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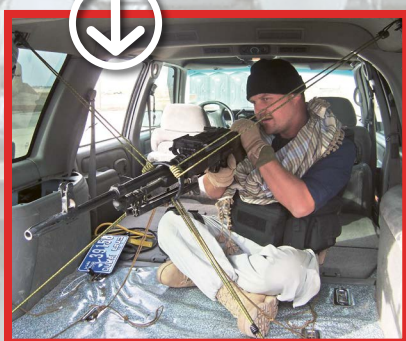
EX TALISMAN SABRE 2005

AL MUTHANNA

CATCH THE BAGHDAD BULLET

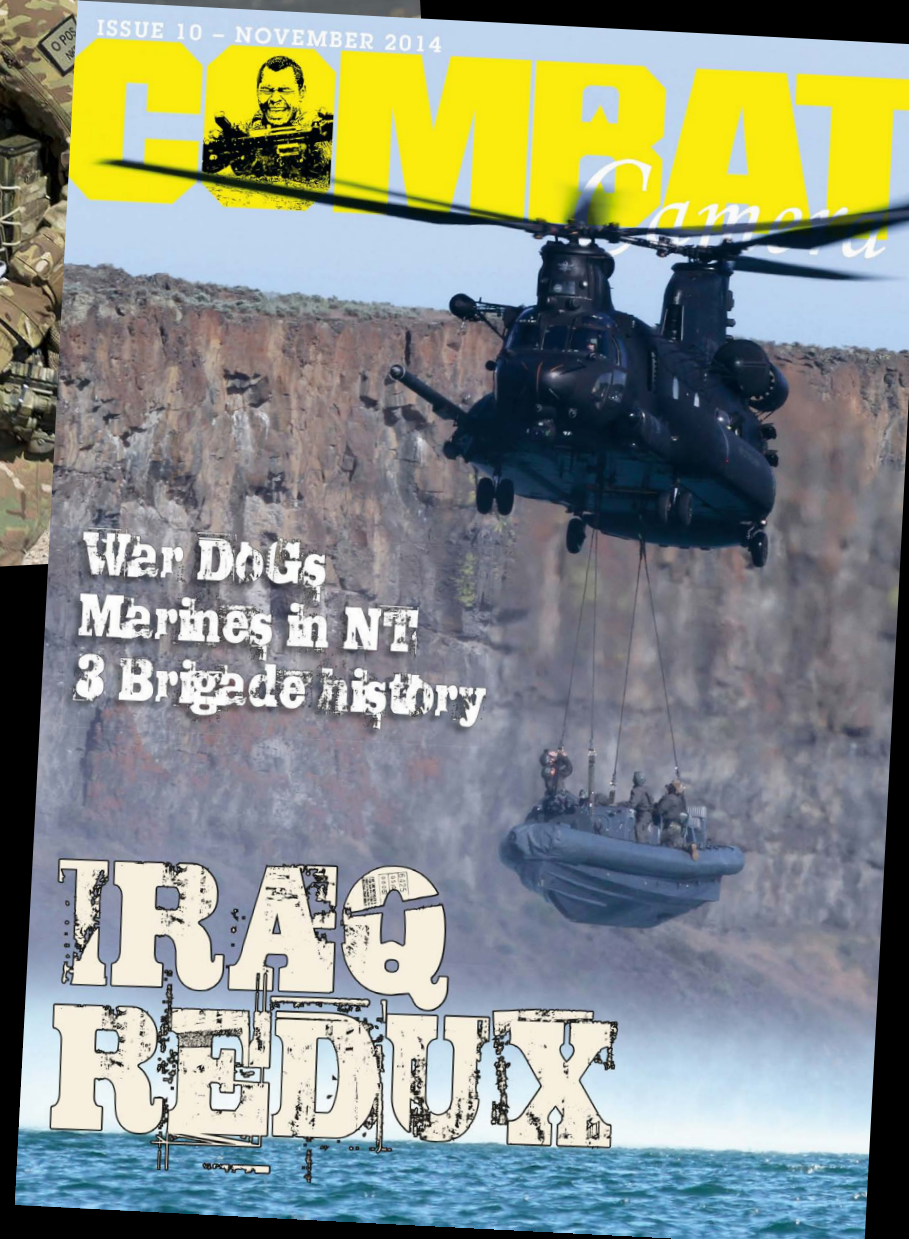
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SOLDIER ON IS ABOUT AUSTRALIANS COMING TOGETHER TO SHOW THEIR SUPPORT FOR OUR WOUNDED. IT'S ABOUT TELLING OUR DIGGERS THAT WE WILL ALWAYS HAVE THEIR BACKS; THAT WE WILL REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE COME HOME, AS WELL AS THOSE THAT HAVE DIED. IT'S ABOUT 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.



