

FIRST FEATURE-PACKED ISSUE!

ISSUE 1 MARCH 2004

\$8.95

CONTACT

AIR, LAND & SEA

THE AUSTRALIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

FIGHTING FRENCH

ONE AUSSIE'S FOREIGN LEGION SAGA

ROLLING THUNDER

ON A HIGH WITH THE ROULETTES

YEAR OF THE TIGER

ARH TAKES SHAPE DOWN UNDER

SHOCK TROOPS

4RAR(CDO) - THE ADF'S HARD-HITTERS

BOTH ELECTRONIC – BOTH FREE



IF YOU ALREADY ENJOY
THESE TWO GREAT
FREE E-MAGAZINES

PLEASE...

ENCOURAGE ALL YOUR
COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS
(INCLUDING ON FACEBOOK) TO
REGISTER FOR THEIR OWN FREE
SUBSCRIPTION VIA

WWW.COMBATCAMERA.COM.AU



For families of veterans,
the battle goes on.

Join the fight

Call 1800 534 229

Donate or fundraise at legacy.com.au
or [f/LegacyAustralia](https://www.facebook.com/LegacyAustralia)

CommonwealthBank



THALES

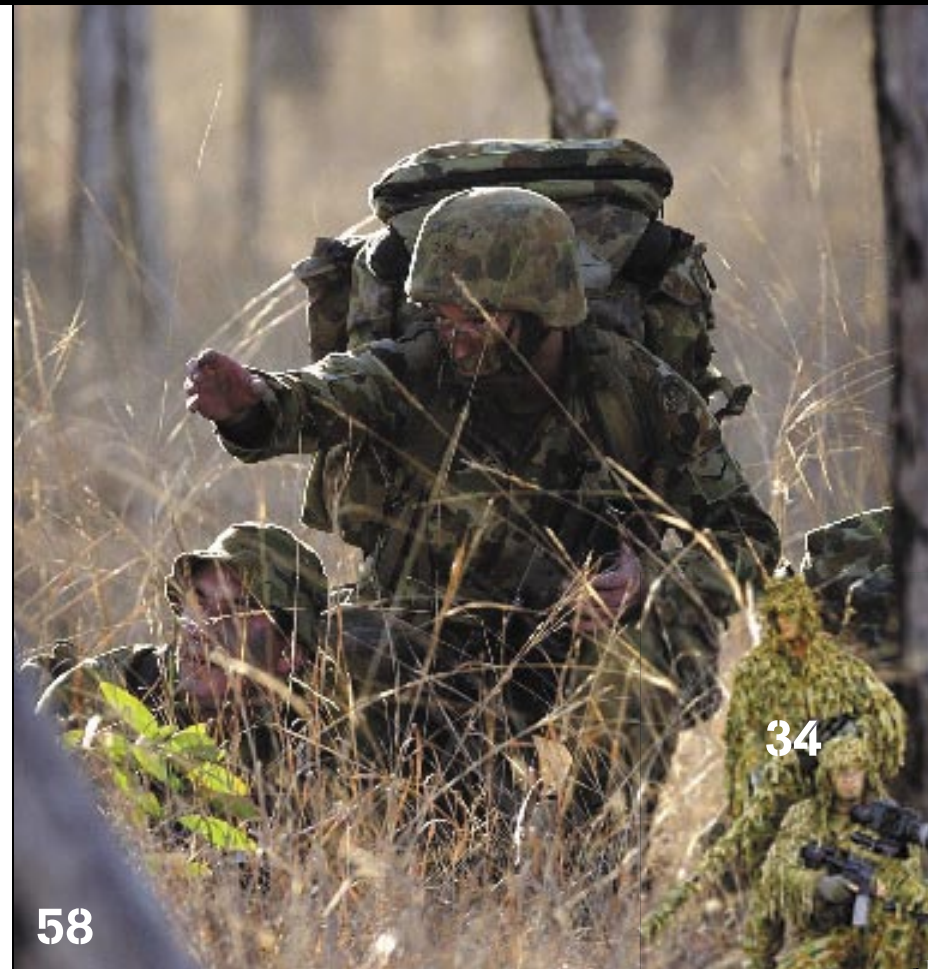


IT'S HOW
WE CONNECT



Caring for Families of Incapacitated
and Deceased Veterans for 90 years

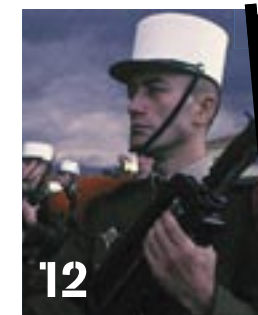
ISSUE 1 CONTENTS



58



60



12



22



42

46

- 08 MILITARY NEWS**
Latest snippets from Australia and around the World
- 12 FOREIGN LEGION**
One Aussie relates his experience with France's foreign fighters
- 18 BATTLE SHOT**
An Australian trooper proves the hitting power of Javelin
- 20 TANKS FOR THE MEMORIES**
We look at the contenders as Leopard prepares to bow out
- 22 HMAS MELBOURNE**
On operations with the Navy in the Persian Gulf
- 24 FLYING HIGH**
Strap in for a back-seat ride with the RAAF Roulettes
- 30 THE LAST CHARGE**
Beersheba, 31 October 1916
- 34 SHOCK TROOPS**
Inside the ADF's commando unit and how to enlist
- 42 SOMALIA**
Africa's dirty little war through the eyes of an M113 commander
- 46 TIGER ATTACK**
Army's attack reconnaissance helicopter comes to life
- 50 BURMESE REBELS**
CONTACT in rebel territory
- 56 REVIEWS**
Military games reviewed and a good read recommended
- 58 3RAR**
Paras drop on 'the Bay'
- 60 JUST SOLDIERS**
War stories in dramatic detail
- 62 PRIVATE NOBBER**
The adventures of a hapless hero



24



INTERNATIONAL ANTI POACHING FOUNDATION



THE INTERNATIONAL ANTI POACHING FOUNDATION IS

RECRUITING NOW

IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES
AND YOU WANT TO SEE AN END TO THE CRUELTY
AND PROTECT SOME OF THE WORLDS GREATEST CREATURES
GO TO WWW.IAPF.ORG FOR MORE INFO



WWW.IAPF.ORG

THE EDITOR'S LETTER



Welcome to this, the first edition of CONTACT Air Land and Sea for an Australian perspective on all things military.

For those of you who don't know me (as they say in certain circles) – I joined the Australian Regular Army in November 1990 as a RAEME Aircraft Fitter and worked in Townsville for more than six years. I was a keen, "green" pugue who participated in extra-curricular, 3 Brigade sporting and military activities.

After Townsville, I landed a job at Army Newspaper Unit where I stayed until, with three hooks on my arm, I transferred to the Active Reserve in June 2002. It was at Army News I developed some of the skills necessary to allow me the confidence to take on this new magazine.

My aim in CONTACT is to bring a collection of news, features, photos and items of interest to those of you who serve in the ADF. I also want to enlighten others who, for whatever reason, are interested in learning more about the men and women who carry weapons, sail ships, fly planes or otherwise shed blood, sweat and tears in military service.

I want to thank you for choosing to buy this magazine and I hope you will continue to support this publication. I know, however, that your continued support is dependant on delivery of a value-for-money product. Please do not hesitate to tell me what you like and dislike about the content, look and feel of this magazine or what you think might be missing. Your feedback is vital.

I want to assure you I will always try to report accurately and honestly on the issues that interest you and I or affect our lives – even if such honesty ruffles a few feathers. This magazine is independent of official influence from Defence or any Government agency and will always defend its right to that independence.

Also, let me extend an invitation to you to contribute in a more tangible way. I am more than happy to consider your stories, photos and ideas for publication, whether they be from your last bush trip, a unit adventurous training exercise or your favourite out-of-hours, out-of-uniform hobby. I appreciate that some things need clearance through proper channels and I may be able to help or advise on these issues. Please get in CONTACT

Again, thanks for supporting us and until next issue, good soldiering, smooth sailing and clear skies

Brian Hartigan, Editor
editor@militarycontact.com

Issue 1 – March 2004 **CONTACT** AIR, LAND & SEA

Editor Brian Hartigan
editor@militarycontact.com
ph: 0408 496 664
fax: (02) 4293 1010

Art/Design Advertising Brian Hartigan
advertising@militarycontact.com

Buy any advertisement in **CONTACT Air Land & Sea** and get the same ad for half price in **COMBAT Camera**

Business Manager Rosie Hartigan
accounts@militarycontact.com
ph/fax: (02) 4293 1010

CONTACT Air Land & Sea and **COMBAT Camera** magazines are Published by Contact Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 3091, Minnamurra, NSW 2533, AUST

www.militarycontact.com (all info)
www.combatcamera.com.au (free subscriptions, both magazines)
www.issuu.com/contactpublishing (archives)
www.facebook.com/CONTACTmagazine
www.youtube.com/CONTACTpublishing

CONTACT Air Land & Sea is published on 1 March, June, September and December. **COMBAT Camera** is published on 1 February, May, August and November. Both magazines are only published electronically on the Internet and both are available by FREE subscription via www.combatcamera.com.au All editorial, advertising and general enquiries should be addressed to the editor.

All material appearing in this magazine is protected by copyright and may not be reproduced in whole or in part without permission from the copyright owner (which may not be Contact Publishing). The views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher or the editor. The publisher does not accept responsibility for any claim made by any author or advertiser – readers are encouraged to seek professional advice where appropriate.



KAZ TECH JOINS NAVY

Sydney-based Kaz Technology Services has been awarded a \$20 million contract to develop an improved data management regime that will monitor the maintenance and inventory needs of all Defence maritime vessels including the Anzac and FFG (frigates), minehunters and LPAs. It is hoped the new management regime will result in improved and cost-effective maintenance reporting of all Navy ocean-going vessels.



LOOKING MORE DESTITUTE THAN DESPOT, SADDAM HUSSEIN MEETS THE ARCHITECTS OF HIS DEMISE. YOU'VE PROBABLY SEEN THIS PIC ALREADY - IT'S SPEED ACROSS THE INTERNET ALMOST RIVALLED THAT OF THE ARMoured ADVANCE ON BAGHDAD



ADF TO BUY HAWK

One major new investment announced in Defence's new Capability Plan is the acquisition of a squadron of Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicles costing up to \$1 billion.

"The success of aircraft such as Global

Hawk in operations over Iraq and Afghanistan have demonstrated the huge capacity boost these assets can bring," Defence Minister Robert Hill said.

Global Hawk can provide commanders with near-real-time, high-resolution intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance imagery from missions that can last more than 20 hours. They aircraft have the capacity to support operations ranging from border control to maritime and land operations in our region and beyond. They could also assist with civil tasks such as bush-fire detection.

Global Hawk became the first autonomous aircraft to fly non-stop across the Pacific in a 22-hour flight from Edwards Air Force Base to RAAF Base Edinburgh near Adelaide in 2001.



GUTERRES IN PAPUA

Eutimio Guterres, the former leader of East Timor's Aitarak militia is reportedly now operating in Indonesia's troubled province of Papua where security forces often engage local separatists.

According to newspaper reports, Guterres, who was released on appeal from a 10-year jail sentence for human rights crimes in East Timor, claimed the people of Papua had invited him to help fight the separatists.

In the 1999 lead-up to East Timor's independence vote, Guterres waged a terror campaign against pro-independence peasants, allegedly supported by then East Timor Chief of Police General Timbul Silaen.

Coincidentally, General Silaen has been appointed Chief of Police in the same Papuan province in which Guterres and his followers now operate.

NEW FLEET FLOATED

Defence Maritime Services (DMS) has won a \$553 million contract to supply and support a new fleet of 12 Armidale class patrol boats for the RAN to be based in Cairns and Darwin.

DMS has subcontracted Austal to build the fleet at its Henderson yard near Fremantle.

At 56.8 meters long, the new boats will be able to operate in heavier seas, up to 1000 nautical miles offshore and be deployed for up to 42 days. They will be equipped with two boats for patrol, surveillance and boarding operations and are armed with a Rafael 25mm Typhoon stabilised cannon.

The first boat, HMAS Armidale, will be delivered in May 2005, with the second and third six months later.



TROOPS FOR IRAQ

Norway became the latest contributing nation to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan after sending a 180-strong mechanised infantry company in November

last year.

After successfully providing security to delegates at the Afghan Grand Assembly (Loya Jirga), as it passed a charter for a new constitution for Afghanistan, the Norwegian rapid reaction force will now focus on providing a range of guard and security duties.

Meanwhile, Germany has expanded its commitment with a further 450 troops, bringing its current strength to approximately 2200.

The ISAF has recently strengthened its role outside Kabul, by establishing Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in the northern province of Konduz.

The Norwegian company will be part of the PRTs, which will implement security reforms and provide protection to the government of Afghanistan and NGOs as they begin work outside the relative safety of the capital to redevelop the nation.

MEDALS AND AWARDS



BRAVERY AWARDED

An Australian military adviser to the UN's top man in Baghdad, Col Jeff Davie, was awarded a Bravery Medal for his actions on the day a terrorist bomb all but destroyed the UN HQ in the Iraqi capital.

Special Representative of the Secretary General, Sergio Vieira de Mello - who was known to many Australians who served with INTERFET in East Timor - died after the blast.

Col Davie witnessed the attack from a distance as he returned to his office and spent the next several hours assisting injured personnel from the building and helped locate Mr de Mello, staying by his side during rescue attempts.

NEW SOLOMONS MEDAL

ADF personnel taking part in Operation Anode - part of Op Helpem Fren - in the Solomon Islands will receive a new award in recognition of their service, Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, Mal Brough said.

The Australian Service Medal with Clasp Solomon Is II will be awarded to ADF personnel who rendered service or completed operational sorties over a period of 30 days, continuous or aggregate, in the area of operations.

US AWARDS FOR ADF

Three Australians have been awarded US Army Commendation Medals and Army Achievement Medals for exceptional achievements in Iraq.

Sgt Steven Attlier, Cpl Carl Connell and Cpl Damien Woolfe received the equivalent of a two-star senior officer's commendation from US Lt-Col Ralph Baker, for clearing large amounts of munitions in a relatively short period, freeing up US forces guarding munitions caches to return to operations.

In the course of 18 days, the team of Royal Australian Engineers denied access to tons of explosives by clearing 16 unexploded ordnance sites.

MILITARY NEWS IN BRIEF



AUST JSF WINS

Australian companies have chalked up 10 contract wins in the Joint Strike Fighter program with more contracts expected.

Prime contractor Lockheed Martin recently selected Lovitt Technologies Australia to manufacture and supply several precision-machined structural wing components for the JSF over the next 10 years.

Northrop Grumman has also extended the scope of its existing contract

with Melbourne-based GKN Aerospace Services to undertake the design of fuselage structural parts.

JSF projects have thus far been awarded to companies based in Moorabbin, Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth.

FUTURE HEALTH

A new military medical centre will be established at University of Queensland's Mayne Medical School in Brisbane with a 'satellite' facility at the School

of Medicine at the University of Adelaide, to better meet the health-care needs of ADF members during and after their service.

The Centre for Military and Veterans' Health (CMVH) will provide professional development and training for ADF members in medical and allied health care fields and will lead research into human performance as well as serving-ADF member and veterans' health-care issues.

TOLL ROAD AHEAD

TenixToll Defence Logistics has won a contract worth up to \$920 million over 10 years for the provision of Defence's national warehousing and distribution services and the maintenance support of select equipment.

The contract, which represents savings of \$40 million against current costs, will allow Defence to reassign around 500 military personnel to higher-priority activities.

BIG MACK REFIT

The Australian Army's Heavy Recovery and Mack truck fleets are about to undergo major overhauls after three contracts worth almost \$40 million were signed, Minister for Defence Robert Hill said.

The work to be carried out is aimed at addressing occupational health and safety, noise and comfort issues with the ageing trucks.

"This major modification program will ensure the relevant

ADF members will be working in an environment that is as safe and comfortable as practicable," Senator Hill said.

As part of the program, \$35 million was awarded to Mack Trucks Australia to fit modern, commercial, off-the-shelf recovery systems and address OH&S issues on each of 64 vehicles - [almost \$550,000 each].

JAIL FOR FALSE VETS

People fraudulently claiming to be a returned soldier, sailor



PROJECT AIR 9000 UPDATE

Project Air 9000 Phase 2 – the acquisition of an additional squadron of troop-lift helicopters – has entered a new phase with the elimination of the AgustaWestland proposal.

This leaves Australian Aerospace and Sikorsky still in contention with their NH-90 and UH-60M aircraft respectively.

NUIE ASSIST

Australia sent a Hercules with 21 personnel and 25,000 pound of relief supplies and medical equipment on board to Nuie in the South Pacific in response to January's devastating cyclone.

Operation Nuie Assist, which saw the C130-J aircraft fly more than 4200km direct from Richmond in NSW, is primarily a medical-assistance mission.

Thirteen Defence medical personnel, supported by a HQ element of five, was scheduled to remain on the island for at least three weeks and would cover the emergency and routine medical requirements of the island until its sole medical facility, destroyed in the cyclone, was rebuilt.

C130 BAM RELIEF

The mission to Nuie followed hot on the heels of a similar deployment to Iran in the wake of



one of the World's worst ever earthquakes, which killed more than 30,000 people in Bam in December.

A Royal Australian Air Force C130-J model Hercules carrying emergency stores in excess of 23,000 pounds of supplies left Richmond on December 28 and was met in Kerman, Iran by Red Cross and Red Crescent personnel.

NAVAL UPGRADE

Defence Minister Robert Hill recently announced two major projects worth more than \$750 million to further improve the ADF's maritime defence capabilities through the upgrading of anti-ship missile defences in the Navy's ANZAC-class frigates and the purchase of new lightweight anti-submarine torpedoes.

Improvements to the frigates will include an infra-red search and track system providing improved detection of low-level aircraft and anti-ship missiles when close to land, and improvements to the existing fire control radars.

LANDMINE BAN IN NEPAL SUPPORTED

With a year-long ceasefire still holding in the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal, Government and Maoist insurgent leaders have expressed support for a ceasefire code of conduct banning landmines that have so far resulted in approximately 1500 civilian casualties.

Nepal is among 44 countries that have not yet signed up to the 1997 international treaty banning the use, production, stockpiling, and transfer of anti-personnel landmines.

A recently released report by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) says military authorities in Nepal have officially acknowledged the local production and use of anti-personnel mines in the civil war with Maoist rebels.

A Royal Nepalese Army official told an ICBL mission that the Army had used approximately 10,000 mines, mostly to defend army and police posts around the country.

Government spokesmen offered assurances that all possible precautions were made to secure mine-laying operations to prevent civilian casualties, including fencing off the minefields, but the ICBL report indicates that operations had also included unmarked areas on roadsides and farmland in a bid to deny freedom of movement to rebels.

