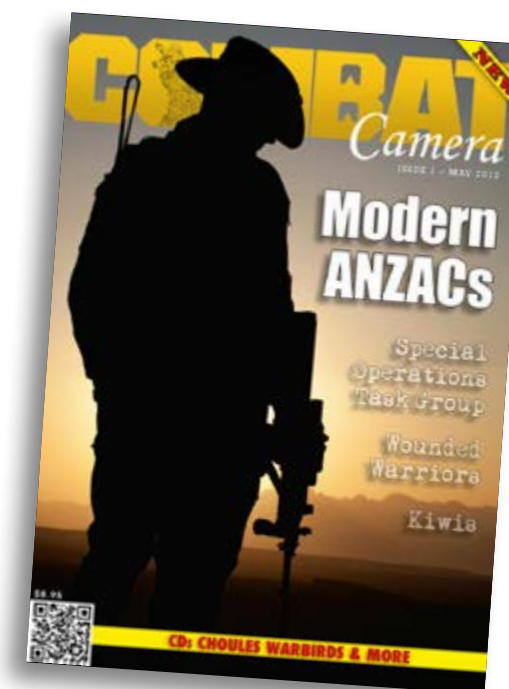
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IN FOCUS

WITH BRIAN HARTIGAN, MANAGING EDITOR

COMBAT CAMERA IS ALL ABOUT PHOTOS - SO WHERE BETTER TO GET TIPS ON TAKING PHOTOS THAT GET PUBLISHED?

Last issue I discussed composition, and briefly mentioned (in the caption of the segmented photo) about a 'rule of thirds'. So, I thought I'd expand on that concept in this issue.

Now, of course, like a lot of things in photography, the 'rule of thirds' is actually more like a guideline or a tip than an actual hard-and-fast rule, but like most of what is discussed here, if you get a good grasp on the concept it will help improve your photography generally – and will certainly help you get published, not just in COMBAT Camera and CONTACT Air Land & Sea, but in a much wider range of publications. And not just publications, of course, but it will improve your general, private photography too.

Another tip I'll throw in here is that you should look at other photographers' work and ask yourself 'what's he done here?' Especially after you read this column, ask yourself, 'did this guy apply the rule of thirds?'

By 'other photographers' I mean of course 'professional' or at least published photographers, especially in newspapers. And, funnily enough, the best newspaper photography is usually found in the 'driest' newspapers, such as The Financial Review, where articles often need imagination to lift them.

Rule of thirds

Anyway, let's take a closer look at my segmented photo of Sergeant Dave Harrison at the Weapons' Intelligence Team lab in Tarin Kot in 2012 (full story in CONTACT issue 37).

For the purpose of illustration, I've divided the photo into nine equal oblongs, which, viewed horizontally and then vertically, are arranged in rows of three x three – in other words, divided into thirds vertically and thirds horizontally.

These segments are of course imaginary. I've only actually drawn them here to assist my explanation.

The reason for breaking down the photo into segments or applying the rule of thirds is to add impact to the photo.

But why does it add impact, you might ask. I actually won't attempt to explain it in detail, but suffice to say that it has been a long recognised 'rule' in the art world. In fact, consulting Wikipedia, I can tell you that it was first written down as a 'rule' by one John Smith, a notable art historian in London, in 1797.

According to John Smith's rule of thirds, I've actually gone too far in my photo, because the key elements of the image should be arranged along the lines that mark the thirds.

For example, if you take a picture of a landscape, the line where the sky meets the land or sea should actually run along either the bottom or the top horizontal line (and not right in the middle).

Imagine now that there is a boat on your horizon. According to the rule of thirds, the best place to 'put' the boat is either on the left or the right vertical line.

It's valuable to note, in our military sense, that the ship is now 'caught in the cross-hairs' where those vertical and horizontal lines intersect. And, according to John Smith and the rule of thirds, that's the best place for it.

Dave Harrison dissected

Getting back to my sample photo of Sergeant Harrison, it's easy to break it down into thirds.

You will notice that Sergeant Harrison's face is in the top one-third and the rest of him is almost fully contained in the left one-third of the photo and the work he's doing is contained in the bottom one-third.

When you look at this photo, you may notice that you find yourself immediately drawn to Sergeant Harrison's face (a natural human reaction) and then you'll scan the rest of the photo in a C-shaped fashion from top left to bottom right and back again.

And, the longer you scan the photo, the less interested your brain becomes in the top right corner and you will begin to ignore it almost completely.

Taking this photo

Before I took this photo, I knew what I wanted to achieve – I could already 'see' the result in my head before I even raised the camera to my face.

I didn't actually stand there specifically thinking about the rule of thirds, but that's only because I'm so used to applying it, it has become second nature.

Just try to imagine if I had placed Sergeant Harrison's head in the middle of the photo. It shouldn't be too hard to imagine that, even if I zoomed out enough to keep the interesting parts of the workbench and laptop in the bottom of the

photo, that there would be a whole lot of nothing across the top, and a whole lot of nothing interesting behind his back.

And, while I point this out to you now in my long-winded way, it simply makes sense, doesn't it?

It's a bit like the marksmanship principles. When you line up a target on the range, you don't actually recite the words "position and hold must be firm enough to support the weapon" – because you already 'know' that you are holding your weapon 'correctly'.

It's the same with photography. After you've learned the 'rules', you'll naturally aim and fire the shutter release 'correctly' without even thinking about it.

But you still have to learn what the rules are in the first instance.

Sticking with the weapon analogy, just try to think of the intersection of the imaginary lines that divide your viewfinder into thirds as your new cross hairs – and use just one of those cross hairs to aim at the most important element in your photo and you've got the rule of thirds in the bag.

Don't forget, of course, that you still have to use the centre focus point of the viewfinder to first focus on the important element before 'aiming off' using your new imaginary cross hairs.

Of course there are cameras that have more than one selectable focus point, and if yours has, then of course you can use them to act as real aiming marks instead of relying on imaginary ones. Just don't forget the basic principle.



Sergeant Dave Harrison catalogues a suspected insurgent's pistol at the Weapons Intelligence Team labs in Tarin Kot.

Photo by Brian Hartigan – Canon EOS-1D MkIII, 70-200mm lens at 100mm zoom, no flash, shutter speed 1/64th of a second, aperture f4.0, ISO 400.

If you have any particular questions about getting stories or photos published in **COMBAT Camera** or **CONTACT Air Land & Sea**, I'd be happy to try and answer them, either here or privately. Write to me at editor@militarycontact.com or PO Box 3091, Minnamurra, NSW 2533.

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