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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.



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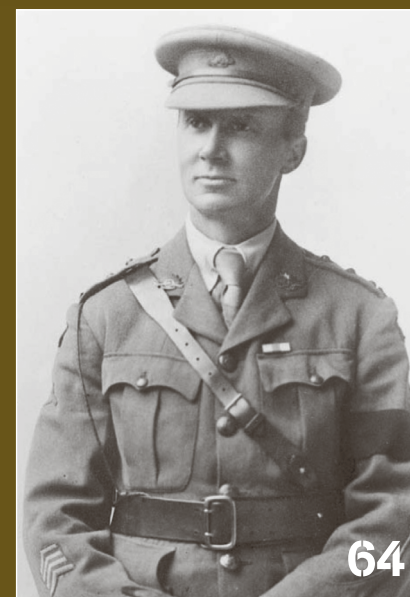
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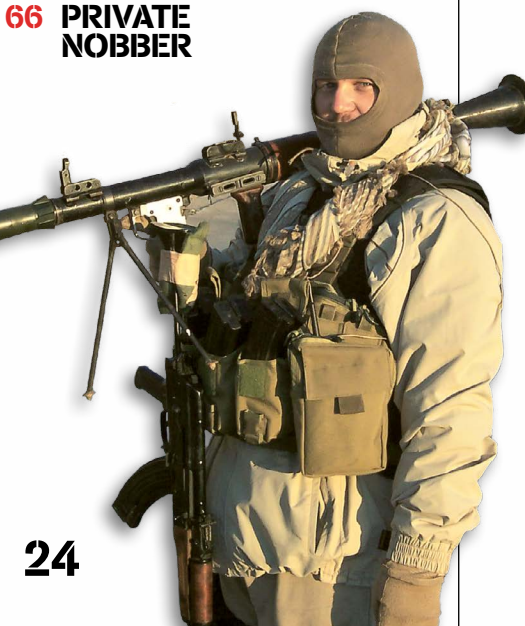
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For families of veterans,
the battle goes on.

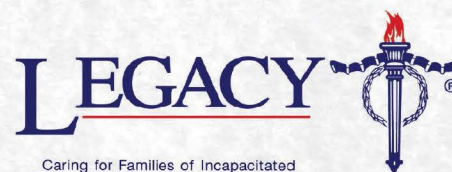
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THALES



Issue 7 - September 2005

CONTACT

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Published by Contact Publishing Pty Ltd
PO Box 3091, Minnamurra, NSW 2533, AUSTRALIA
www.militarycontact.com

Printed by Pirion, Fyshwick, ACT

CONTACT - AIR LAND & SEA is published in March, June,
September and December each year. All advertising,
subscription and general enquiries should be
addressed to the editor.

Subscriptions \$34 per year (incl GST, postage and
handling within Australia). Fill out credit card details
on the subscription form available in this issue, send
a cheque or money order made payable to Contact
Publishing, with the completed form, to the editor or
use our secure on-line credit card subscription page on
our web site - www.militarycontact.com

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equipment of the Australian Defence Force and on the defence forces
of other countries. Current editorial staff and the publisher have a close
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Force and seek to portray their activities and circumstances honestly.
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stamped, self-addressed envelope if material is to be returned.