Rebels have in turn used pressure, tripwire activated, command-detonated mines and improvised explosive devices for vehicle ambushes, defence of safe areas and the destruction of physical infrastructure.



SEA BOARD

A Royal Australian Navy warship successfully apprehended the Maya V, a vessel believed to have been fishing illegally within Australia's exclusive economic zone around the remote Heard and McDonald Islands, more than 4000 kilometres south-west of Perth.

HMAS Warramunga first made contact with the Maya V on 22 January and an attempted boarding was abandoned after prevailing weather worsened, but two days later, when weather conditions permitted, sailors fast-roped to the fishing vessel's deck from their ship's Seahawk helicopter and took control.

Defence Minister Senator Robert Hill said HMAS Warramunga and her sailors on patrol in Australia's southern oceans had battled extremely bad weather and high seas to intercept and board the Maya V.

"It is a credit to their skill and professionalism that they were able to overcome dangerous conditions to successfully board the vessel."

MILITARY NEWS IN BRIEF

or airman could face six months in prison under proposed new laws.

Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence Mal Brough said anyone falsely claiming to be a veteran should face the force of the law.

"It's a disgraceful act that warrants a strong penalty," he said.

"Many Australians have served our country proudly, and wrongly claiming to be a veteran is an insult to those men and women."

Offenders face a maximum prison term of six months or a maximum fine of \$3300.

PILOT BLAMED

A TNI investigation into the death of eight of the its army's Special Forces (Kopassus) personnel during an exercise in Ache in August has laid blame with the helicopter pilot, who will be court-martialled.

On 4 October, eight Kopassus soldiers fell 200 metres into waters off Ache after the harness they were hanging on to was severed by crew when the chopper became unstable flying in strong winds.

The elite soldiers were practising a stabilised tactical airborne

manoeuvre in preparation for TNI anniversary celebrations. The manoeuvre is conducted by anti-terror units to evacuate hostages.

The bodies of the Kopassus personnel were found the following day, tied together, floating near where they plunged.

An official report said other officers aboard the helicopter were being looked at to share blame.

NEW REHAB CENTRE

A newly established Army Rehabilitation Centre at Holsworthy

Barracks was officially named the Private Jeremy Williams Rehabilitation Centre in a recent ceremony in Sydney.

The centre was named in memory of Pte Jeremy Williams, a soldier who committed suicide while undertaking training at the School of Infantry in Singleton in February 2003 after being injured during basic training and transferred to the Rehabilitation and Discharge Platoon within the school.

The establishment of the centre is one of a range of initiatives Army is

taking to support injured trainees.

Pte Williams' family and Army's Training Commander, Maj-Gen Ian Gordon, attended the ceremony.

ATC GROUNDED

ADF air traffic control elements serving at Baghdad International Airport will remain deployed until at least May to ensure a smooth transition to local civilian air-traffic management.

The Coalition Provisional Authority is managing the transition of air-traffic management from

military authorities to trained Iraqi civilian controllers, currently undertaking training in Jordan.

But, according to Defence Minister Robert Hill, while progress was being made in re-establishing a number of essential services in Iraq, transition to Iraqi control was not yet complete.

"We expect all requirements to be met in about May or June this year and at that point our air traffic control contingent can look forward to rejoining their families in Australia. In the mean time, personnel will

continue to be rotated," he said.

The air traffic control element has processed more than 100,000 aircraft movements at Baghdad International Airport since deploying to Iraq in May last year - equivalent to the third busiest airport in Australia.

TIGER PILOTS WANTED

The imminent arrival of Tiger ARH in Australia has seen a recent boost in pilot recruiting.

It is recognised that recruiting a sufficient number of pilots is vital to

getting the most out of the ARH.

Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence Mal Brough said that Defence had recently increased its quota for Army pilot training from 40 to 56 candidates per year.

The invitation to potential pilots is extended to newcomers and seasoned pilots alike.

Army pilot training begins with a six-month course on fixed-wing aircraft at Tamworth, with the newest batch of Tiger hopefuls having already started their training in February.

IN FOREIGN FIELDS

THE LEGION WAS MY HOMELAND

An unknown number of Australians have served and continue to serve in the world's most notorious military unit – the French Foreign Legion. This is just one Australian's story – Shane's story.

WORDS SEAN BURTON

Tall and wiry, with quick eyes and a quicker smile, Shane's story starts with tales of his great-grandfather's exploits with 1AIF in WW1 that led him to embrace the ADF, where he served as an infantryman in the Royal Australian Regiment.

Not long in the Infantry, Shane began to develop career aspirations with the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) as a clearance diver, sparked by an interest in scuba diving.

Months of dive training at his own expense and long hours of hard physical training were testament to his motivation.

In 1999, training was put on hold when he deployed to Dili as part of INTERFET where, he

says, he saw the Australian soldier at his best and is still passionately proud about the job he and his mates did, helping people who had lost everything.

But the situation on the domestic front was not going so well, with Shane and his wife splitting up while he was in East Timor.

On returning to Australia, he picked up the pieces and resumed his aspirations as a clearance diver with new vigor.

Encouraged by a quiet nod of approval from the RAN dive gurus who had trained with him, he began the administration process to transfer.

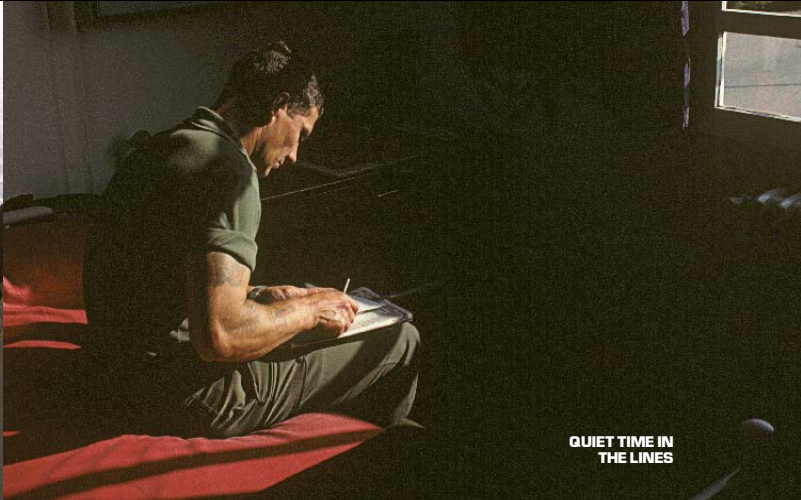
He tried to track the progress of his transfer application as it disappeared into battalion headquarters, but heard nothing as the deadline expired for that year's course and subsequently



SHANE V ON GRAD-
UATION DAY



FRENCH FOREIGN
LEGION SNIPERS
ON OPERATIONS IN
SARAJEVO



QUIET TIME IN
THE LINES

finding it had never left his unit's in-tray. This was the straw that broke the camel's back and Shane threw in his discharge papers in frustration.

"My life was a shambles – my wife had left, taking my son, and I thought the Army had let my career down.

"I turned to the Legion because I wanted to do a real job – the same reason I joined the ADF in the first place.

"At that time, any Army would have done. I called a few, but the Legion was the first to make me a definite offer."

He freely admits he knew very little about the French Foreign Legion before he set off for France, enlisting in Bordeaux.

"There was just me and a recruiting corporal. He kept asking me how much we got paid in the Australian Army – he seemed preoccupied with our pay and conditions."

Shane says things were pretty relaxed at Bordeaux while waiting to go on to the next stage of selection at the Legions HQ at Aubagne where he would join more potential recruits from another 15 recruiting centres around France.

When he arrived at Aubagne one of the first English speakers he met was a Canadian, smoking pot in a crowded courtyard.

"I don't think he had much of an idea. As we walked past a heaving beam he gave it his best fly kick – he didn't last long and he didn't get in," Shane laughs.

"We were all wearing Kapooka-style blue track-suits and when not cleaning up we just sat

A WHACK FROM THE STAFF MEANT YOU SOON PICKED UP THE LANGUAGE

around waiting to be processed or rejected.

"If you're not doing selection stuff you're cleaning shit that's been cleaned a million times already and if you cleaned the floor any more you'd slip on it – but you do it anyway."

Every day the number of recruits got smaller, but the routine was a familiar hurry-up-and-wait.

At this early stage, Shane started to notice how the different nationalities stuck together. The biggest group appeared to be from the former Soviet Union and the majority of them appeared to be there for a standard-of-living improvement. They were christened the Russian mafia.

"The Asians were pretty quiet. They kept together in a small group away from everyone else and, being small guys, it was easy to see they were intimidated.

"It seemed most recruits joined for a new life. They didn't want to volunteer for the paras or snipers. Nor did they want to carry a heavy pack. They didn't want to work for it – they just wanted the money and a French passport to a new life."

Food at Aubagne was pretty simple – "lots of bread, but not that bad."

After passing three weeks of selection at Aubagne, Shane and his fellow recruits arrived at Castlenaudary to begin basic training. But, as training progressed, Shane started to notice little things, and to silently question the professionalism of the organisation he was to serve in for the next five years.

"They didn't teach us anything like marksmanship principles and I had serious doubts about the standard of marksmanship the Legion was producing.

"Other training was very basic as well. For example, first aid was non-specific, unlike Kapooka where one of the first things you learn is CPR and trauma. But in the Legion, training was rudimentary to say the least."

It was this non-specific approach to a fundamental life-saving military skill that was to spell tragedy and ultimately mean the end of Shane's career in the Legion.

Teaching methods consisted of, demonstrate, imitate and a whack to confirm.

"A whack from the staff meant you soon picked up the language, watching and listening to what was happening around you.

There was no free time. There were no washing machines. Everything was done by hand, in sinks – without making a mess.

If Shane questioned the professionalism of the Legion's teaching methods, he was however impressed by its French-only officers.

"One night out in the countryside, we got

dragged out of our sleeping bags after a 60km march because the picket had fallen asleep.

"They had us leopard-crawling through snow and stinging nettles, in our undies, doing push ups in a freezing river – the whole deal.

"And, the officers were there with us – putting in. They didn't have to, but they led by example – unlike some I had worked with back home."

After a month at Castlenaudary the recruits became Legionnaires and received the prestigious Kepi Blanc – the symbol of the French Foreign Legion. But Shane says he had other things on his mind that night.

"The colour of my hat didn't bother me, I just wanted to do a job. It meant little to me by then – my feet were fuckin' sore from marching 60km to the ceremony. But a lot of the young guys were excited about it."

As training progressed, Shane formed a friendship with the two other 'Anglos' – Dooley, a former South African police officer, and Morgan, a former Royal Air Force air-crewman.

Shane says Morgan had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions in the first Gulf War, but had problems adjusting to life after the war and was looking for a new challenge.

The three native English speakers began to stick together more than ever, as the mafias became more prominent.

"It was a survival thing. We were on our own. We didn't have a 'mafia'.

"If there was a duty to be done, do you think the Russian corporal was going to give it to the Russians? No. And so it went on. There weren't

any 'Anglo' corporals, so we copped all the shit.

"My Polish section commander, Cpl 'Bad-nutz' hated the 'English'. Every time he saw me he wanted to hit me.

"He was a full-on Nazi. He was a hard man who, I think, was trying to harden us up, and I came to respect him for that. He was a very good soldier – someone I would want next to me when the shooting started.

"However, I question his ability to draw the line when using force. He could be a real arsehole."

Men fight – always have done – and you have to be prepared to do it to them before they do it to you if you want to survive and be a man amongst men, especially in an enclosed area like Castlenaudary.

But on one fateful day, the three 'Anglo's' future careers with the Legion went into free-fall.

The series of events started with Dooley breaking his back in a skiing accident while training in the Alps, and would lead to his eventual medical discharge.

Later that day, the platoon and its training staff took the night off from mountain warfare training to let off some steam in a remote Alpine pub.

"We'd managed to have a night on the piss during training, away from the barracks. It was pretty full-on – loads of piss and a stripper."

Shane says that during the night, one of the Russians threw up all over a table and his 'mafia' forced a Portuguese Legionnaire to clean the

DAILY ROUTINE GROUNDHOG DAY

Regimental daily routine is fundamentally the same wherever a member serves with the Legion and Legionnaires will find little variation whether on overseas operations or in metropolitan France.

0500	Wake up call
0530	Roll call
0530-0700	Breakfast, ablutions, Corvee duties (pronounced Kor-vay means chore, cleaning or menial task)
0730	Rassemblement compagnie (company parade)
0730-0900	Sporting activities
0900-0930	Showers
0930-1200	Morning training/work details
1200-1300	Soupe, (lunch). Corvee duties
1330-1400	Corvee quartier
1400	Rassemblement compagnie
1400-1730	Afternoon training/work details
1730	Soupe (evening meal)
1730-2130	Free time, or allowed to be absent from camp if the member has applied for and been granted a permission slip and passes uniform inspection
2130	Corvee duties
2200	Roll call
2230	Lights out

FACTS OF LIFE IN THE LEGION

The reality of "romantic" French service

- **KING** Louis Philippe raised the French Foreign Legion in 1831 as a fighting force of foreigners to serve French colonial interests.
- **THE** only Frenchmen officially allowed to join its ranks are officers. However, Frenchmen do join, but alter their nationality on enlistment,

- for example to Swiss or Canadian.
- **TODAY'S** French Foreign Legion is 8500 strong, in 11 regiments based on the same order of battle as the French Army, with the same equipment and military laws – except that no women are permitted to serve.

- **SEVEN** regiments are based in France with the rest overseas in Djibouti, French Polynesia, Mayotte in the Indian Ocean and French Guiana in South America.
- **THE** Legion has the same entry standards as the regular French Army – poor eyesight, hearing and fitness are screened out.
- **OF** the 12,000 men a year who want to be "a man amongst men". Only one in 12 is accepted.
- **130** countries are represented in

the ranks. The Legion views this cultural melting pot as its strength. Officially members have only one nationality, that of Legionnaire, as reflected in the their motto Legio Patria Nostra – the Legion is our homeland.

- **THE** myth that authorities turn a blind eye to serious criminals joining the Legion in exchange for dirty deeds done dirt cheap, is not the case – any more. IDs are processed by the Legion's security section

who liaise with Interpol to weed out wanted criminals.

- **COMPARED** to times past, the Legion doesn't need the hassle from the authorities. They can now afford to pick and choose, as the disintegrating former Soviet empire has provided plenty of 'clean' recruits eager for bed and board and a French passport to the West.
- **THE** Foreign Legion is reputedly the only institution where a man can be truly reborn, and it's at Aubagne

you can choose to change your name and leave history at the gates. Recruits can be issued a new name or later, their original identity through a process called rectification.

- **LEGIONNAIRES** receive the same pay as regular soldiers of the French Army with the usual sliding scale in pay according to rank and length of service. Bonus pay is earned according to posting. Starting pay for a Legionnaire is 1040 Euro per month paid into an account of his choosing.

- **AFTER** 15-years service, members qualify for an Army pension, payable in any country.
- **VEHICLE** ownership prohibited – even push bikes.
- **EIGHT** men to a room normal for barrack accommodation. TV, VCR and bar fridge are allowed.
- **ONLY** single men may enlist, but marriage allowed after five-years service – with permission.
- **CIVILIAN** clothing never to be worn except on annual leave.

- **15-45** days paid annual leave must be spent in France, except by hard-to-acquire permission.
- **INTRUSION** into daily life means most Legionnaires only serve the basic five-year contract, which begins when he arrives at one of the Legion's 16 recruiting centres spread throughout France.

Life in the French Foreign Legion: How to Join and What to Expect When You Get There – Book review on page 56.



table while the Russian went to the toilet to clean himself up.

"I respected the Portuguese bloke – he was a nice guy. The men in his family had all been Portuguese firefighters and he tried to follow in their footsteps but was turned down. I think he joined the Legion to prove something to himself and to his family. He was a good kid. He didn't deserve to be treated like that. So Morgan followed the Russian into the toilet and gave him a good beating."

Unfortunately for Shane and his offsider Morgan, things escalated from there and it signalled the start of a sorting out of who was who in the zoo. Grudges surfaced, scores were settled and reputations were on offer.

Until that night Shane had had no social contact with his platoon sergeant, but now Shane, Morgan and the platoon sergeant were drinking heavily together and swapping stories.

As the night wore on, the pub became a pressure cooker of testosterone and alcohol.

The platoon sergeant, now stirred by alcohol and the fighting going on around him, wanted some action of his own and challenged Shane to a fight away from the eyes of the platoon, with no repercussions and no questions asked.

With a drunken, mischievous, devil-may-care attitude, Shane agreed and the sergeant removed his brassard as the two men walked out the door.

Outside Shane turned to face the sergeant who had conveniently found two wooden batons, which were already approaching Shane's head at a rapid rate.

Like the flick of a switch – thanks to long hours of military unarmed-combat training back in Australia – Shane applied a few choice moves and the sergeant went down and stayed down – but not before biting Shane's ear almost through.

Soon after, other SNCOs and Legionnaires came out to view the spectacle – but it wasn't what they expected, with the heavily bleeding Legionnaire standing over the broken Russian sergeant.

Not knowing that it was, in fact, just two consenting men having a bit of drunken rough and tumble, the other SNCOs presumed the platoon's hierarchy had been turned upside down.

To cut a long story short, the party was over

and the rest of the platoon were quickly loaded on to trucks for the trip back to base. Shane and Morgan, however, were siphoned off to a separate truck where they waited alone in the dark.

When a mob of Russian Legionnaire's boarded, the tension became unbearable. Shane and Morgan understood that, one way or another, it was going to be a bumpy ride home.

The two 'Anglos' decided to break the ice by singing Waltzing Matilda as loud as they could, further incensing the Russians who, with the support of training staff, were not going to lose any more national face.

As the truck picked up speed, the Russians wasted no time, and hooked in with fists and boots. Although outnumbered, Shane and Morgan gave as good as they could. However, things got a lot worse when Morgan disappeared, head first, over the speeding truck's tailgate and into the darkness of the French Alps.

There was pandemonium as the men tried frantically to alert the driver to stop. Shane managed to get to the unconscious Morgan first – but it was too late. Lying in the road, his friend had suffered massive head and neck injuries from the beating and the fall.

Experienced in first aid, Shane began EAR and attempted to control the bleeding only to be pushed aside by a panic-stricken Russian SNCO who was shaking the dying Englishman's head and shoulders, screaming, "Souflee Morgan, souflee" (breathe Morgan, breathe).

Reeling in shock at the unprofessional behaviour of these supposedly elite soldiers – Shane wondered was this what he really aspired to become?

Nearly three hours later an ambulance arrived, but on arrival, the medics didn't fully comprehend the injuries and, Shane says, that without any doubt, their resulting treatment did not help.

Morgan later died in hospital.

On returning to base, Shane was "interviewed" with fists and kicks by everyone who had something to lose from the results of an impending inquiry into Morgan's death and, locked in a room, he was unable to give a statement to the investigating French Police.

SHANE APPLIED A FEW CHOICE MOVES AND THE SERGEANT WENT DOWN AND STAYED DOWN

Now without his two mates to watch his back, and very much out of favour with the training staff, who made sure Shane was kept busy with never-ending menial cleaning duties, Shane realised he didn't want the type of soldiering the Legion was offering.

"I wanted controlled aggression, discipline. And I wanted to work with professional soldiers," he says shaking his head.

Shane requested the termination of his contract at the end of the Legion's authorised six-month cooling-off period.

"After they knew I was serious about leaving, the system took over and things were OK.

"Funnily enough I ended up in the discharge room with Dooley, who was being medically discharged because of his broken back but which didn't stop training staff allocating him strenuous cleaning duties.

"A former Belgian paratrooper and a former German Special Forces guy were also there.

In fact, all my platoon's former professional soldiers were in the discharge cell.

"Maybe that tells you something about the type of person who didn't want Legion life.

"I have no regrets, though. I met some good guys who I still keep in touch with, I learnt a new language, bits about other cultures, new skills – and my fitness was awesome," he laughs.

Shane's advice to potential Legionnaires?

"Do it while you're young. But, the type of guy who joins the Legion won't listen to other people's advice anyway. He has to experience it for himself, first hand – and he will."

INFORCE®

The NEW **WML-X**
500 LUMEN



Low Profile
Ergonomic Activation
High Performance

500 Lumens | 2 hrs

Dedicated Momentary Switch

Constant + Strobe + Lockout

OWN THE NIGHT®

360DEFENCE
.COM.AU

Buy direct online. FREE express freight.



LOCKHEED MARTIN PIC

ANTI ARMOUR

BATTLE SHOT

“What the F*k was that?” An Australian trooper battle tests the ADF’s new tank-killing pocket rocket to maximum effect

WORDS TONY PARK

There’s a split second after you hear that first distinctive ‘click’, as the missile leaps from the launch tube like a racehorse from a gate, when you catch your breath and wonder if the thing’s going to just drop and fizzle out on the dirt.

But, Javelin is anything but a dud. After the launch motor propels the M98 A1 Javelin missile a safe distance from the operator, the tail end dips slightly towards the ground. Just when it looks like it’s going nowhere fast, the second-stage flight motor ignites with a brilliant flash of light and the warhead’s on its way.

With a noise like a supersonic jet buzzing a tower, Javelin streaks away. Milliseconds later, all that’s left of the target is a cloud of dust.

It’s hard not to be left awe-struck by the speed and the accuracy of the ADF’s new Direct Fire Guided Weapon (DFGW) system, or its real-time effects in the hands of a well-trained operator.

In a much-publicised contact, SASR Trooper “X” took out three targets with Javelin – two vehicles and one building – from three launches while his patrol was being engaged by a numerically superior force during the liberation of Iraq.

Manufactured by Raytheon/Lockheed Martin, Javelin is a fire-and-forget weapon that can engage armoured targets beyond 2000 metres. Unlike previous in-service weapons such as

the wire-guided MILAN, it does not require the operator to maintain visual contact with the target once the missile has been launched permitting him to quickly reload and move to another firing position.

The missile can defeat any armoured vehicle in service worldwide but will supplement rather than replace the 84mm Carl Gustav short-range anti-armour weapon.

The hunt for a man-portable, long-range fire support weapon capable of precision engagement of hard targets at 2000m, and tanks at up to 4000m, began in 1999 with the Land Force Firepower Study.

Project Land 40 Ph1 addressed this deficiency in the Army’s arsenal and set out to provide selected infantry, cavalry and Special Forces units with a new DFGW system. This was to be a new capability for the ADF – not a replacement for anything else.

Javelin, an off-the-shelf system already in service with the US Military, was eventually selected from a field of international competitors.

The new system was pressed into service on a temporary basis when the SASR departed for Afghanistan in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Javelin was carried on operations during the conflict, and test-fired at the East River Range near

Bagram, north of Kabul. Near the end of SASR’s involvement in Afghanistan, the Government announced that Javelin would be acquired for other selected Army units by 2005.

With no let-up on operational pressures, 4RAR(Cdo) and SASR personnel were trained in the use of Javelin in the lead up to the deployment of another Special Forces Task Group in 2003 – this time to Iraq.

As part of the wider introduction of the system, members of 4RAR(Cdo) recently qualified the first five School of Infantry instructors in the system. They will serve as assistant instructors for the following course.

Another course will be conducted next year, after which School of Infantry instructors will train soldiers from relevant units.

Because of the way training is conducted, operators can be experts on the weapon without actually needing to fire it. A computer simulation system provides the trainee with every conceivable situation he would encounter, such as a malfunction or infrared clutter, in multiple battlefield scenarios.

During training, the instructor can see, on a computer screen, the same picture the trainee can see through both the day and night-vision sights and can assess a trainee during target engagement or provide a full critique by playback review.

Operators can maintain their skills during field exercises or operations through the training software. New system upgrades can be done by a computer-chip replacement or by download.

The simulation is so effective at developing and maintaining operator skills, that trainees are not required to fire the weapon to become qualified.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Javelin comes in two main parts – the Command Launch Unit (CLU), and a launch tube, containing a round.

The CLU consists of the sighting system, controls and indicators and is a reusable portion of the javelin system. Javelin actually has two sighting systems – a day sight and a night-vision sight.

The day sight works like a telescope and consists of a lens, status indicator and eyepiece. This sight provides the operator with a 4X magnification for target viewing and battlefield surveillance.

The primary sight used by the operator is the ‘night-vision sight’. This is an imaging infrared system, which can be used during either day or night. It allows the operator to see during conditions of limited visibility, including darkness, smoke, fog and inclement weather.

The night vision sight operates by converting an infrared target image to a visible-light image. By looking through the eyepiece the operator can view the target area on a miniature television.

Using this mini TV, the weapon operator searches the target area, identifies the target and locks on to the selected target by manipulating a set of visible gates through the use of the weapons controls. Once these gates are located around the target, the operator locks them into place. The weapon is now ready to fire.

The night-vision sight display provides the operator with both a 4X and a 9X magnification, with a narrow field of view magnification for target identification and selection.

Positioned on top of the command launch unit is the launch tube containing a missile. The missile contains the guidance section, mid-body section, warhead section propulsion section and control actuator section.

The warhead features two charges. The first, a precursor charge, causes explosive-reactive armour on an armoured vehicle to detonate before the main charge reaches the target’s hull. The second, main charge is a shaped warhead charge designed to penetrate the target’s main armour, to achieve a kill.

There are two motors in the propulsion section, a smaller launch motor, which punches the missile out of the tube until it is a safe distance from the operator, and the main flight motor, which sends the warhead the rest of the way to the target.

The missile has two operator-selectable attack modes – top or direct. Each mode has its own flight path or profile for reaching the target.

Top attack is the default mode when the missile seeker is first activated. In this mode, the missile approaches from above to impact and detonate on the top of the target. Armoured vehicles usually have less protective armour on top.

In direct attack mode the missile flies straight at the side of the target

X-TREME JAVELIN - ONE TROOPER’S TRUE TALE

On the return of the Special Forces Task Group from successful operations in Iraq, Prime Minister John Howard awarded an SASR soldier, known

USING THE VEHICLE AS A STABLE PLATFORM, I ENGAGED AN ENEMY VEHICLE, WHICH WAS FIRING A HEAVY MACHINEGUN IN OUR DIRECTION, WITH A JAVELIN MISSILE

only as Trooper X, the Medal for Gallantry in relation to a contact which took place during Operation Falconer.

Trooper X’s patrol was tasked with clearing an Iraqi installation, to prevent it being used for the command and control of theatre ballistic missiles. Trooper X was the machine gunner in the exposed .50 Calibre mounting ring in his patrol vehicle.

“When contact was initiated we found ourselves screened by other vehicles, which provided an ideal position to use Javelin from,” Tpr X says.

The enemy force comprised utility vehicles mounted with machine guns, and about 20 dismounted infantry, who were aggressively advancing on the SAS patrol’s position. During the entire action Trooper X was under enemy fire.

“Using the vehicle as a stable-firing platform, I engaged an enemy vehicle, which was firing a heavy machinegun in our direction, with a Javelin missile. This vehicle was destroyed.

“In the interim, I passed the CLU and expended tube to my offside, who conducted a reload. As this was occurring I engaged advancing enemy with the vehicle .50 (calibre) machine gun. Once the Javelin had been reloaded and handed back to me, I engaged a second vehicle at a much closer range.”

The second vehicle was destroyed and, subsequently, as the patrol closed on the enemy position, Trooper X engaged a mortar tube with his sniper rifle, hitting the tube with his first round and causing the weapon to explode.

During the final stages of the contact, he used the Javelin system once again to engage and destroy, at long range, a communications building in which enemy soldiers were located.

All who witnessed the engagement agreed that Javelin provided a flexible and very effective weapon system which, through its superior range, design and easy-to-use drills was instrumental in defeating a numerically superior force.

TANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

WORDS SIMON POINTER

In Australia we have vast tracts of flat open land. This country lends itself to mobile warfare, and in any conflict on the Australian continent the side with the greatest mobility, firepower and protection will eventually win.

So what is so wrong with our current tank that we need to purchase new ones?

Firstly our tank, the Leopard 1, is old. It is a design that was first delivered to the West German Army in 1965. Australia's Leopards were delivered in the mid to late 1970s and, like a second-hand car, are simply wearing out. Also, the armoured and anti-armoured forces within our region have advanced to the point where the 10mm-70mm thick armour of the Leopard 1 is no longer adequate defence. Its 105mm gun is out-ranged by most modern anti-tank weapons and by other tanks in the region.

Considering the trinity of mobility, firepower and protection – If you are mechanically unreliable, you can not ensure battlefield mobility, if your armour can be easily pierced you have no protection and if your gun does not have the range you can not destroy your enemy. So, we need a new tank!



ADF PIC

LEOPARD 1

Crew	4
Armament	105mm gun, 7.62mm co-axial machinegun, 7.62mm machinegun mounted, 8 x smoke grenade dischargers
Armour	10mm-70mm steel plate
Length	7.1 m
Width	3.25m
Height	2.64m
Weight	42,400kg
Engine	10-cylinder multi-fuel, 830hp at 2200rpm



CHALLENGER 2

Challenger 2 is currently the most advanced tank in the British Army. Battle tested last year in Iraq, it is quite a formidable machine. It was introduced into service in mid 1994 – so it is the youngest of the three contenders.

The turret is manufactured from welded steel with the new second-generation Chobham armour is applied over it. This is a special type of armour designed to absorb the affect of an incoming round. Additionally, the shape of the turret is very good ballistically and can deflect incoming rounds from certain angles.

Challenger 2 is armed with the new Royal Ordnance L30 rifled gun. The barrel is fitted with a thermal sleeve and muzzle reference system. The thermal sleeve prevents undue and uneven heating of the barrel while the muzzle reference system increases the likelihood of a first-round hit.

This is the only tank to enter service recently with a rifled barrel – because of the British Army's belief in HESH/HEP rounds. When one of these rounds impacts an enemy tank, it briefly forms a cake of explosives against the hull which, when detonated, dislodges a scab of metal from the inside wall that ricochets around inside, killing the crew and destroying equipment. The rifled barrel is necessary in order to provide the spin stabilisation needed for the HESH/HEP round in flight.

Challenger 2 is diesel powered and has good over-ground performance. However, it is a very heavy tank and, although it carries a large fuel load, its weight causes the engine to work harder, thus limiting its range. This was not a problem in the recent war on Iraq when the allies were able to provide excellent logistical support. However, when operating in the vast open plains of Australia with the limited civilian and logistical infrastructure present, it could be a real handicap. On the plus side, the use of diesel means it is in line with the fuel usage of our other military vehicles.

Crew	4
Armament	L30A1 rifled gun, 7.62mm chain gun, 7.62mm remote controlled gun, 10 smoke grenade dischargers,
Armour	Second Generation Chobham
Length	11.5m
Width	3.52m
Height	2.5m
Weight	combat 62,500kg
Engine	Diesel, 1200hp at 2300rpm



M1 ABRAMS

The M1 Abrams is a battle-tested and proven tank that, in its current form – the M1A1, is a formidable armoured vehicle.

Unlike most other tanks in service today, a gas-turbine engine powers the M1. This engine produces a vast amount of power and in all M1s delivered, a governor is fitted (first thing removed by crews) to prevent over-revving the engine and going above the maximum design speed. It is very reliable, mechanically simple and easy to service – all plusses for mobility.

However, the engine is extremely noisy and emits a lot of heat, both of which make the M1 very easy to detect on the battlefield.

Additionally the engine consumes a huge amount of fuel, and although it was not a problem in the two allied wars against Iraq, it could prove to be a limiting factor if fighting in the Australian outback. This engine option was originally intended for a vehicle operating in the relatively confined European theatre of operations.

The M1 has very effective armour, but its composition is classified. However, what we can say is that, from combat experience, it appears to be very good at stopping most forms of anti-tank munitions. Additionally the M1 has a compartmentalised structure, which means that a fatal hit to one part of the tank will not be transmitted to the remainder, thus increasing crew survivability.

Also, the main armament of the M1A1 is the magnificent Rhienmetall 120mm smooth-bore gun. This weapon has the ability to fire very-high-velocity rounds out to a very respectable range with a remarkably flat trajectory. Coupled to the gun is a state-of-the-art laser range and targeting system, which feeds into a targeting computer. This combination can give the tank crew the ability to achieve a first-round kill under most climatic conditions.

Crew	4
Armament	120mm smoothbore gun, 7.62mm co-axial machinegun, 12.7mm machinegun mounted, 7.62mm machinegun mounted, 8 x smoke grenade dischargers
Armour	Classified
Length	7.92m
Width	3.66m
Height	2.89m
Weight	57,154kg
Engine	Gas Turbine, 1500hp at 30,000rpm



LEOPARD 2

Leopard 2 is the oldest tank of the three contenders for the Australian armoury, being first deployed in the German Army in 1978.

Although the initial design is 24 years old, it has been steadily improved over time and can really be considered a different tank in 2004 than it was in 1978.

Leopard 2 is armed, like the M1A1, with the magnificent Rheinmetall 120mm smoothbore gun. This weapon provides considerable firepower to the Leopard 2 and, like the M1A1, is coupled to an advanced target acquisition and identification system, offering single-round kill.

The armour of the Leopard 2 is a spaced, multi-layer application which offers effective protection against most types of shaped charges it is likely to come across.

The Leopard 2 is a diesel-powered vehicle, which allows the tank to use the most common fuel type in the Australian Defence Force.

Crew	4
Armament	120mm smoothbore gun, 7.62mm co-axial machinegun, 7.62mm machinegun mounted, 16 smoke grenade dischargers
Armour	Spaced, multi-layer
Length	7.72m
Width	3.7m
Height	2.48m
Weight	55,150kg combat weight
Engine	Diesel, 1500hp at 2600rpm



The criteria for the evaluation of tanks set forth in this article is the trinity of mobility, protection and firepower. It is within this construct we evaluate our selection and, at all times, using the Leopard 1 as a base against which to compare the others.

MOBILITY

Keep in mind that the Leopard 1 is wearing out and, as a result, it can in reality not be considered to have first-class mobility. However, we shall look at its original design mobility in comparison to our three contenders.

Tank	Maximum Speed
Leopard 1	65km/h
M1A1	67km/h
Challenger 2	56km/h
Leopard 2	72km/h

The Leopard 2 appears to have the edge on speed with the M1A1 coming in a close second, while Challenger 2 is slower than even the Leopard 1 because of its weight.

RANGE

Tank	Maximum Range
Leopard 1	600 km
M1A1	480 km
Challenger 2	450 km
Leopard 2	550 km

Based on this comparison the Leopard 2 is again the best contender, with the M1A1 a close second. Let us not forget that Australia is a big country and range is an important factor. Sadly it would appear that no tank in our selection quite matches the original Leopard 1 for range. The rational for this is that each of the three tanks is considerably heavier than the Leopard 1 and has more powerful power plants. It is also not surprising to note that the heaviest tank, Challenger 2, is also the tank with the shortest range.

VERTICAL/TRENCH OBSTACLES

Tanks must either go over objects or cross trenches. This was part of their original design specification way back in 1915 and is still an important factor within their designs today. So how do they compare?

Tank	Vertical	Trench
Leopard 1	1.15m	3.0m
M1A1	1.07m	2.74m
Challenger 2	0.9m	2.34m
Leopard 2	1.1m	3.0m

The Leopard 2 most closely matches the Leopard 1 for obstacles and beats the other two tanks again.

In summary, Leopard 2 is the more manoeuvrable of the three, is 5km/h faster than the M1A1, can travel 70km further on a tank of fuel and can climb higher obstacles and traverse wider trenches than either the M1A1 or Challenger 2.

Bear in mind however, that mobility is only one item in the trinity and that in order to achieve this performance some compromises may have been made in either armour or firepower or both. Let's have a look.

ARMOUR

Armour is the ability to withstand the attacks of an opponent by absorbing his strikes. As you can imagine, this is a critical component of the vehicle and one which is the hardest to compare.

Tank	Armour
Leopard 1	10mm-70mm steel plate
M1A1	Classified
Challenger 2	Second Generation Chobham
Leopard 2	Spaced, multi-layer

We cannot really quantify or compare the armour types within the scope of this article, however, I am a firm believer in Chobham armour and believe that although it increases the weight of a tank, it confers a substantial protective force to the vehicle. It is my contention that there is very little which could penetrate this armour within our region. So I shall place the Challenger 2 above that of the other three with the Leopard 2 as second. The M1A1 cannot really be considered because its armour is classified and the Americans will not tell me.

FIREPOWER

The final in our trinity – firepower, the ability to hit an opponent with enough devastating force at the correct range to either destroy or incapacitate him.

With guns, both range and destructive force are more related to the ammunition fired rather than the gun itself. As this is not a discussion of tank-fired munitions I can only say that, in my opinion, the Rheinmetall 120mm smoothbore is the best weapon available for tanks at this time. As a result, first place is tied between Leopard 2 and M1A1.

SO, WHICH IS THE BEST

Based on the trinity it must be apparent that Leopard 2 is the best all-round package – it has excellent firepower, good armour and brilliant mobility. Sure, it is not as well-armed as Challenger 2 but it defiantly has the heavy punch required. Additionally, it is a diesel vehicle, which gives us fuel compatibility with all the combat vehicles within the Australian Army.

So, would I recommend the Leopard 2 to the ADF as our next tank? No.

Surprised?