RIGHT: Editor CONTACT Air Land & Sea Brian Hartigan with 1MSU
mascot 'Bob'. The photo was taken in Dili, East Timor, during the INTERFET
deployment in 1999
Photo by Sergeant W. Guthrie

THE EDITOR'S LETTER

Wars are fought on many levels. Behind the scenes on this
issue of CONTACT I fought a good fight, but in the end I was
forced to pull a story in its entirety. Its replacement, I think,
is more than adequate, but I would have preferred the fight
never happened. No need to go into detail here, but I wasn't prepared
to roll over and die without having one last say on the matter - as editor
of this independent, privately funded, now international magazine, I
want to remind those concerned that the pen is mightier than the sword
- and I have a very long memory.

With the second anniversary of RAMSI in July, I felt it appropriate to
have another look at this unique mission. Led by the Australian Federal
Police, with Defence in a supporting role, the Regional Assistance
Mission to the Solomon Islands has been a huge success (thus far) by
any reasonable measure - the unfortunate loss of two lives the only mar
on an impressive scorecard. While I usually like to get the man-on-the-
ground perspective on most missions, this time I thought the top-down,
big-picture view was worth a look.

Getting back down among the weeds, however, I really like the
story starting on page 24. Not only is AJ Shinner's tale from Iraq very
interesting and entertaining in its detail, but I commend AJ for his very
nice writing style. I found it a pleasure to read and I look forward - as
I'm sure you will - to reading the second half.

Another writer I admire for his style is Corporal Cameron Jamieson
from Directorate Defence Newspapers. This issue he too is in Iraq, and his
up-close-and-personal examination of life on the ground and in the air
over there is as enlightening and entertaining as it is easy to read.

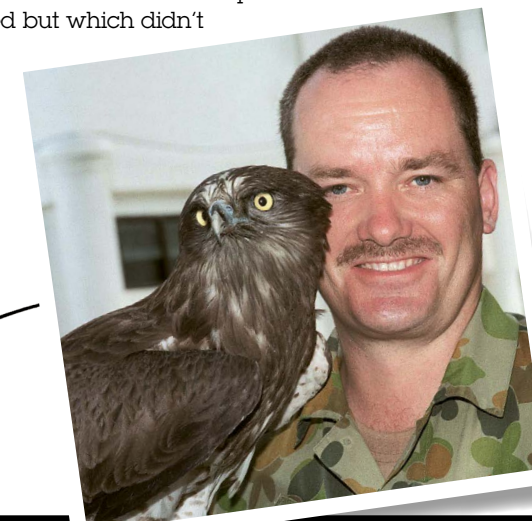
As promised, we also commence a regular Military Fitness column this
issue. While I'm no expert on the subject, I have faith that our new fitness
columnist Don Stevenson knows what he's talking about, and I look
forward to benefiting from his wisdom along with those of you who take
his ideas on board. As a side column on these pages, I also welcome
Major Travis Faure, an expert in military unarmed combat. Between
them, they aim to pass on sufficient information and motivation to those
who seek functional military fitness rather than a show-pony physique.

On a different subject - while the choice to use the products and
services of our advertisers is solely yours to make, if you do choose to
use them, please mention CONTACT when dealing with our advertisers.
Their continued and growing support will help us deliver a quality,
growing magazine to you.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome all our New Zealand
readers - yes CONTACT has gone international!

One last thing, and sorry for any confusion caused. The picture below
is of Bob the eagle and myself in East Timor. The photo in the last
issue featured a photo I liked but which didn't
find a space in its own
story layout. There was a
caption on the left but, I
admit, it was a bit hidden.
Apologies to Corporal
Mat Tanner.

Brian Hartigan
Managing Editor



WHO USES CARINTHIA...

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CHILEAN ARMY
CYPRES ARMY
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PREMIER DEFENCE AGENCIES PTY LTD
02 9708 2475 INFO@PREMIERDEFENCE.COM.AU
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INCOMING

RAPID FIRE...

Hello, I am a Cadet Sergeant in the Australian Air Force Cadets. You have really hit the mark with your magazine - by far the best Australian military magazine on the market. I really enjoy reading all your articles, especially articles on past operations such as your ongoing write-up of Somalia. Congrats on a brilliant magazine. I hope to buy every issue you produce.

Nathan O'L

Many thanks for the Hydrapac and copy of the mag - looking forward to trying the Hydrapac out. I've never tried one before - it was the old rock-under-the-tongue trick in the Legion in my day!

I look forward to reading many more stories in your mag. Keep up the good work.

Craig S

Great Avalon pics and I really like the requiem.

New size too?! Easier to find on the shelves now.

Thanks for the copy - I shall explore it in-depth over a brew.

Belinda M

It's not actually bigger, Belinda, but we have sorted out some colour reproduction issues, making it brighter and more colourful and thus stand out more. Thanks for your support - Ed.

I like your magazine but I have one small complaint! AATTV was never ever referred to as AATT-V, in writing, during its 10-year plus life span, which only ever existed in Vietnam, during the period Jul/Aug '62 to Dec '72! It was

always AATTV and, in a similar vein, you could have referred to the modern-day Team in Iraq as AATTI, all very simple (AATTV and AATTI).

Other than that, fairly informative magazine! Persevere.

Bernie McG

AATTV March '70/'71

My sincere apologies, Bernie - and to all AATTV and AATTI vets - Ed.

I had forgotten about the game!! [won Shellshock; Nam '67]. Thank you.

I'm not really a game-head but this one isn't bad at all. Funny, my head keeps getting blown off though.

Seriously, it's very good. Being a 7.62mm fan I ditched the "BB" gun and went for an AK-47 - MUCH BETTER.

My old man was right - the NVA were good.

The mag keeps getting better and better. I still get Combat and Survival (old loyalties and all that) and Aussie NZ Defender - but Contact is far superior. Keep it up.

Stephen B

I bought your first mag in my local newsagent and as soon as I read it I subscribed for two years. I think it is the most up-to-date Australian military magazine yet. Once I read the first article I can't stop 'till my parents confiscate it and tell me to do my homework.

You have a great mag and I hope you can keep it up.

Cadet M

P.S. Nobber is the best part.

ON TARGET...

This issue's best letter wins a 3ltr Hydrapac worth \$115, from Cool Kit Australia - visit www.coolkit.com.au

Awesome job on the mag. Could you possibly include an article/pictures on 5/7RAR.

I'm really interested in 5/7 plus I'm in the Army Cadet Corps (cadet sergeant) and my ex-CSM - the best CSM I have had - finished cadets and joined the army. He joined 5/7RAR and went to Iraq and I'm pretty sure he is back for his second tour.

Aron H

Hey again, I sent a feedback form about a week ago about my ex-CSM ('01-'02) from 306 Army Cadet Unit Monash who joined 5/7RAR and went to Iraq...

Now another ex-CSM ('03-'04) has joined the army and is being transferred to 5/7RAR and might be serving with the first CSM.

How cool is that!

Aron H

SUSTAINED BURST...

As a civvie with many military and ex military colleagues and a strong interest in the comings and goings within the Iraqi campaign I look forward to reading your publication each time it hits the news stand.

Furthermore, I consider it a valuable, accurate and balanced source of information.

In the information-rich world we're living in we are constantly bombarded with the media's twist on current affairs. This has often meant - particularly with the Iraqi conflict - we have been subjected to "newsworthy" stories instead of worthy news stories.

We all know that there are thousands of people in Iraq at the moment with the sole duty of restoring a country and a culture back to working order. I think it is noteworthy and commendable that you're telling a story worth telling and not spinning the "doom and gloom" we all see on the news.

Congratulations on balancing the picture - not just in Iraq, but everywhere the ADF serves.

Jonny B

Government, do not appreciate veterans. This is untrue. The Australian people, through their Government, honour the service of veterans and have demonstrated this with the largest budget in history devoted to veterans' care. The budget this year is \$10.8 billion. This [is more] than the Government spends on Defence equipment.

[This] is a clear indication of the importance the Australian Government gives to caring for veterans.

MINISTERIAL...

Sheldon Maher OAM
VVFA Lismore NSW

From early last century 'till 1997, there was a clear principle, that war veterans received free medical treatment for war-caused illness and injuries.

How did it come about that the sickest of our war veterans will, next year, be slugged \$97 to help pay for medical treatment?