Well you shouldn't be. We exist in a world, which has not been in as much turmoil or danger since the Munich Crises of 1938. The great democratic powers of Great Britain and the United States have been in a near or actual state of constant combat since October 2001. And with the likelihood of combat with North Korea or Iran an ever-growing possibility, it would be in our best interests to select equipment which is compatible with our allies.

Sadly the Leopard 2 is not compatible with either the United States or Great Britain. Of the two remaining tanks it is really no surprise as to which tank is the best purchase. The M1A1, in my opinion, should be acquired for the Australian Army as a replacement for the Leopard 1, thus allowing us better interoperability with the United States Army.

Simon Pointer is a postgraduate student of military history with a special interest in armour.

MEAO

PERSIAN PATROL

HMAS Melbourne patrols the Persian Gulf – again

PICS ADF

As part of Australia's ongoing commitment to the rehabilitation of Iraq, guided-missile frigate HMAS Melbourne replaced sister ship HMAS Newcastle in mid November last on patrol duties in the Persian Gulf.

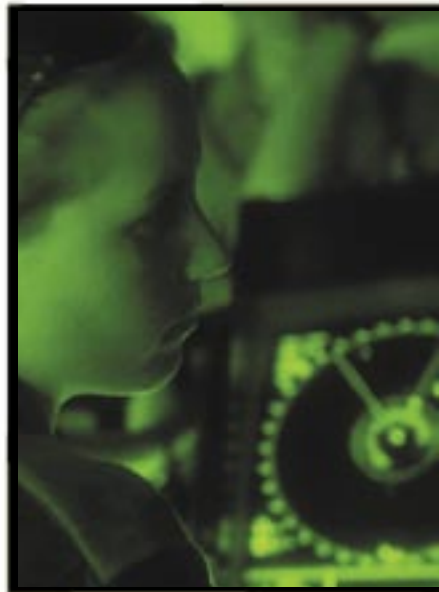
The rotation maintains an Australian contribution to the security of Iraqi territorial waters and the prevention of oil smuggling and other unregulated cargo that diverts much needed funds from the beleaguered Iraqi economy.

The 230-strong crew of the Australian ship is also tasked to protect an offshore oil terminal that injects an estimated A\$100 million a day into the Iraqi economy – making it a prime target for insurgents.

This is the second time in 18 months that Melbourne has deployed in support of operations in the Middle East Area of Operations, having patrolled the same waters between May and November 2002.

In the interim, the ship participated in Exercise Sea Sabre, the fifth in a series of initiatives aimed at stopping the transportation of weapons of mass destruction.

The exercise was the largest of its kind to date and involved defence and law-enforcement agencies from 12 nations.



RAAF ROULETTES

FLYING HIGH

Army Sergeant Troy Rodgers tries to explain to CONTACT what the hell he was doing chasing clouds with the RAAF's top fliers – the Roulettes.

WORDS SGT TROY RODGERS PICS SGT TROY RODGERS

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's an Army photographer barrel rolling, looping and whooping it up with the Royal Australian Air Force's aerobatic team, the Roulettes.

It would have to be every young and 'old' boy's dream to do loops, barrel rolls and wingovers in an aircraft. And, for the lucky few, nothing beats flying in formation with the RAAF's top guns.

So, you are probably wondering what's an Army photographer doing flying with the RAAF Roulettes – the RAAF have plenty of photographers? Well, it is like the old saying goes, I was in the right place at the right time.

At the time I was the Defence Public Relations photographer based in Melbourne when my boss asked one day if I would be interested in flying back seat with the Roulettes after the regular photographer was injured. It took about half a second to say "YES!"

My first flight was a test flight to see if I could handle aerobatics.

We took to the skies above the home of the Roulettes – East Sale, near Victoria's Gippsland. With wide-open air and a perfect, cloudless day, I set off in the back seat of a PC-9 Pilatus.

Flt-Lt Andrew Greaves, a former New Zealand Air Force pilot who was flying aircraft over "the land of the long white cloud" before the New Zealand Government disbanded the RNZAF's fast jets, was my pilot, and I decided this was not the

time, nor the place for my endless repertoire of 'Kiwi' jokes. This man had the power to turn me inside out at just the flick of the wrist or push of the pedal, so I kept the nervous chatter to topics like his previous service in New Zealand.

"Right Troy, we are going to do a couple of loops to see how you handle it. Are you ready?" came Andrew's voice over the intercom. "Yeah mate, I'm ready!" Then, before I knew it, the pitch of the turbine engine changed and I felt the g-suit suddenly inflate on my legs and abdomen. The g-forces made my body feel heavier and I struggled to lift my arms, and wondered how I'd cope holding a camera.

"How you going in the back there?" "Yeah great, this is amazing. I can't believe you get paid to do this," was my gleeful reply.

Now, to describe the feeling of the g-suit inflating – it's like when you visit your GP for a health check and they test your blood pressure with that inflatable, hand-pumped device to stop the blood. A g-suit is like that, but faster and more intense. A small hose is attached to the aircraft from the suit and air is pumped in through the hose when the aircraft starts to pull g-forces, better known as 'gs'.

Next, we flew over Ninety-Mile Beach – up side-down! – and did more wingovers, barrel rolls and loops. It is so hard to describe the sensation, but I guess, in the words of the Scottish warrior William



RAAF ROULETTES

Wallace, "Freedom!" comes close. I can honestly say I never felt so free before, especially when free-falling after a loop.

I was surprised to find that I didn't feel sick – except when we were level flying back to the RAAF base to pick up my camera gear and a second aircraft.

I found the helmet and oxygen mask made placing the cameras against my face difficult, and cameras were heavy in my hand but the photographs appeared to be in focus and well exposed – to my surprise.

The next task with the Roulettes was a rehearsal over Melbourne of the routine to be performed on an Australia Day public appearance. Policy has it that, during an air show, no one can fly in the back seat, so this was my only chance to photograph the aircraft over the city.

On that day, the Australian Open Tennis was being battled out on the ground. The flight was to occur at midday during the lunch break but, because of low cloud, the timings were put back 'till 1430. Defence had done the right thing and informed Tennis Australia that the flight was re-scheduled, however, the message was lost.

I was having a great time in the chase aircraft and, I must admit, there is no greater feeling than having control of six aircraft and having them do what you want to get a perfect shot. I kept telling my pilot, Flt-Lt Andrew Greaves, that I needed another fly-past to get the right perspective against the city of Melbourne and, more importantly, give the spectators at the Rod Laver Arena a good show at the same time.

After landing I found out that Tennis Australia wanted my family jewels on a platter for the disturbance to play.

When Australia Day came around I captured the aerobatics from the ground and waited for the Roulettes to come back and sign autographs for the kids.

While this was going on, well-known Australian actor, Bud Tingwell, was present at the VIP area. In real life, Bud was involved in World War II as

a Spitfire pilot, flying missions in the Middle East but, luckily, never experienced the horrors like his Changi TV character.

An offer was made to Bud to get his wings back and come for a flight with the Roulettes. He jumped at the chance – and this was also to be my next memorable flight.

Bud proved to be one of the nicest people I ever met. Despite his age, his spirit to fly again never held him back and he passed his pre-flight medical with (if you pardon the pun) flying colours. Unfortunately, on the day he was to fly, the PC-9s were grounded an hour from taking off.

Bud still went flying in a CT-4 trainer with Flt-Lt Michael Briggs. I suggested, however, that this flight wasn't going to spark media interest and that we really needed to get Bud in a PC-9.



And so a week later, Bud Tingwell and I flew from Essendon to Barwon Heads, Lorne and back to Essendon.

With a little help on to the wing, Bud was back in the saddle and you could clearly see he was back in his element. I photographed and videoed Bud in the wild blue yonder and, as I found out later, he actually had control and flew formation off us most of the time. Back on the ground the eighty-plus actor had the look of an eighteen-year old fighter pilot again. The wind-swept white hair, the sparkle in his eyes and the smile from ear to ear did not betray any hint of age.

That afternoon, I drove Bud home to his Melbourne residence and he could not stop talking about his latest adventure. He was "as giddy as a school boy"

My next flight occurred only because I had the cheek to ask – and it worked! The 2002 Australian Grand Prix was upon the City of Melbourne once again and when I heard that two FA-18 Hornets

MELBOURNE FROM A NEW ANGLE

RAAF ROULETTES CARVE UP THE SKIES OVER MELBOURNE



FORMER SPITFIRE JOCK BUD TINGWELL LOVED THE ROULETTES



MY DIGNITY WENT WITH ME IN THE BOTTOM, ZIPPED-UP POCKET OF MY FLYING SUIT

were arriving, I suggested to my boss that photos were required – not from the ground, but in the air! He agreed, and so my next flight with the Roulettes was signed sealed and delivered.

The FA-18 Hornets arrived late one afternoon and I captured them over the Albert Park circuit. It was just as much a thrill to fly beside them and once again have the ability to move these multi-million-dollar machines where I needed them for my shots.

There would be only two-passes during which I had to shoot both stills and video. It was a struggle, but the pilot of the PC-9, this time Flt-Lt Col Ells, showed tremendous skill flying inverted beside these supersonic jets, so I could get both jets and race track in the same shot. The photo worked and, if only I had copyright ownership of

that photo, I could have retired on the potential sales at the race track.

My last flight with the Roulettes was over the venue for the 2002, 500cc Motor Cycle Grand Prix at Phillip Island.

The youngest Australian rider for the race was Casey Stoner, a 17-year-old speedster, who hung on every word Roulette One, Sqn-Ldr Sean Bellenger said to him during the safety brief and ground training.

This flight to Phillip Island was to be my most memorable, with more aerobatics than I had ever done with the Roulettes before – at least six loops, with barrel rolls and wing-overs thrown in for good measure.

While I was looking through the camera I was fine, but the return flight is one I do not wish to

RING-SIDE SEATS

remember. My dignity, however, went with me in the bottom, zip-up pocket of my flying suit!

The next time I flew with the RAAF wasn't with the Roulettes, but was still quite exciting as I documented US Marine Corps FA-18 Hornets and French Mirage fighters conducting air-to-air refuelling over Afghanistan.

Ah... but alas, that's another story!

PILATUS PC-9 TWO-SEAT TRAINER

Engine 950 shp Pratt & Whitney PT6A-62
Propeller Hartzell four-bladed, constant speed, fully feathering, 8ft diameter
Wing span 10.124m (33ft 2.5in)
Length 10.175m (33ft 4.75in)
Max range 887nm (1642km)
Max speed 320knots (593km/h)
Max g limits +7/-3.5

The RAAF purchased 67 aircraft – the first two were delivered in 1987.



FLOATING FLIGHT LINE

RAINBOW WARRIORS

WORDS AND PICS US NAVY

Ever wondered what all those coloured jerseys of flight-deck crew on the US Navy's aircraft carriers mean?

Those involved in the flight deck operations have specific, clearly-defined roles, and are easily recognisable by the colour of their jerseys.

BLUE Plane Handlers, Aircraft elevator Operators, Tractor Drivers, Messengers and Phone Talkers

GREEN Catapult and arresting gear crews, Air Wing maintenance personnel, cargo-handling personnel, ground support equipment (GSE) troubleshooters, hook runners, photographer's mates, helicopter landing signal enlisted personnel (LSE)

YELLOW Aircraft handling officers, catapult and arresting gear officers, plane directors

RED Ordnancemen, crash and salvage crews, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD)

BROWN Air Wing plane captains, Air Wing line leading petty officers

WHITE Air Wing quality control personnel, squadron plane inspectors, landing signal officer (LSO), air transfer officers (ATO), liquid oxygen (LOX) crews, safety observers, medical personnel

PURPLE Aviation fuels

THE WELLS OF OLD BEERSHEBA

...They lined the ridge at sunset and, in the waning light
The far-flung line of squadrons came on in headlong flight,
The desert land behind them, in front the fearful fight,
The Wells of old Beersheba must fall before the night.

The Turkish rifles raked them and horse and man went down,
But still they held the gallop towards the blazing town,
They heard the hot lead whining, the big guns thunder-roll,
The Wells of old Beersheba their destiny and goal.

With cold steel bayonets gleaming, in sodden seas of blood
They raced towards the stronghold, all in a crimson flood,
Such maddening surge of horses, such tumult and such roar
The Wells of old Beersheba had never seen before.

They stormed across the trenches and, so the stories say,
They drove the Moslem gunners as wild winds scatter spray.
No force or fire could turn them on that long maddening run,
The Wells of old Beersheba had fallen with the sun...

...Remember them, my brothers, lend them a helping hand,
They led that charge of splendour that won the Promised Land,
And those who came not homeward, their memory is grand,
The Wells of old Beersheba will guard their graves of sand.

Edwin 'Trooper Gerardy' Gerard, Palestine 1917

BEERSHEEBA, OCTOBER 31, 1917

THE LAST CHARGE

The Australian Light Horse – soldiers famous for their inspiring display of valour and daring during what has been described as one of the greatest mounted infantry charges in the history of warfare.

STORY ALISHA WELCH PICS AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

During the total devastation that was the First World War, Australian military forces repeatedly proved they were not simply colonial puppets, but a force of highly competent and gutsy fighters willing to lay down their lives for the benefit of the British Empire.

While the Allied landing at Gallipoli on April 25, 1915 is known as Australia's baptism of fire, the success of the Australian Light Horse at Beersheba was a victory in which the heroic mythology surrounding Australian soldiers flourished.

Allied success in the Middle East was critical in the journey towards total victory. By mid-January 1916, all the troops evacuated from the Gallipoli campaign had been sent to four different fronts – Salonika, Mesopotamia, France and Egypt. Those who returned to the desert, and the old bases near Cairo and the Suez Canal, formed the heart of the 280,000-strong force that continued fighting the Turks. This force was successful in safeguarding the Suez Canal by creating a Turk-free zone in the Sinai and later crossing the desert to invade Palestine and Syria.

By the first anniversary of the Gallipoli landing, the Allies had lost more than 250,000 men – dead, wounded and prisoners – fighting the Turkish Army. At the same time, British intelligence reported that 25,000 Turkish soldiers were again approaching Egypt. Despite this, within months, Allied defensive action had turned offensive in nature as the mighty force – led by the Australian Light Horse – crossed the Sinai in some of the harshest environmental conditions on Earth. The temperature often rose to between 43° and 52°C resulting in men and horses suffering from

extreme thirst and exhaustion. The Australian Light Horse endured these appalling conditions throughout 1916 and for much of 1917 as political events across Europe gradually dictated the course of the war.

For Britain, the Russian Revolution, which began on March 8, 1917, was a crucial point in the war that coincided with heavy fighting in Gaza against the Turks. As the Bolshevik revolutionaries began peace talks with Germany, British forces were suffering heavy casualties in the Middle East. Reports to London on the first battle of Gaza were misleading and the man in charge, General Sir Archibald Murray, was ordered to attack again – 6444 British soldiers were killed compared to 2000 Turkish dead. As a result, Murray was replaced as commander by General Sir Edmund Allenby – a cavalry officer to whom British Prime Minister Lloyd George said that the capture of Jerusalem was wanted '...as a Christmas present for the British nation...'; to compensate for disastrous losses on the Western Front.

At the time of Allenby's appointment, it was decided that British and Allied forces were to

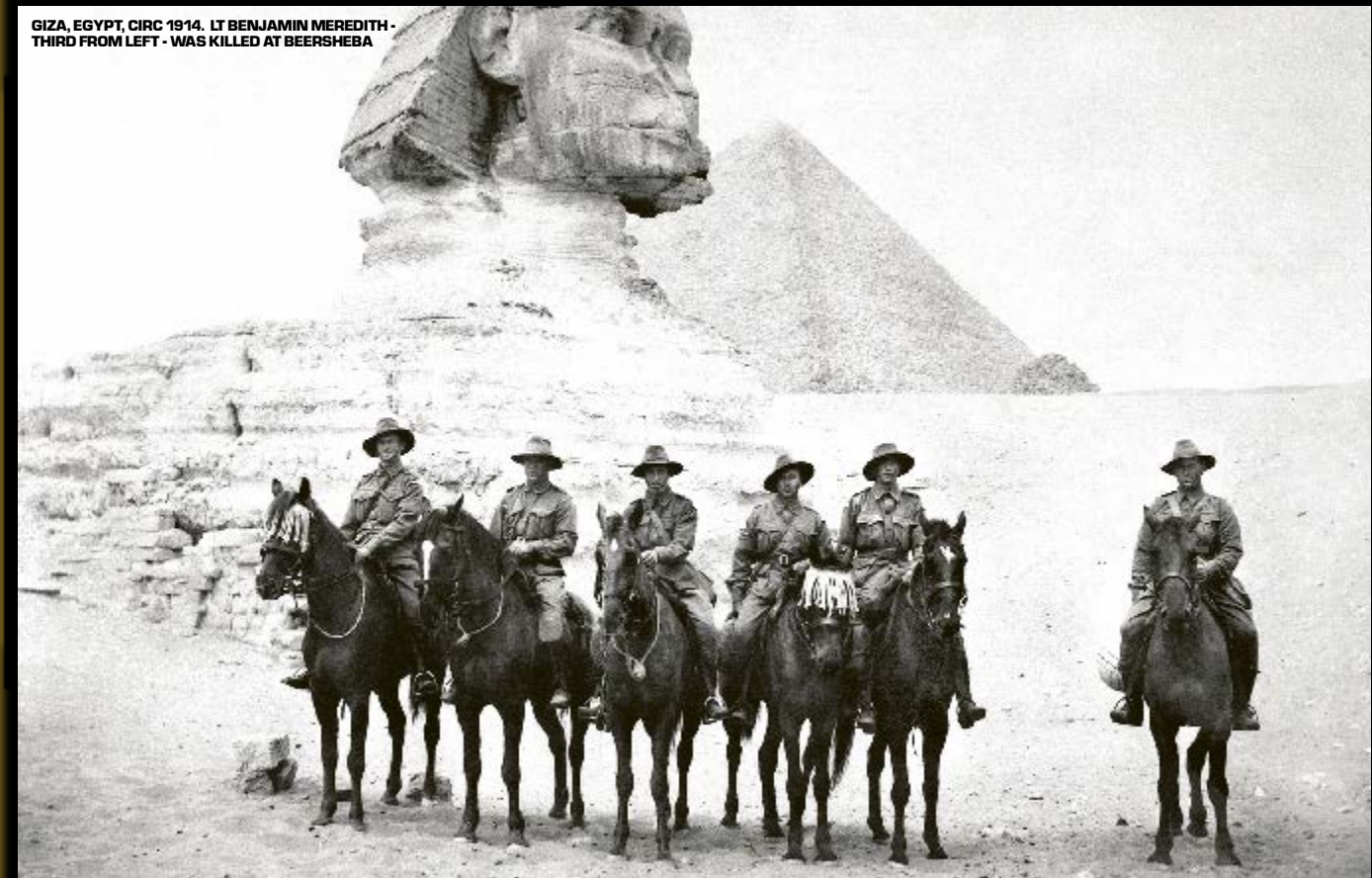
THE AUSTRALIAN
LIGHT HORSE
ENDURED APPALLING
CONDITIONS
THROUGHOUT 1916

invade the Holy Land and take Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. The objective was the same as for the invasion of the Gallipoli Peninsula – the collapse of the Ottoman Empire – and Allenby's forces had six months to break their way through the Gaza/Beersheba gateway.

As Allenby arrived in Palestine, supply remained a problem and reinforcements had increased

enemy numbers to 35,000 Turkish and 6000 German troops. British and Allied mounted units were united into what Allenby called the Desert Mounted Corps, under the newly knighted Sir Harry Chauvel, a Queenslander. With a force of 88,000 men – seven infantry divisions and three mounted divisions – Allenby planned a strategic attack intended to capture southern Palestine. Gaza was to be continually bombarded for three days by land and sea, and the Australian Light Horse was to be deployed to the area around the ancient town of Beersheba. The plan emphasised that once Beersheba had fallen, the Australians were to take Gaza from the rear. In addition, the Light Horsemen were to capture the wells at Beersheba before the enemy had a chance to sabotage them. Unless the town and its life saving wells were captured on the first day, the men and horses would have little chance of survival.

The town of Beersheba was situated in a valley surrounded by the Judean Hills around which 1500 Turkish defenders had managed to exploit the terrain by building a network of trenches in a horseshoe shape around the valley. Despite



GIZA, EGYPT, CIRC 1914. LT BENJAMIN MEREDITH - THIRD FROM LEFT - WAS KILLED AT BEERSHEBA

this strong defence, the Desert Mounted Corps, by dawn on October 31, had taken up offensive positions in the hills. The Allied infantry divisions began their assault on the town early in the morning and, as the battle raged on throughout the day, the Allies had barely tarnished the Turkish resistance – towards evening Beersheba was still in enemy hands.

Chauvel knew that the uncertain situation required daring and decisive action if victory was to be achieved. The 4th Light Horse Brigade – comprising the 4th and 12th Light Horse Regiments – had been held in reserve all day but, as evening fell, the Australians were ordered to ride out of the hills on the south side in order to break through the Turkish lines of defence. This sector of the town was heavily defended by artillery and machine guns, but Chauvel had faith in the strength of the Light Horse.

With the 11th Light Horse Regiment following the 4th and 12th, the 500 Light Horsemen rode over a ridge and headed down the open valley towards the town, as a hail of Turkish shrapnel rained down on them. To reduce the impact of the bombardment, the Australians fanned out across the valley advancing at a thundering gallop, yelling and coo-eeing as the euphoria of the wild charge ran through their veins. As hundreds of horsemen charged towards them, the Turkish artillery had difficulty finding their range – as did two German Albatross aeroplanes as they swooped low, spraying machine gun fire over the horsemen with little effect.

Once the mounted infantry were within firing range, the Turks opened up a barrage of machine gun and rifle fire that did not have the desired

EVEN SOME TURKS STOOD AND APPLAUDED - SUCH WAS THE MAGNIFICANCE OF THE FEAT

effect. The speed of the attack and the fact that the guns had been established to destroy approaching infantry, not cavalry, reduced the impact of the bombardment and ensured the Australians reached the panic-stricken Turks having suffered very few casualties. At the scene was Ian Idriess, who, after witnessing the attack, wrote, "This charge was the grandest in history. A magnificent cheer went up from the watching British troops and even some of the Turks stood and applauded, such was the magnificence of the feat. Hopelessly outnumbered and outgunned, they thundered on, their plumes fluttering proudly, and the gateway to Jerusalem was opened that day".

The fury of the attack ensured the Turkish

resistance crumbled and, in the rear lines, groups of demoralised men surrendered – sometimes to a single trooper. The 12th Light Horse continued the charge into Beersheba to secure the wells, which had been wired with explosives but, as fate would have it, not destroyed. The Australians had successfully completed their mission and opened the gateway to the Holy Land.

In what was one of the most successful attacks in modern warfare, the Australian Light Horsemen captured 738 enemy troops, while losing only 39 of their own men. One trooper was shot dead by a German officer after having captured a group of Turks who had surrendered. The prisoner was later executed. Another German major, taken prisoner by the Australians, summed up the feelings of the defenders when he said the Anzacs "...are not soldiers at all, they are madmen".

The capture of Beersheba paved the way for the swift collapse of the whole Turkish defensive line. Allied forces pushed forward and, on November 6, Gaza fell, followed by Jerusalem on December 9. Thanks to the gallant efforts of the Australian Light Horsemen and their trusty whalers, Allenby was able to deliver the much-needed morale-boosting Christmas present to the Allied nations, and indeed, the legend of the Australian Light Horse was born.

Sources: *Voices from the Trenches: Letters to Home*. By Noel Carthew. New Holland Publishers. 2002; *From Gallipoli to Gaza: The Desert Poets of World War One*. By Jill Hamilton. Simon and Schuster. 2003; *Australia's War 1914-1918*. Edited by Joan Beaumont. Allen and Unwin. 1995.



SOLDIER ON HELPING OUR WOUNDED WARRIORS



SOLDIER ON IS ABOUT AUSTRALIANS COMING TOGETHER TO SHOW THEIR SUPPORT FOR OUR WOUNDED. IT'S ABOUT TELLING OUR DIGGERS THAT WE WILL ALWAYS HAVE THEIR BACKS; THAT WE WILL REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE COME HOME, AS WELL AS THOSE THAT HAVE DIED. IT'S ABOUT GIVING THE WOUNDED THE DIGNITY THEY DESERVE AND THE CHANCE TO DO AND BE WHATEVER THEY CHOOSE.

SOLDIER ON IS ABOUT THE ANZAC SPIRIT, AND MATESHIP AND ALL AUSTRALIANS KEEPING THEIR PROMISE TO TAKE CARE OF OUR WOUNDED WARRIORS.



INSPIRE, ENHANCE AND EMPOWER

Our wounded have done their part for Australia, they have given their best. Thousands have wounds, some you can see and some you can't. It is now Australia's turn to look after them, please give generously and make a difference in our wounded warriors lives.



4RAR(CDO)

SHOCK TROOPS

4RAR(Cdo) will benefit most from the ADF's new Special Forces Direct Recruiting Scheme. CONTACT takes a look inside the unit and the inovative scheme.

WORDS CONTACT IN ASSOCIATION WITH SOCOMD
PICS PTE BEN PEARDON, CPL SEAN BURTON AND SOCOMD

After WW2, Australia disbanded the M and Z Special Units and the Independent Commando companies that made up its first special forces units.

During 1955 in a bid to maintain the skills developed by M and Z Special Units, two reserve commando companies were raised.

These companies operated independently, training reserve and regular commandos and maintaining commando techniques. Commandos from these companies went on to assist in manning the SASR when it was raised as a company in 1957.

In 1995 Townsville-based 2/4RAR was split, with 4RAR moving to Holsworthy and re-roled from light infantry to commandos in 1997, becoming operational in November 1999.

The 2000 Defence White Paper reiterated the requirement and confirmed the Government's commitment to project Land 132 – the implementation of a full-time commando capability.

Project Land 132 has a budget of \$117 million comprising \$44 million for facilities and \$73 million for equipment, including M4 modular weapon systems, para-Minimi, sniping systems, Commando Watercraft, all-terrain vehicles and surveillance/reconnaissance vehicles.



THERE IS NOTHING DISCREET ABOUT A COMMANDO OPERATION, WHICH IS AN ACT OF EXTREME FORCE

off without incident and 4RAR(Cdo) re-deployed back to Australia in November, replacing their UN berets for commando berets and re set itself to giving Australia a full-time commando capability by September 2002.

Even after recent high-profile deployments to the Gulf on Operation Bastille, a fair proportion of the ADF and the Australian public still have little understanding of the unique operational capability 4RAR(Cdo) offers as the nations newest strategic asset.

Commando operations span the gap between conventional infantry and unconventional operations, principally focused on strikes conducted at long distances from Australia.

Primarily organised, trained and equipped to

Assembling boats at any time is a laborious task but in the water it's extremely hard, physical work.

An experienced amphibious operator says daylight water landings are easier compared to ground ones, but that's when the fun stopped.

"It's bloody hard yakka in the sea – day or night – everything's a struggle and you can multiply that by 10 when the sea state is up."

In addition to his insertion skills, which include static line parachuting, commando amphibious operations, airborne repelling and military roping the modern commando has advanced infantry skills as well as specialist communications and first-aid skills. He is also trained in advanced urban, close-quarter battle skills, cliff assaulting and demolitions.

During its recent Gulf deployment, 4RAR(Cdo) was deployed as the Quick Reaction Force for the Special Forces Task Group. Other responsibilities included the traditional commando role of combat search and rescue.

These skill-sets do not exist in other Australian Defence Force units outside of Special Forces.

Coming under the SOCOMD umbrella, along with the Incident Response Regiment, 126, 152, 330 Signals Squadrons, SASR, and the Special Operations Combat Service Support Company, 4RAR(Cdo) have at times attracted unfair criticism.

Critics say that 4RAR(Cdo) is an unnecessary niche capability, especially in a time when defence spending is under close scrutiny.

Maj-Gen Duncan Lewis disagrees and says

RAMBO NEED NOT APPLY

Nowhere else in the ADF is there a greater emphasis placed on physical fitness than in Special Forces.

For personnel taking their first steps towards SF entry, the standard appears daunting.

A popular misconception is that by the time they attempt entry testing, applicants should already be marathon-running body-builders and part-time Olympians.

4RAR(Cdo) PTI, Cpl Glen Folkard says this is not true and he is keen to dispel the myth, believing it deters suitable applicants.

"We're not looking for Rambo here. A lot of blokes arrive at selection and think they have to be super-man on day one. Relax guys – that's not what it's about," he says.

"But a strong aerobic base – through running or swimming for example – is essential. You must be able to do push ups, chin ups and dips. So, when it comes to bush and pack work the SF soldier is not a Neanderthal – he's got a more natural body shape."

He says there are very few blokes in 4RAR(Cdo) who are 'monsters' and it's usually the shorter, wiry blokes who get through assessment easiest.

"Most guys here are physical types anyway because the last two years have seen a massive emphasis on physical training. It's the nature of the beast, it's ingrained into the commando subculture – if you don't keep it up you'll fall behind your peers."

Self-discipline is essential, with regular workloads demanding that soldiers do training in their own time.

If you want to join 4RAR(Cdo), get some advice from SFTC, speak to an ADF PTI and start on the right program from the outset.



CHOOKS. NO COMS, NO BOMBS

An integral part of any Australian SF unit is its highly experienced and respected signal operators – affectionately known as chooks. But why? It originated when a 152 Sigs Sqn sergeant in Borneo, didn't trust his troops to take their anti-malaria tablets and took to handing out the pills on parade. Grunts, seeing this, likened it to chooks, "pecking up" their tablets. The term was further reinforced in Vietnam with Sigs using a small morse key, which looked and sounded like a chook pecking at something. Then there's the visual reinforcement of seeing a signaller bent over, under pack, with two legs sticking out the bottom – like a chook.

During April 2000, 4RAR(Cdo) were warned out for peace-making duties in East Timor in 2001.

Training for this mission was temporarily halted during this period, however, as Bravo Company and HQ 4RAR(Cdo) were deployed to north Queensland as a quick reaction force for Operation Plumbob, the evacuation of foreign nationals caught between warring ethnic factions in a simmering Solomon Islands.

In April 2001, 4RAR(Cdo) deployed as a light-scale infantry battalion group to East Timor during the country's most precarious period since INTERFET – that of post-independence elections.

In testament to efforts of the whole battalion group, the potentially explosive elections passed

conduct strike operations, the unit is capable of being inserted into a target area by a variety of air, sea or land insertion methods including specialist advanced parachute techniques.

One specific skill is beach parallel parachuting. In this technique commandos parachute into the ocean and swim to a beach-landing site through the surf zone.

If commandos can't get close enough to the coastline they can use an insertion method called parachute load follow. This involves parachuting into the sea behind bundled deflated Zodiacs which are assembled in the water in preparation for the team's arrival soon after, also by parachute.

that 4RAR(Cdo) has increased the flexibility of Australia's Special Forces but are a different animal compared to SASR.

"The commandos are major muscle movers. They are heavily armed, operate in large numbers and are designed to fight. They are deployed to reach out and apply a great deal of concentrated military force and then return home," he says.

"SASR are different. They are an organisation designed for a more surgical approach to warfare. They operate in a more discreet fashion compared to the commandos because there is nothing discreet about a commando operation – which is an act of extreme force."



Stomping into the future, 4RAR(Cdo) doesn't forget its roots and has deliberately strengthened its ties with the 4RAR Association, who are regular guests at Holsworthy, including at the battalion's recent birthday parade.

Veteran's of past South East Asian wars stood in huddles talking with commandos.

"It's a different ball game, a different type of job from my day but these boys must go hard, I wouldn't want to get on the wrong side of 'em", one Veteran mused while examining a display of high-tech equipment.

He lent closer, out of ear shot of the others, and whispered as if sharing a secret, "When I heard what these young fellas go through to get that Green Beret... Mate! I bought him a bloody beer!" he said with a hint of pride as he acknowledged a commando across the table.

What would you say if someone offered you a job that paid damn well to do all the high-tempo, adrenaline-junkie challenges you currently pay good money to do on weekends?

The Australian Defence Force is offering just such a job to fit young men with a taste for adventure. But make no mistake, entry standards are second to none.

If you've been put off by the thoughts of a 'standard' career in the military, now is your chance to grab your spot at the sharp end – Australian Special Forces.

The Special Forces Direct Recruiting Scheme (SFDRS) has been developed to meet Government requirements to increase the capability and force structure of Special Operations Command (SOCOMD) – specifically, 334 additional commando positions including a number in support.

This opportunity for direct entry into Special Forces is based on a similar successful concept currently operating in the US but it's not an entirely new idea to Australian Special Forces.

Commando Training Courses Senior Instructor at the Special Forces Training Centre (SFTC) Capt Damien McMahon says 1 Commando Regiments' Simpson Platoon ran a successful trial last year

recruiting candidates to the General Reserve and says he has no problem with thinking outside the square to find potential new commandos.

"The SFDRS has a lot of potential, a lot of merit, so ultimately – why not?"

If you think, however, that this scheme is some sort of back-door, shortcut to Special Forces, you'd be well off the mark. The scheme has its critics, of course, but, it would seem potential SFDRS applicants have a very high standard to meet.

Starting with the basic enlistment process, applicants face a much more stringent physical, psychological and security checking regime than their regular Army counterparts. For example, SFDRS applicants must attain 'beep-test' level 10 compared to 7.5 for regular enlistees.

Of the more than 900 enquiries for the scheme thus far received by Defence Recruiting, roughly 100 of those have progressed.

However, the scheme's target appears to be on track with 45 applicants having commenced the first stage of training – the standard six-week recruit-training course at ARTC Kapooka.

THE ISSUE OF US MAINTAINING STANDARDS IS NOT NEGOTIABLE

With a further 125 positions to be filled in the financial year 2004-05, a second full-strength platoon will commence training this month, with a third course starting in May also expected to be full. The scheme's backers anticipate that between 70 to 80 per cent of applicants will stay the distance and earn the coveted Sherwood Green commando beret.

Training at Kapooka will follow the standard template, but special-forces aspirants will train together and receive added motivation from Special Forces staff posted to ARTC not to lose sight of their goal.

After ARTC, the applicants begin 12 weeks of infantry Initial Employment Training (IET) at the 'grunt factory' – Infantry Centre, Singleton – with standard instruction from commando and infantry platoon staff.

After successfully completing IETs, applicants are posted to 4RAR(Cdo) but only take the short walk to the SF Training Centre, also at Singleton, where they begin an eight-week accelerated training course on the long, challenging path to fully fledged Australian Special Forces status.

The accelerated course has been designed to give applicants the basic skill-sets that an infantry soldier would have gained after one to two years experience in an infantry battalion. These skills are required to pass the Special Force Entry Test (SFET) and are the necessary building blocks to really start absorbing special-operations training on the Commando Training Courses.

Applicants who fail to meet the grade will be given options at a number of decision points to pursue either an alternate role in the ADF or return to civilian life.

Special Operations Commander–Australia Maj-Gen Duncan Lewis is adamant that applicants will be required to meet the same exacting standards as those joining Special Operations Command through traditional avenues.

"The issue of us maintaining standards is not negotiable," he says.

"But, SOCOMD development means we need more high-quality applicants – and we need them now. Therefore we have had to widen the pool of potential applicants through the introduction of the SFDRS. We're trying a different approach to find more people – and offering them the chance of a lifetime in return.

"We're hoping to attract people with drive, determination and high levels of intelligence who see service in the Special Forces as the ultimate challenge. We can promise them a high-intensity lifestyle, great training and, best of all, the chance to work with a group of like-minded and dedicated professionals."

Maj-Gen Lewis says that SOCOMD is looking to recruit Commandos and Special Forces signallers

COMMANDO SKILL SETS

COMMANDO IN PLF INSERTION KIT

RECON PATROL MEMBER

OFFENSIVE FIRE SPECIALIST

LEAD CLIMBER

COMMANDO STATIC LINE PARACHUTIST

AMPHIBIOUS OPERATOR

SNIPER PAIR

URBAN OPERATIONS ASSAULTER



RAY SIMPSON VC DCM COMMANDO

Ray Simpson, an exceptional Aussie Com-mando, was born in NSW in 1926 and joined the Army in 1944 with 2nd AIF.

He served with the RAR in Korea and Malaya, and later joined the SASR.

While he was with 1 Cdo Regt and attached to the Australian Army Training Team, Vietnam, his actions saw him later awarded the Victoria Cross.

In a battalion-scale operation on 6 May 1966, the 232nd Company of the Mobile Strike Force, under Simpson was moving through jungle in II Corps area near the borders of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. When one of his platoons became heavily engaged with the enemy, Simpson led the remainder of his company to its assistance. As the company moved forward, one platoon commander, WO2 M.W. Gill, was seriously wounded and the assault began to falter. Simpson, in the face of heavy enemy fire, moved across open ground and carried Gill to safety.

He then crawled forward to within 10 metres of the enemy where he lobbed grenades into their positions, ordered his company to withdraw and, with five others, covered them.

Four days later, contact was again briefly made with the enemy.

At first light the next day artillery pounded the ene-my positions and when the battalion moved forward they found the bunkers unoccupied.

The battalion probed ahead with WO2 A.M. Kel-ly leading the 231st Com-pany. In the first burst of fire from the next contact, Kelly was wounded and the battalion commander,

US Capt Green, was killed when he went to assist. Simpson quickly organised two platoons and led them to the location of the contact. Simpson moved forward through withering machine-gun fire in order to cover the initial evacuation. The wounded, including Kelly, were evacu-ated with Simpson covering. The action ended indecisively next day when the battalion was evacuated.

Simpson received his VC during an investiture in Sydney in 1970. The United States also awarded him the Silver Star and the Bronze Star For Valour.

Ray Simpson VC DCM died of cancer in Japan on 18 Oct 1978, while posted to the Australian Embassy and is buried at the Yokohama War Cemetery.



I WOULD SEE MOST CONSOLIDATING SKILLS AT 4RAR(CDO) BEFORE ATTEMPTING SASR SELECTION

for service in 4RAR(Cdo) but is also seeking a few high-grade applicants for service in SASR.

"If we think they have what it takes we'll offer them a chance at SASR selection but I would see most consolidating skills at 4RAR(Cdo) before attempting SASR selection a couple of years down the track."

Completing his barrier testing and Commando Training Course in 2002, Pte Ben Sykes says that after 24 days of assessment, which 65 men started,

39 passed and 30 were ultimately selected, he never once considered opting out.

"I did whatever I had to do to get over that finish line", he says. "Becoming a commando was my goal and I didn't want to let my mates down or get left behind."

And its been well worth the effort, he laughs, adding, "We get to do the fun stuff all the time – shoot lots of bullets, fly around in choppers, scream around in boats – that's the shit, mate. That's what I joined for."

Pte Nick Thelan who, at 18, was one of the youngest soldiers to become a fully qualified commando, echoes this sentiment.

After four years at 4RAR(Cdo) he says his career highlights have so far included deployments to East Timor, the Gulf, and recently qualifying as a sniper, "So things are going pretty good."

"I work with a good bunch of blokes. We experience things that civilians can't, plus we get paid well for doing real-time, high-tempo work."

"My advice to SFDRS guys starting out is, look after your feet and look after your mates."

"Go-on, throw your hat in the ring."



When all hell breaks loose you wanna have a cool t shirt on

www.pimpsnmercs.com



OPERATION SOLACE

WELCOME TO SOMALIA

Reporting on Australia's involvement in Somalia in the early '90 was far less comprehensive than subsequent deployments, much to the chagrin of many who were there. In this new series we get a first-hand account of what it was like

WORDS WAYNE COOPER PICS PETE REEVES, WAYNE COOPER & ADF

After more than 20 hours on the plane, we finally started to descend and my anxiety began to rise. We came in low over the Indian Ocean, continuing to descend until it seemed we would land in water. We crossed the coast, and the city of Mogadishu suddenly spread out either side of the Qantas 747 seconds before the wheels touched.

Crew requests that we stay seated until coming to a complete stop were ignored as soldiers pressed their faces against the windows to see what would be our home for

the next 17 weeks. As the aircraft taxied down the runway we got our first glimpse of Mogadishu. The city sprawled around us and at first its white buildings looked relatively normal – an illusion that was to be short-lived.

The devastated city formed a sinister background for the mass of military hardware lined up on the side of the airfield. Attack helicopters, armoured fighting vehicles and military aircraft of all descriptions sat in the morning heat like a giant Jane's car-park sale. It seemed the whole world was here and had come ready for business.

It became obvious we had flown into something really big and, for a moment, I felt reassured – surely with all this hardware, the bad guys wouldn't mess with us. My relief was short lived as the plane taxied past four gutted Canadian armoured vehicles. Welcome to Somalia.

It was Monday, 18 January 1993, and I was part of the 1RAR Battalion Group – 1000 diggers sent to Somalia as Australia's contribution to Operation Restore Hope, a US-led mission to secure the distribution of humanitarian aid. My unit, B Squadron 3/4 Cavalry Regiment was attached for the duration. We had all hoped that we would one day be part of a real operation, a chance to get our hands dirty. Finally our wishes had been granted.

We stood on the tarmac and waited. All around us, Americans sped past in trucks and Humvees, kicking up dust as we all tried our best to look relaxed. As I surveyed the bustle of Mogadishu airport I was reminded of the opening scene in

live rounds into a magazine in a real AO (area of operations). The act itself becomes very familiar after a few years in the Army – you can carry it out without really thinking. But as I pushed the SS109 rounds into the Steyr magazine I wondered how long it would be before I had to decide whether or not to fire one of these at another human being.

Word went 'round that they wanted some 3/4 Cav guys to go to the port and guard some of the carriers left by 1 Troop, who had already left for Baidoa. Nine of us piled into the back of a Rover and headed for the port – and our first up-close look at Mogadishu. As we drove through a gate guarded by anxious looking Pakistani soldiers, we went to "action" on our rifles for the first time and moved outside the wire into the twilight zone. We drove quickly through the back streets of the city.

The devastation was overwhelming. Every building was damaged, riddled with holes caused by various calibre of ammunition. Burnt-out cars

AusCams. We found the remaining 1 Troop and Squadron HQ vehicles parked in a quiet corner of the port and tried to make ourselves comfortable. We sat and watched as Somali kids threw rocks and jeered at the soldiers working in the port.

As the sun began to set on our first day in Somalia we found a few Yanks who were keen to get their hands on some Aussie rations. We made an outrageous demand of one box of American MREs (meal ready to eat) for each one-day Aussie ration pack and, to our surprise, they accepted. With the exchange made, we sat and filled our faces with the overly sweet and fatty Yank rations, glad to have something different to eat and feeling pretty smug. Little did we know, the supply of the relatively boring, but practical Aussie ration pack would dry up in a fortnight and we would be stuck eating MREs for the next five months.

Mogadishu at night was a scary place and even from the relative safety of the port I could feel the

yelled orders at each other, before going back to our game of cards, which was promptly interrupted by a burst of .50 Cal fire just outside. Nervously we peered out of the tent to see the Arabs screaming abuse at a bashful-looking soldier standing behind his smoking machine gun.

The rounds had passed through the back of the truck in front, without killing anyone, and this seemed to be OK by the UAE soldiers who, after yelling at the culprit for a minute, mounted their vehicle and proceeded toward the gate. The Arab with the itchy trigger finger shrugged and smiled sheepishly as he drove past us. We pondered the odds of getting killed by friendly fire in Mogadishu. We needed no other incentive to get our vehicles and get out of Dodge.

HMAS Tobruk arrived on 20 January and we set out to the port to unload the vehicles. The driver of the Rover I was standing in took a wrong turn in the city and got off the main route. As he stopped

and was an ex-artillery bombardier. He was a few years senior to me and had taken a drop in rank to come to Cavalry, so it was also pretty obvious he was not terribly impressed having a brand-new lance corporal telling him what to do.

Although time would show we got off to a rough start personally, Pete and I clicked as a crew almost immediately. We were both keen to get to work and professional enough not to let personality interfere with our jobs. Time would also show that through 17 weeks of Operation Solace, Pete would prove an excellent driver and crewman and we would become best of friends.

At 0600 on the morning of 22 January we lined the vehicles up in packets and proceeded toward the port gate for the 300km convoy to Baidoa. The vehicles were filled to the brim with spares, ammunition and rations and most had a huge wooden crate containing a spare engine or differential strapped to the roof. We waited at the

we passed – it was quite clear that not everyone thought us being here was a good idea.

The road to Baidoa was long, straight and boring so the packet stopped every hour to check vehicles and give the drivers a rest. Driving an M113 at speed is not like driving the family sedan, it is a very demanding and a physically draining task. Although it was not strictly legal, many of the crew commanders swapped with their drivers and took the sticks for a stint to give them a break.

After an exhaustive day's driving, we finally approached the plateau that led up to the inland city of Baidoa. We stopped a couple of kilometres outside the city to clear a truck from the road and took the opportunity to stretch our legs.

My troop sergeant, Shane Wakley, and his driver decided to investigate the small abandoned village just near the road. The seemingly innocuous group of huts turned out to be a lot more interesting than Shane had suspected as he realised he had walked



Oliver Stone's *Platoon*, with the FNGs gawking at their new surroundings – at least no one was loading body bags.

The Qantas crew posed for a photo as forklifts unloaded our kit. Somewhere among those pallets were our personal weapons and we were all keen to have a rifle in our hands. The first Aussies who landed here two days before had been shot at as they stood unarmed on the tarmac and we were not keen to be caught in a similar situation.

The crew quickly retreated inside the 747, turned it around and took off after less than an hour on the ground. As the first sounds of distant gunfire drifted in from somewhere in the city I watched the big plane head out over the ocean. There was one pilot happy to have his big, shiny and expensive target out of harms way.

We were eventually loaded on to trucks and moved to an admin area. As we sat in shabby American tents, and played the first of countless card games, our weapons finally arrived. Our relief at being armed was somewhat diminished as we waited another couple of hours for ammunition.

There's something daunting about loading



THE FIRST AUSSIES WHO LANDED HERE TWO BEFORE HAD BEEN SHOT AT AS THEY STOOD UNARMED ON THE TARMAC

lined the streets and destroyed armoured vehicles sat where they had died as if to remind us of the dangers of armoured warfare in an urban environment – a warning not lost on we Cavalry.

Mogadishu port was a very busy place. Old shipping containers stacked four high surrounded the main dock area to keep the locals out, as massive military and civilian ships unloaded cargo.

Lined up on the dock were masses of tan-coloured Marine Corps tanks, trucks and artillery waiting to be loaded as streams of green-coloured US Army equipment poured ashore. The Marines were leaving as the Army was taking over, and the enormity of the US war machine was on display.

Everywhere large American soldiers in tight, tailored desert cams moved equipment and stores oblivious to the gawking Aussies in their baggy

tension and menace of the city. I tried to go to sleep but was too full of nervous energy. I lay on top of my sleeping bag listening to gunshots and watching tracer fire arc over the city, wondering what the next 17 weeks had in store for us.

After a fitful night at the port we returned to the airport to wait for the arrival of HMAS Tobruk, which was carrying our M113 APCs and the rest of our troop's personnel. Our eagerness to get the vehicles and move to our AO in Baidoa was compounded by poor discipline among the UN soldiers guarding the airport. Besides, Cavalry soldiers don't like playing without their cars and we were all getting toey anyway.

On one hot afternoon, a group of United Arab Emirates vehicles lined up in front of our tent for a patrol. We watched in mild amusement as soldiers

to get his bearings, a group of Somali men stared at us from across the street, one of whom pointed at me and lifted his shirt to reveal a semi-automatic pistol. My heart raced and, as I raised my rifle, he made the shape of a gun and pretended to shoot me. After a few nervous seconds the Rover began to move and the man, who I later realised was probably stoned on the local narcotic, Khat, just waved and laughed.

We unloaded Tobruk through the day and half the night. The old transport ship sat dwarfed by the huge American craft nearby. As we rolled the 30-year-old M113s off by the back, an old Yank gunnery-sergeant walked over and, with a rye grin, asked why we had brought our museum.

Jibes aside, I was happy to have my ancient vehicle and home-away-from-home. The M113 was more than 10 years older than me, but it was tough, reliable and virtually unstoppable cross-country. Besides, when the bullets start flying, I'll take three inches of compressed aluminium armour over a baggy green shirt any day.

My driver had also arrived on Tobruk and we set about preparing our vehicle and getting to know each other. Tpr Peter Reeves had recently been posted to 3/4 Cav from 2/14 Light Horse Regiment

gate for about 20 minutes for the US MP escort before the convoy commander decided to keep to schedule and go without them.

As soon as the first vehicles moved out the gate they were fired at. We did our best to turn the vehicles outward into some form of defensive posture, but half of us were still inside the port gate. The lead vehicles reported a contact and waited, resisting the urge to return fire in such a built up area without a defined target.

After a few tense minutes the MPs showed up and the decision was made to move on and leave the shooters for them to chase. We had been told in our convoy orders the night before that intelligence had warned of a possible ambush on the road to Baidoa – and we hadn't even made it out of the port without being fired on. As we filed through the gate and turned left, every turret traversed and pointed its guns towards the building where the shots had come from, each of us quietly begging them to try it again.

We drove out of the city and most of the people treated the convoy with disinterest. Some children ran to the roadside and waved while others gave us the one-fingered salute. Occasionally, an angry looking Somali man would spit at the vehicle as

into a patch of anti-personnel mines. Back-tracking very carefully, the sarge and his driver escaped unscathed and we took it as a timely reminder that there were over a million mines in the ground in Somalia and that everywhere was unsafe until proved otherwise.

After marking the minefield we mounted our vehicles and made our way up the plateau to Baidoa. We moved through the outskirts of town, past the densely packed refugee camps and the buildings that were to become very familiar to us over the next 17 weeks. As we made our way through the city it was very apparent that this region and its people were in a much worse state than Mogadishu. Baidoa's nickname, City of Death, had been an accurate description indeed.

As we approached the gates of the airfield that was to be our new home, the desolation and despair of this dying city washed over me. The people on the side of the road looked up through sunken eyes and, for the first time, the enormity of our task struck me. With death and danger all around us, one thing was certain, it was going to be an interesting four and a half months.

Wayne Cooper served in the Australian Army for 14 years – 10 years in the Royal Australian Armoured Corps.



ARMY'S ARH

TIGER ATTACK

With the Army's entry to the world of attack reconnaissance helicopters less than two years away, soldiers across the country can soon expect to see a Tiger prowling among the weeds

WORDS BRIAN HARTIGAN
PICS FULLFRAME PHOTOGRAPHICS AND DESIGN AND AUSTRALIAN AEROSPACE

Of the 22 Tigers ordered by Australia under the terms of the Army's Project AIR87 – the replacement of the Vietnam-vintage Kiowa reconnaissance and Huey gunship airframes – the first should have already been test flown in France when this magazine goes to print.

Three more – Numbers 5, 6 and 7 – have commenced production, with the first of these already standing on its own wheels, at a specially built facility in Brisbane.

The bulk of the Australian airframes will actually be assembled in Australia.

Vice President ARH Tiger Project Marc Jouan says that Australian Aerospace (formerly Eurocopter International Pacific)

has come a long way since signing the project just over two years ago.

The company has grown and changed its name, new assembly and support facilities have been built in Brisbane and a small army of Australian companies have been sub contracted to assist with a wide array of construction, development and support aspects of the project.

"[This year], 2004, is another very important year for us. We must prepare for type certification of the Tiger in Australia and we must achieve two aircraft flying at the Army School of Aviation in Oakey by December," Mr Jouan says.

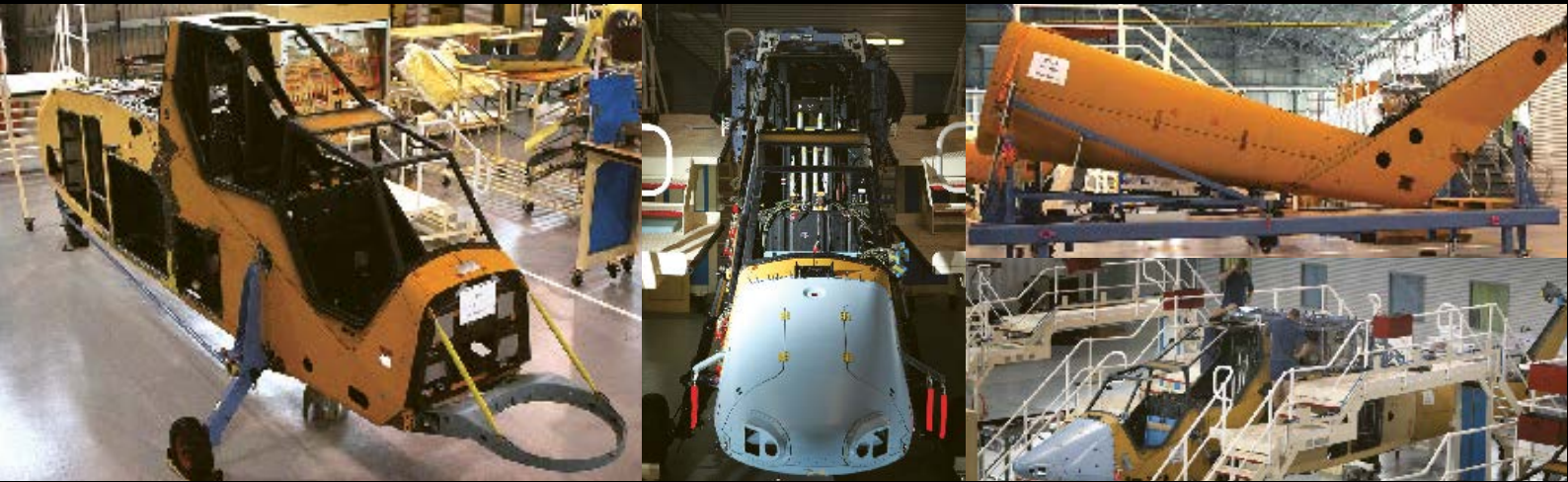
"Not only that, we must have two teams trained, have a reasonable amount of

spares and tooling, and have army [ground] personnel trained, with mission and support equipment in place."

And, he says, the company is looking well placed to meet that commitment.

The second stage of certification – missiles and other weapons – will take place in 2005 and, by mid that year, the full platform will be in Australia and ready for operational evaluation by the Australian Army.

Tiger is a highly sophisticated war machine, armed to the teeth with 30mm cannon, guided missiles and unguided rockets, backed up by serious computer power and sensor suites, and is built like nothing before seen on the Australian Army's order of battle.



TIGER ASSEMBLY LINE IN BRISBANE

Mr Jouan says that the Army needs to use the platform to fully understand its capabilities and develop its own techniques.

“So far they can only imagine what they can use the platform for and until they have the real platform in the air, they cannot fully quantify the operational capabilities of this aircraft.”

As a fighting machine, Tiger is very capable. It's chin-mounted 30mm cannon (1.2 inch on the old scale) packs more wallop than even ASLAV.

Slaved to either the pilot's or the gunner's helmet – following their head movements, ready for action – the cannon fires up to 10 rounds in a burst – not to where the target is, but to where a firing-resolution computer predicts the target will be when the bullets get there, based on the relative speeds and direction of both the Tiger and the target.

Under 'wings' on either side of the 'skinny' helicopter dangle an array of air-to-air, air-to-ground, guided and unguided missiles and rockets. How many and of what type will be dictated by the mission of the day.

Under its skin – which is made of carbon composite materials – Tiger is a very smart animal. Pre mission, the pilot climbs aboard and pushes two buttons. While he straps in, Tiger's computers run up the engines, cycle through their own pre-flight checks and, when all the lights go out, the pilot is ready to take to the skies.

Before that day, however, it will take a quantum leap for Australian Army aircrew and ground crew alike to upgrade from their very basic Vietnam veterans to an aircraft designed and built for the 21st Century.

Consider first that the UH-1H gunner aimed his

ITS CHIN-MOUNTED 30MM CANNON PACKS MORE WALLOP THAN EVEN ASLAV

rockets with nothing more than a Mark1 eyeball through an unaided reflex sight. Then consider that his Tiger ARH counterpart will aim through helmet-mounted sights assisted by either low-light TV or Infrared sensors backed up by considerable computer power. It's then that one begins to see the scale of change about to unfold in the Australian Army Aviation Corps.

Simulator training programs are being developed as part of the overall project commitment to assist in this transition. Flight, cockpit and maintenance simulators will augment flight crew and RAEME support staff training programs at Oakey and, to a lesser degree, at the squadron level.

Australian flight and maintenance crews are also being trained at Tiger's home facilities near Marseilles, in the south of France.

While the Tiger cockpit has been described as equally complex as an F/A-18 Hornet, many thousands of hours have been invested in

simplifying and automating where possible. Computer menus are laid out in logical sequences, minimising the number of keystrokes required for any given function.

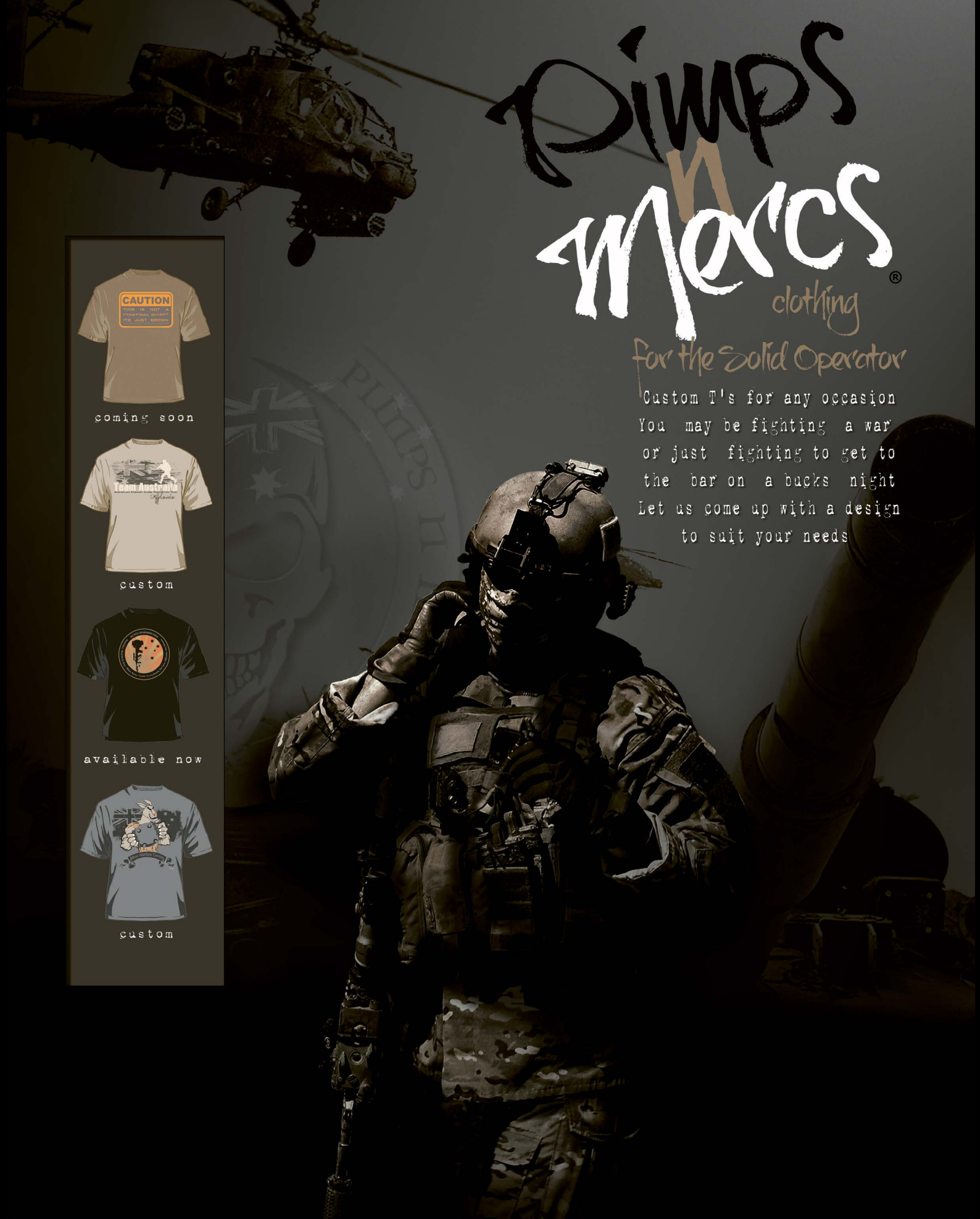
And in the maintenance shed, Tiger is smart enough to tell the mechanic exactly what ails it. Australia was the first Tiger export customer for Eurocopter, the world's leading helicopter manufacturer. Through this acquisition, the Australian Army, and particularly its Aviation Corps, are on the brink of a quantum leap in capability.



ATTACK RECONNAISSANCE HELICOPTER

Cockpit Tandem with the pilot forward
Airframe Carbon composite materials
Main Rotor Hingeless elastomeric hub, 13m diameter, 4 blades
Engines 2 x MTR 390; 1171shp max continuous each; 1770shp super contingency
Fast cruise speed 275km/hr = 148kt (at max weight)
Max Weight 6600kg (14,537lbs)
Weapon Systems 30mm cannon, 450

rounds, 750 rounds per minute, high lethality to 1200m, +/- 90 degrees azimuth (left and right from centre) -30 to +33 degrees elevation; up to 68 x 68mm rockets in four pods (five types of warhead); air-to-air and anti-tank missiles
Maintenance 4hrs maintenance per 1hr normal flying; engine change in less than 2hrs; self diagnosis.



GUERRILLA WAR

JUNGLE FIGHTERS

Burma's rebels still fighting for independence 40 years on

WORDS CONTACT PICS ANON

Burma's military government has for more than 40 years banned journalists from the country's war zones but, recently, a photographer who, for his own safety must remain anonymous, smuggled these photos out of the country exclusively for CONTACT. In a country as repressive as Saddam Hussein's Iraq, these photographs could mean death for their author.

In October last year, the Burmese Army launched an offensive against the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA).

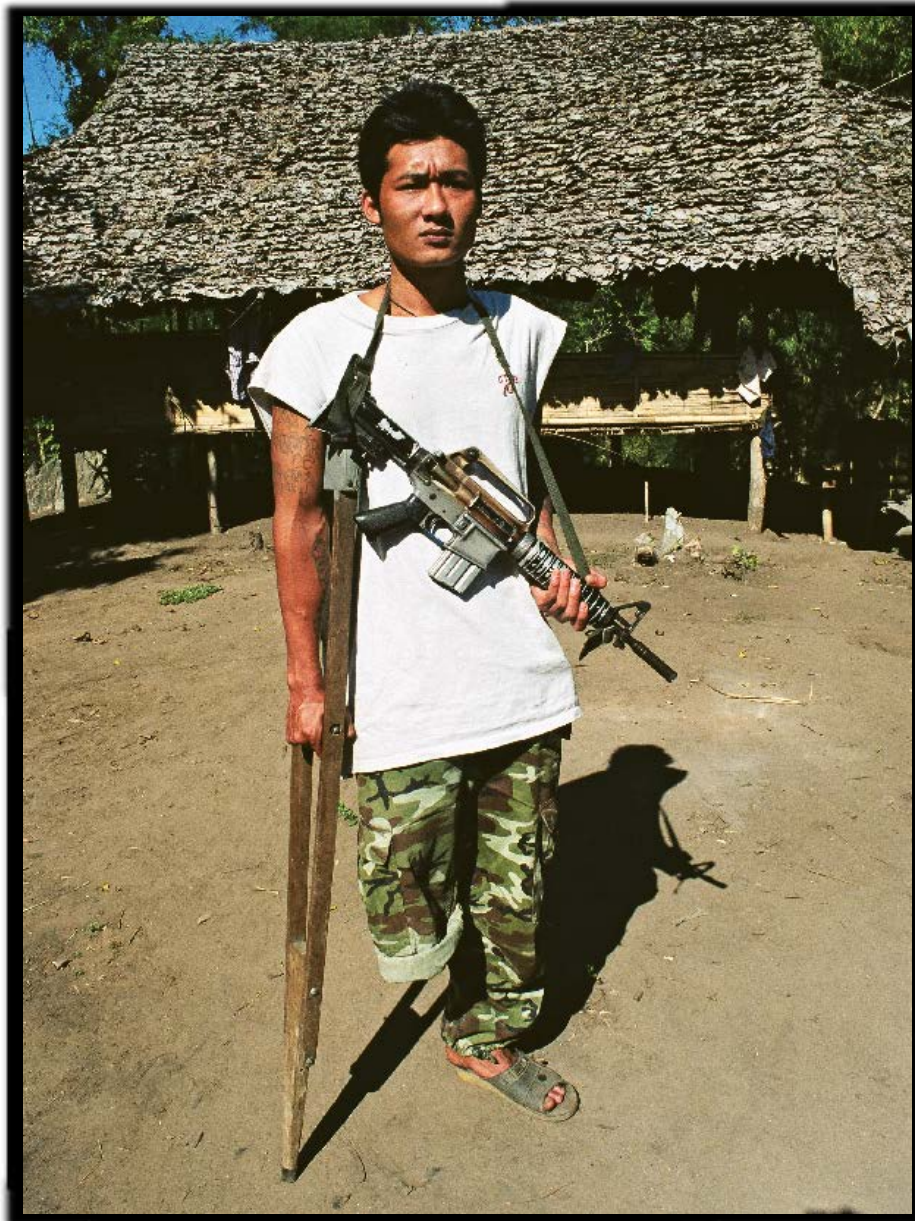
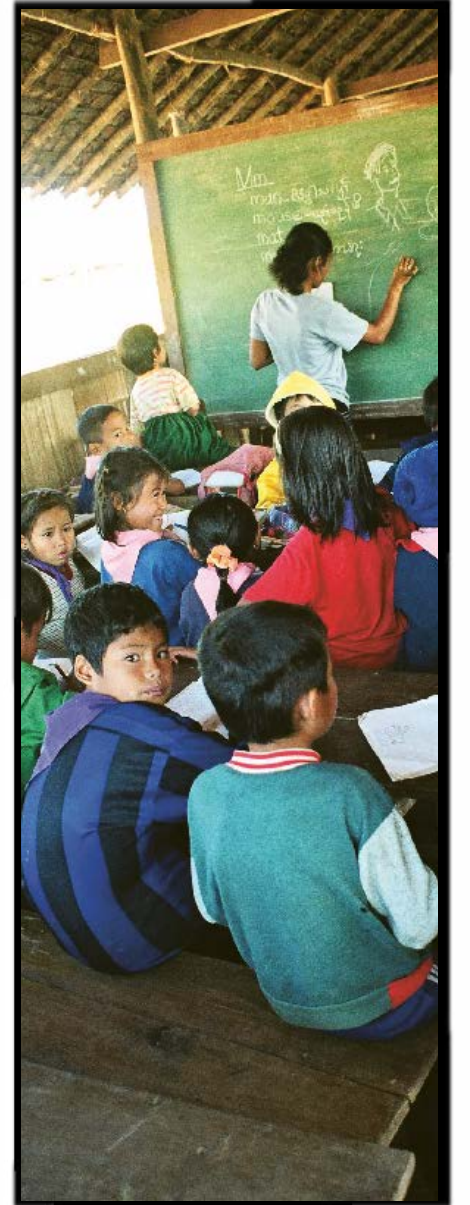
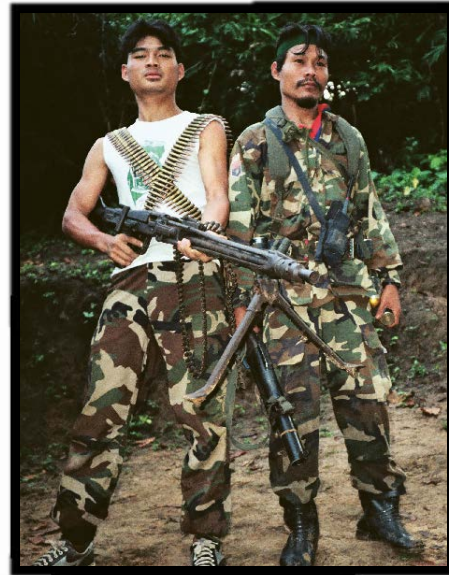
Twelve Burmese Army battalions with artillery support were sent to the area near the Thai border, where fighting concentrated on Lee Day Mountain, the highest peak in the region. They faced KNLA guerrillas, armed with Vietnam-era M-16s, AK-47s and a 12.7mm anti-aircraft gun.

Desperately short of ammunition, the guerrillas resorted to laying thousands of landmines, which reportedly accounted for up to 150 government soldiers. But the real victims of this tactic – as too often is the case – were local villagers.

Relief agencies working in the area report that the army torched several villages, forcing more than 500 villagers to flee into the jungle, some crossing the border to become refugees in Thailand. Others were rounded up and forced to carry artillery shells through the jungle or become human mine sweepers.

Allied with the British during World War II, KNLA rebels have been fighting for their own independence since Burma was granted its independence from Britain in 1948 without provision for a Karen homeland.





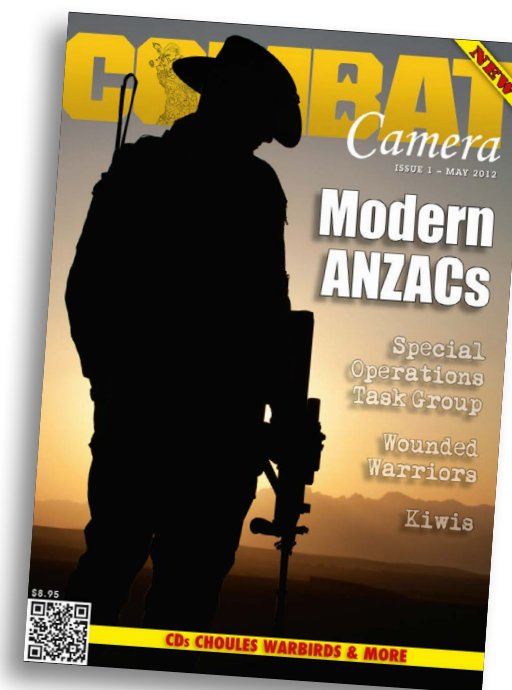
CONTACT

AIR LAND & SEA

THE AUSTRALIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

*Old-school publications
still available on paper*

Australia's two best
boots-on-the-ground
military magazines



COMBAT Camera is a photo-essay-based magazine with the same DNA as **CONTACT**. **CC01** is available in print only.

To mark the 60th Anniversary of the Royal Australian Infantry Corps, **CONTACT** produced an 'Infantry Special' issue as a collectors' item not to be missed.

'Infantry Special' – **\$11 each** to Australia – \$18.45 NZ & SE Asia – \$23.40 Rest of World
All others – **\$8 each** to Australia – \$15.50 to NZ & SE Asia – \$20.60 to Rest of World

All prices including mail and tax (if applicable) – bulk discounts available on our web site, www.militarycontact.com

Send the following details by mail or email (or use PayPal on our web site)

Name – Address – Phone – Email – and Credit Card details including card number, expiry date, 3-digit CSC, the name on the card and the billing address (if different to magazine delivery address)
to - Contact Publishing, PO Box 3091, Minnamurra, NSW 2533, Australia
or email accounts@militarycontact.com or visit www.militarycontact.com

Don't forget to also include your postal address and to list which magazines you are ordering!

**ALL BACK ISSUES
1 to 40 STILL
AVAILABLE
IN PRINT**

RAINBOW SIX 3



RAINBOW SIX 3
UBI SOFT
XBOX
www.rainbowsix3.com
\$99.95 (\$120 incl headset)

Those who said a console could never replace a PC for a complex and detailed gaming experience must have had an absolute horror of a Christmas. Not only were PC releases pretty average and extremely low in number, Xbox sales in particular went through the roof. This is in no small part thanks to the much-expanded range of titles available for Microsoft's flagship gaming product. As most would expect, Tom Clancy's

Rainbow operatives are leading the charge in quality Xbox titles. Along with their green-role associates in Ghost Recon, Ding Chavez and his team have proved that immersive and highly-detailed military-themed gaming is possible on a console. Rainbow Six 3 has been specifically made for the console – rather than just porting the PC version – and this ground-up approach is evident in the game's functionality. The instantly recognisable Rainbow feel is in the game, but it has some major differences. Players are now restricted to one team of four and play as Ding Chavez throughout the campaign (unfortunately Aussie Timothy Hanley

is nowhere to be seen). The same menus exist but some options are limited – there is no more agonising for hours over camouflage choice or planning intricate, coordinated shock actions. The game is optimised for console controller use but it still takes some getting used to. Variable targeting reticle sizes allow easier targeting for those with poorer thumb control and other options are available to adjust the competence of the enemy. The interface is well done and, for the first time, everything seemed to be assigned where it should be on the controller. This well-designed interface does become slightly redundant, however, if a player teams the

game up with a headset to access its greatest feature – voice commands. Rainbow Six 3 is available in a pack with a Rainbow-themed headset, allowing the team to be controlled via voice commands in both single and multiplayer games. Although talking to the TV sounds stupid, actually commanding the assaulters through the headset is very easy. Surprisingly my shockingly rough Aussie accent even worked, so most players should have little trouble getting the team to do what is required with the simple commands. Apart from the interface, the greatest feature of the game is the AI. Friendly and enemy AI have been tweaked and groomed

throughout the Rainbow series and this game seems to have it just about right. The enemy is cunning, well-trained and, on the higher difficulty levels, damned lethal. More importantly in a game of this type, Ding's three offisers are very competent. They will behave realistically, cover arcs and use each of their weapons systems to great effect. Lead them stupidly, however, and they'll succumb to terrorist bullets quicker than you thought possible. If you have Xbox Live, Rainbow Six 3 will become your new home – you can also use your Live headset for the game and buy the cheaper game-only version for the same experience. There is a strong

Aussie Xbox Live community playing this game and it is never hard to get in and enjoy some serious multiplayer fun. The game includes 15 levels and downloadable content will be available through the Xbox Live service. Rainbow Six 3 will also be released for PS2 in March.

RATING ★★★★★☆

COMBAT MISSION: AFRIKA CORPS



COMBAT MISSION: AFRIKA CORPS
BATTLEFRONT
PC/MAC
www.battlefront.com (order online)
US\$45 (incl shipping)

Talk to any WWII armour aficionado about the push-pull campaign in the African desert and their eyes will glaze over, drool will form at the corner of their mouths and all conversation will cease for at least a couple of minutes. The fighting in Africa with its massed-armour battles, long-range engagements and a wide expanse in which to practise

the fine art of manoeuvre is apparently something that only those wearing large silver watches can truly appreciate. For the rest of us, Battlefront's third iteration of the Combat Mission game may be just what is required to understand this strange phenomenon. Combat Mission: Afrika Korps (CMAK) is a remake of 2002's "Wargame of the Year," Combat Mission: Barbarossa to Berlin (CMBB). Essentially, the developers have changed the cold and bleak Russian landscape for a hot and bleak African landscape, adjusted the unit types and equipment to suit the new theatre of war and let the award-winning game system do the rest. There have of course

been a few tweaks to the overall engine based on player experiences with CMBB and judging by comments on the forums, Battlefront look to have got it right. CMAK, is instantly playable and totally rewarding. For those unfamiliar with the series, CMAK uses a hybrid turn-based system as its basis. Essentially each player issues commands to their units and then sits back to watch the results in 60 seconds of real-time action. It offers all the deliberate planning available in a turn-based game and the action of a real-time game and really is a happy medium between the genres. It also allows a choice between

play-by-e-mail or straight TCP/IP for multiplayer gaming. In CMAK, players fight throughout the Mediterranean from July 1940 at Libya through to the capitulation of Italy in 1945. There are more than 700 vehicle and unit types from 10 countries available including a fantastic array of Aussies, Kiwis and South Africans along with the more widely represented British, French, Germans and Italians. The game includes 70 battles and operations and the ability to make thousands more with a quick-battle maker and a full scenario designer and map editor. The battles cover a wide range of historical and fictional fights such as the Austral-

ian defence of Trig 29 outside El Alamein, a short, sharp contact in one of the vineyards on Crete, through to the Germans slogging it out with the French Foreign Legion at Bir Hakim. Each scenario has been painfully researched and play-tested by a dedicated design team. Unfortunately the activities of David Stirling's boys and the LRDG fail to make it into the game but there is an included scenario allowing a player to scream through enemy lines in a Jock Column that is enjoyable. The game uses 3D audio to good effect, although, I quickly found the Commando-comic style Aussie voice cues started to grate on me – I can just never imagine

Aussie diggers using perfect English when thousands of Jerries are approaching. While graphically it is not up there with the latest in the FPS genre or even the newer 3D RTS games, it's not that harsh on the eye and the gameplay soon makes up for the strange way troops run across the ground. CMAK is only available for purchase from Battlefront's website for US\$45 including shipping to Australia. Windows 95, 98SE, ME, 2000 or XP. CMAK is also available for Mac OS 8.6-9.xx running on a G3 or better.

RATING ★★★★★☆

BOOK REVIEW



LIFE IN THE FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION:
HOW TO JOIN AND WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU GET THERE

EVAN MCGORMAN
PSI RESEARCH
US\$19.95 on the Internet

Life in the French Foreign Legion has always made for a good yarn but what's fact and what's fiction has been hard to differentiate over the years – but it's that very mystique which has served as the Legion's best recruiter.

Those looking for relevant first-hand information on what to expect, should they decide the French Foreign Legion's basic no-frills military life is for them, will be frustrated and could end up making a costly, ill-informed decision. It was this lack of real information which led former Legionnaire and Canadian Evan McGorman to write the remarkable straight-talking book, *Life in the French Foreign Legion: How to Join and What to Expect when You Get There*.

In 1983, McGorman read a magazine article about the Legion and the article sat smouldering in his curiosity for the next six years during military service in the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery. In 1989, McGorman left the Canadian Army and, without really knowing what he was getting in to, took the plunge and enlisted in the French Foreign Legion for the standard five-year contract. In his book, McGorman recounts every detail of his time with the Legion, from the "pure, heart-pounding rush" of arriving in Paris to enlist at the Fort de Nogent recruiting centre to regimental life with the 2nd Parachute Regiment based in Corsica, to UN operations in Sarajehvo and finally to his discharge five years later.

The intention behind McGorman's candid book was to give potential recruits something he never had, a solid basis from which to make an informed decision. Speaking from his native Canada, McGorman told CONTACT that the real litmus test to his book's credibility was what former Legionnaires thought of it. "Almost all of the feedback I've received has been very positive," he says.

And what of the readers who were potential recruits to the Legion? "There have been a handful who've indicated they decided against joining after reading my book, but a lot of guys are still willing to take their chances even with ample dissuasion." *Life in the French Foreign Legion: How to Join and What to Expect when You Get There* pulls no punches about the total dedication and commitment required to give five years of your life to the Legion, this straightforward book is a mine of information and will leave potential recruits in no doubt what awaits them.

McGorman says that in spite of its shortcomings, many former Legionnaires have found service in the Legion to be their beacon in stormy seas. Without the slightest regret in joining, he says that looking back on his service, his expectations of life in the French Foreign Legion were unfulfilled and, as disappointed though he ultimately was, he also believes that serving in the French Foreign Legion is an undertaking without equal.

"There isn't much on the planet that can compare to it. I wouldn't have traded it for anything."

RATING ★★★★★☆



PARA GROUP

DROP-IN ON CROC '03

3RAR exercises its wings at Shoalwater Bay

WORDS CONTACT PICS ASHLEY ROACH

A combined force of roughly 10,000 Australian and US troops took part in last year's Exercise Crocodile '03, the most significant ADF activity for the year, outside operational commitments.

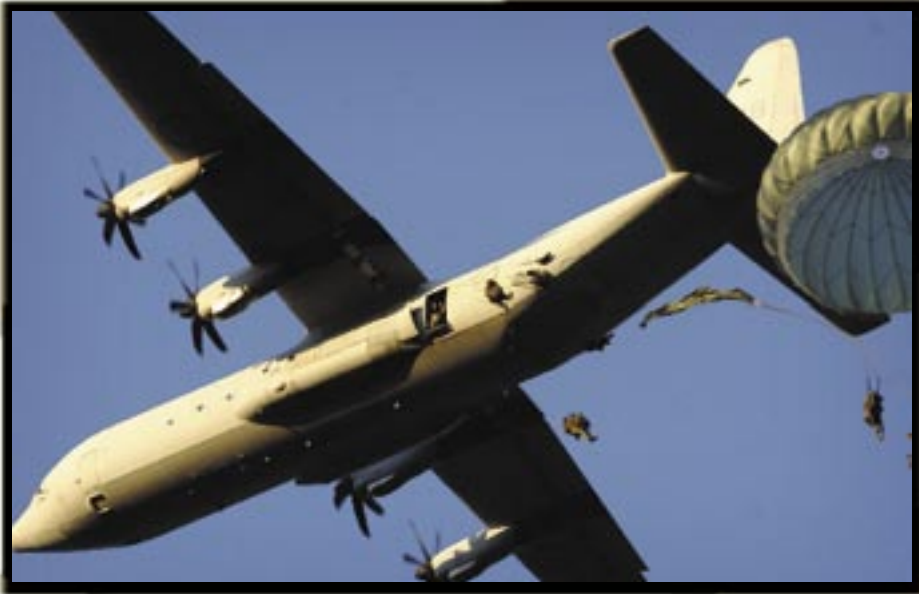
Croc '03 was designed specifically to train Australian and American forces in combined operations led by Australia and supported by the US.

Among those who made their usual, spectacular entrance to Shoalwater Bay Training Area were the soldiers of Australia's only parachute infantry battalion – the recently much maligned yet justifiably proud 3RAR.

The role, mission and capabilities of 3RAR are a unique and highly valuable asset on any commanders order of battle.

3RAR is a battalion-sized group of air-deployable infantry that can be assigned to seize and secure a point-of-entry (POE) for follow-on elements. Their doctrine calls for them to fill the capability where conventional methods of insertion are unavailable or not appropriate.

Battalion philosophy is to overmatch an adversary on the ground by using surprise and the indirect approach to rapidly achieve decisive advantage.





PIC SUPPLIED BY WO1 DARRYL KELLY

WITHIN SIGHT OF HOME

After enduring the unmitigated horror that is war – and living to tell the tale – Pte Richard Warne discovered to his cost that fate had not finished with him and still had a cruel and bitter blow in store

WORDS WO1 DARRYL KELLY

Richard Warne was born to simple country folk in Maryborough, Queensland, in 1898. A boy of the land, he worked hard on the family farm at Owanyilla in support of his family's endeavour to eke out a living. He was bright at school and did well, but with little leisure time on his hands, sport took second place. When the opportunity did arise, he enjoyed a hard game of tennis.

On his enlistment in the Australian Imperial Force in March 1916, he was one of a select group of recruits commonly known as 'the fair dinkums' – the volunteers who knew what to expect of war after Australians had been made aware of the carnage at Gallipoli – that this was not the great overseas adventure that had prompted so many to join up when war was first declared.

Richard Warne was first posted to the ranks of the 41st Battalion. He enjoyed his life in the military and adapted well to the rigours of training. In May 1916 he boarded the troopship Demosthenes in Sydney, bound for training camps in England, where the Diggers would be instructed in the skills required for the war on the Western Front.

In late 1916, Warne received his orders to embark for France – he was being assigned as a reinforcement for the 31st Battalion which had suffered heavy losses in actions in the Somme Valley. On 17 November the battalion was engaged in heavy fighting at Flers – their

objective, a system of heavily fortified trenches known as 'the maze'.

As the Diggers advanced towards the enemy line, no part of their training could have prepared them for the conditions they were about to experience. France was entering the worst winter in 100 years. The troops were enveloped by freezing cold, relentless damp, knee-deep mud and the constant presence of death – a scenario they could never have imagined in their wildest dreams. The Australians succeeded in capturing some of the trenches, only to lose them again in counterattacks a couple of days later.

In February 1917, Warne was on a ration-carrying party supplying the front line. As the party wove its way forward, the scream of incoming shells pierced the night. Diving to ground, Warne and his partner sought safety in the mud, but as the shells exploded, a piece of shrapnel shattered the urn they were carrying and drenched Warne's feet with boiling water.

As the young soldier was carried to the dressing station, he pleaded to stay with his mates, but the medics knew the burns Warne had suffered would require specialist treatment in England. On 8 February 1917, Warne was admitted to the Norfolk War Hospital where he received treatment for the next eight weeks.

On his release from hospital, Warne was assigned to remain in England to assist with the training of new recruits. As he read news

reports of the casualties and the heavy losses – particularly disturbing was the loss of so many mates – he pestered his superiors to post him back to the front. In October 1917 his request was granted and he returned to his battalion in France.

In November of that year, Richard experienced his first taste of military discipline. He was charged with the serious crime of stealing – not for taking a mate's money or possessions but for pinching two kilos of apples which he had given to members of his section. He was found guilty and sentenced to one day's detention.

The Australians held their ground through the great German Spring Offensive of April 1918 – finally the tide was turning and they had 'Fritz' on the run.

Richard showed his worth at Morlandcourt, where, on the night of 28 July 1918, he volunteered to act as stretcher-bearer to retrieve wounded from a captured position. Despite fatigue and lack of food, he worked all night and most of the next day, under heavy fire, until all the wounded had been brought in.

He was awarded the Military Medal for his bravery. In part, the commendation reads, 'His splendid contempt for enemy artillery set a wonderful example to all...'

In August 1918 the battalion participated in the capture and liberation of the French town of Villers-Bretonneux and later, Bullecourt. At one point the 31st became bogged down and were driven

back by accurate German artillery fire. The front was strewn with Australian wounded. With total disregard for their own safety, Warne and a friend – Pte Richard Stutz MM, also from Owanyilla and who would go on to marry Warne's sister after the war – went out under heavy fire and dragged their wounded mates to safety. For their selfless bravery that day, both soldiers were recommended for bars to their Military Medals.

The battalion, as part of the 5th Division, was later dispatched south to Amiens to confront a full-scale German offensive, but soon the Germans were retreating on all fronts, with the Allies hard on their heels. During an attack in September, the 31st again came under heavy German artillery fire.

A Lewis gun section, which included Richard Warne, sorted forward to locate the troublesome enemy gun battery. They engaged it with accurate small-arms fire and forced the Germans to temporarily abandon their guns. This respite from attack enabled the 31st to continue its advance. Warne's name was submitted for a bar to his Military Medal, but it was not approved.

An armistice was declared on 11 November 1918 and the battlefield took on an eerie, ghostly silence – finally the war was over.

Private Richard Warne MM, would have to wait his turn to go home. He was sent to England on leave and took the opportunity to sight-see and participate in the post-victory revelry. Finally the order he had waited so long to hear – HOME!

As the troopship neared the coast of Australia, Diggers swore they could smell the gum trees.

Private Warne attended a final medical board in Brisbane on 22 August 1919 and was passed fit with no disabilities. He sent a telegram to his family advising he would catch the first available train from Brisbane, which was due to arrive in Owanyilla on the afternoon of the 25th.

He intended to travel with Private George Black, also of the 31st. They had been the best of mates for the past 18 months and had looked

out for each other – both in and out of the line. By a stroke of luck, Warne was released on leave early and thought he would surprise his family by catching an earlier train – scheduled to arrive on the morning of the 25th.

While on the train, Warne was horrified to discover this train would not be stopping at Owanyilla. He pleaded with the driver to make a special concession – an unscheduled stop. The driver refused, the best he could do was slow down to allow Warne to jump.

At around 5am, as the train reduced speed on its approach to Owanyilla, Richard Warne hung out the window of the carriage. He could see the lights of his home and could imagine his mother cooking breakfast.

Black walked with Warne to the carriage door where they paused, shook hands and said their good-byes. As the platform came into view, Warne threw his kitbag from the train, watched to see it land safely on the platform, then having carefully judged his timing, he jumped.

The sequence of events that followed can only be described as a horrible twist of fate. The train was going too fast; he had completely missed the platform and bounced along the ground. He hit

a large rock alongside the tracks with such force he was thrown under the wheels of the train. The lower portion of his right leg was shattered, he suffered head injuries including a compound fracture of the skull, and he sustained multiple contusions to the rest of his body.

At about 7am, Eva Lay, the wife of a local linesman made her way to the platform – her job was to open the gates. She noticed the kitbag lying on the platform, but on searching for the owner of the bag she found the platform deserted. Curiosity got the better of her so she checked along the track. To her horror, she stumbled across the bloodied and badly injured body of the young soldier. On closer inspection, she could see a slight rise and fall of his chest – was it possible that he was still alive?

Being new to the area and with her husband away, she raced to the nearest farm for help – the property of the Warne family. On arrival at the scene, Richard and Clara Warne looked down at the battered form of the young soldier only to see that it was their own son, Richard. A series of phone calls clacked along the ancient telephone lines, urgently requesting that the ambulance from Maryborough be sent.

The attending ambulance officers did their best. They placed young Richard in the back of their vehicle with his mother cradling her son's battered head. The ambulance sped towards Maryborough but as it approached the hospital, Private Richard Warne MM lost his final battle and died in his mother's arms.

The citizens of Maryborough district contributed funds to have a memorial erected over the young soldier's grave. His grieving mother never recovered from the death of her first born and secretly, her favourite child. She lived a further 41 years of anguish and torment, never coming to terms with the tragic loss of Richard. She finally found peace when laid to rest, alongside her son, in 1960.

WORDS JONATHAN GARLAND ILLUSTRATION GREG@TWIST

NOBBER GOES TO GROUND

The incident occurred during a return to barracks from a day tramping through the weeds.

This particular base was ringed by hills and there was a lookout platform where the road to the exercise area crossed the ridge. The lookout afforded, in daylight, an unobstructed and picturesque view of the countryside for kilometres around.

It was well after dark, however, when Recruit Nobber and his section reached that stretch of ascending tarmac known lovingly by PTIs – and with unmitigated loathing by everyone else – as Heartbreak Hill.

Now, Nobber was far from the fittest member of his section. This was not entirely through lack of effort on his part. But,

despite the best attempts of both Nobber and his trainers, the soldier threw himself into PT with the grace of a stork tap-dancing – and to similar effect.

So, by the time the weary section reached the summit, Nobber was huffing and puffing like the big, bad wolf and seeing more stars than were visible in the night sky alone.

As they approached the lookout, the section commander

became aware of a vehicle ascending the road on the opposite side of the ridge. For reasons that no doubt seemed good at the time, he gave the order to take cover.

The section scattered, leaving Nobber standing like a scarecrow in a wheat field. Blinking through his spectacles, with blood pounding in his ears, Nobber looked around uncomprehendingly as his commander shouted at him to, "Get the #\$\$^ off the road!"

As the urgency slowly penetrated, Nobber began moving, looking for a place big enough to hide him, his weapon and his pack. By now, of course, all the good spots were taken.

He darted from place to place like a graceless hummingbird, unable to find cover. Finally, with

engine noise reaching a deafening crescendo and headlights coming to bear, Nobber made a desperate dash for the knee-high stone wall ringing the lookout and launched himself into the dark unknown.

His plan, he would later explain, was to hug the far side of the wall until the all clear.

Naturally, it didn't work out like that. In his haste, Nobber had forgotten two crucial facts. First, a lookout is so-named because it is commonly situated at the top of ground that rapidly slopes away. Second, his momentum was vastly increased by the weight of the pack he was carrying.

So, Nobber found himself landing several metres further away from the wall than he intended and, having struck the ground, was quite unable to stop.

The luckless soldier and his pack bounced rapidly down the slope like two sacks of potatoes tied together, thumping over stones, brush and what could have been a startled wombat. He made futile grabs at the ground every time it passed in front of him and was repeatedly brained by his pack as the two of them continued their dance downhill.

There is no telling how far he might have gone had the slope been uninterrupted. But, eventually, Nobber struck an obstacle and there was a cessation of noise and movement.

When the remainder of the section reached him a few moments later, there was a long, startled silence – followed by uncontrollable laughter.

Nobber lay, blinking in the light of a hastily scrounged torch, almost upside down in a barbed-wire fence. His right arm and both legs were comprehensively tangled in the wire and his pack had cleared the top strand, falling back against him from the opposite side and pinning him beyond any hope of self-extraction.

The soldier stared into the torchlight from below – or above – the bush hat that inexplicably remained firmly jammed on his head. After a moment, he saluted with his free hand.

The charge was written up as damage to Commonwealth property. The officer hearing the charge couldn't keep a straight face either.

THE LUCKLESS SOLDIER AND HIS PACK BOUNCED DOWN THE SLOPE LIKE TWO SACKS OF POTATOES TIED TOGETHER



SOLOMON

EAKING



ADF PIC



BOOTS

**We have a huge range of boots from all
the leading brands including;**

**ALTAMA • CROSSFIRE • GARMONT
MEINDL • TRACERLITE**



**View the range at
www.militaryshop.com.au/boots**



MILITARY SHOP

**EVERYTHING MILITARY
FRONT + CENTRE**

ON LINE: www.militaryshop.com.au PHONE: 02 6123 2950

IN STORE: 65 Kembla Street Fyshwick ACT