And that's not the end of it. The amount sick war veterans are out of pocket for medical treatment will increase each year so that by

2009, these veterans will have to find \$125 from their pensions.

Editor's note: This heavily edited article goes on at length to list key dates, facts and figures. In the interest of balance, Minister for Veterans Affairs De-Anne Kelly was offered an opportunity to respond. The full text of both letters is published on our web site, along with an invitation to have your say. Minister Kelly wrote in part...

Dear Mr Hartigan,

Articles such as this imply that the Australian people, through the

FLEET REVIEW

A composite carrier group, pictured during Joint Maritime Course exercise in the North Sea, comprises (l-r) Turkish ship TCG Orucreis, British Aircraft Carrier HMS Illustrious, American Ship USS McFaul, British Ship HMS Westminster and Danish Ship HDMS Raven. Pic by Petty Officer Damien Pawlenko from HMAS Anzac, which left home in March and has travelled more than 15,000 nautical miles so far as part of a World tour – Northern Trident – taking in visits to India, Egypt, Malta, Turkey, Europe, Ireland and the UK, as well as participating in 90th Anniversary Commemorations of Anzac Day at Gallipoli this year. She will return to homeport in August.



Her Majesty The Queen, embarked on HMS Endurance (red hull), reviews an international fleet at Spithead, off Portsmouth, England, as part of a series of events in Britain to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar and the life of Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson. Of more than 170 ships to be inspected, HMAS Anzac was one of just six to take part in the formation sail past for the Queen.



Lieutenant Arno Tielens, a junior Warfare Officer on HMAS Anzac, was presented the Queen's Gold Medal for the Outstanding Royal Australian Navy Trainee Officer of the Year for 2004, by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II – the first time ever the medal was presented by the reigning monarch since its inception in 1916. The presentation was made in a ceremony onboard the British warship HMS Invincible following the Queen's Royal Fleet Review in Portsmouth.



Royal Australian Navy Guided Missile Frigate, HMAS Darwin returned to her homeport at Fleet Base West, Garden Island, in Western Australia at the end of June after a six-month deployment to the Persian Gulf. She departed on 28 December last year and spent four months on station in the Middle East Area of Operations before handing over to sister ship, HMAS Newcastle. This was Darwin's fifth operational deployment to the Persian Gulf.



Western Australia's coastal port of Dampier has been selected as the preferred home for two additional Armidale Class Patrol Boats, a move aimed at optimising maritime surveillance and response capabilities in a strategically vital area of Australia. "The patrol boats will provide an enhanced quick reaction capability to respond to potential threats and will add to Navy's overall border protection capabilities," Defence Minister Robert Hill said. Patrol-boat crews will fly into and out of Dampier to maintain patrol cycles on a rotational basis, while the families of crewmembers will reside in Darwin.

CHOOKS FLYING FOR 10 YEARS

TOWNSVILLE'S 5th Aviation Regiment has celebrated the 10th anniversary of Australia's largest helicopter – the Chinook – entering Army service.

The Regiment, which operates all six of the Army's Chinooks as well as Black Hawk and Iroquois helicopters, held a reunion and dinner in Townsville to mark the milestone in May. During their 10 year Army careers, the Chinooks have been deployed on numerous operations, including active service in the Middle East, the Sydney Olympics, drought-relief operations in New Guinea and flood-relief operations in Australia.

WHAT THE (DEFENCE) DOCTOR ORDERED

Defence can expect a greater focus on business and improved support for the purchase and maintenance of Defence equipment following the Defence Material Organisation (DMO) becoming a prescribed agency.

Defence Minister Robert Hill said DMO had undergone major reform in recent times to provide a professional, quality service.

"The DMO's performance in delivering acquisition and sustainment services will become even more transparent to the Parliament and the public," he said. "While DMO will have its own financial statements, it will remain inextricably linked to Defence, with the critical aim of equipping the ADF.

"I am confident that under this new arrangement, DMO will provide Defence, the Government and Australian industry with the best service possible."

The change took effect on 1 July.

CALL FOR KOREA MEDALS SUBMISSIONS

An independent review is seeking submissions on the level of recognition of service by Australians in Korea following the 1953 armistice. An estimated 5000 Australians served in Korea until August 1957.

Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence De-Anne Kelly said the Working Party conducting the review wanted to hear from interested individuals and groups about the appropriateness of the award of the Australian Active Service Medal 1945-1975 with clasp "Korea" and the Returned from Active Service Badge.

"The Working Party will consult widely, and it needs as much input as possible on the nature of service during this period", Mrs Kelly said. Visit www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dpe_site/honours_awards/paksr/ for details.

AREA DENIAL DEMO ROCKS PORT WAKEFIELD

Metal Storm has released information regarding a successful firing of its Area Denial Weapon System (ADWS) capability demonstrator undertaken at the Port Wakefield Proof and Experimental Range near Adelaide in July.

ADWS integrates Metal Storm 40mm stacked projectiles into a multi-barrel pod system and linking them with intrusion sensors and a fire control system. Including a human in the fire-control loop, overcomes the indiscriminate nature of landmines in the area-denial role.

The concept demonstration system comprised four weapon pods, each of four barrels, networked and linked to a command and control station. Each pod has the capability to fire up to 20 projectiles in varying user-selectable combinations including rates of fire, barrel selection and firing sequence.

Firing responses on the demonstration included a range of combinations from single shots through to a rapid-fire burst of 20 projectiles. The pods are capable of a maximum fire rate of 6000 rounds per minute.



FIGHTING FEMALE HONoured

The first female Soldier since WWII to win a Silver Star was awarded the honour on 16 June in Iraq, after helping turn the tide of a convoy ambush earlier this year.

Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester and seven other members of Kentucky National Guard's 617th Military Police Company received the citations for valour – three of them Silver Stars, the US' third highest valour decoration.

The soldiers countered a convoy ambush by about 40 insurgents southeast of Baghdad. The 45-minute firefight left 27 insurgents dead, six wounded, and one captured. Only three of the MPs were wounded.

CATS LIFE EXTENDED

The 101metre aluminium catamaran WestPac Express, built by the Australian shipbuilder, Austal, has been re-chartered by the US Navy for a further 18 months.

First leased by the US Marine Corps' Third Marine Expeditionary Force as a proof-of-concept vessel in 2001, the US Navy's Military Sealift Command signed a three-year charter the following year.

Austal is vying for a share in construction of a potential 60 to 85 new ships for future US navy fleet requirements over the next 15 years.

ARMIDALE GETS BIG GUN

An Australian-made Typhoon Mk-25 naval stabilised gun mount – carrying the same 25mm Bushmaster cannon as used on the ASLAV – will be fitted to Navy's new Armidale Class Patrol Boats.

General Dynamics Land Systems – Australia are manufacturing the mount that will be fully automatic and remotely operated. The first of 13 systems has been sent to the Austal shipyard for installation.

ARMY AIR FLEET GROWS

The Australian Army has signed a 10-year lease on three Beechcraft King Air 350 fixed-wing aircraft to be

operated by 173 Surveillance Squadron for command and control, communications support and surveillance roles.

Featuring a state-of-the-art digital cockpit, the aircraft has the range to operate to locations such as Dili, Honiara, Port Moresby and Bougainville.

Army Aviation has also signed a \$1 billion contract to purchase 12 new Eurocopter MRH 90 for extra troop-lift

capacity in Townsville. The chopper can carry up to 18 troops plus four crew or 4000kg of cargo. It can cruise at up to 300kph and has a maximum range of over 900km. This acquisition will allow for a squadron of Black Hawks to be relocated to Sydney in a new counter-terrorism support role.

AIRPORT LEASE EXTENDED

Defence has extended the existing lease with Newcastle

Airport Limited to operate civil aviation activities from RAAF Base Williamtown for 40 years. The lease area has been structured to enable civil aviation activities to be conducted from the operational airbase. F/A-18 Hornet, Hawk Lead in Fighter Trainers and PC-9s currently use the base, with the future Airborne Early Warning and Control aircraft to be based there from 2006.

HEAVY TRAILERS ORDERED

MAN Military Vehicles Systems (Australia) has won a \$16 million contract to supply 14 Heavy Tank Transporters and associated commercial repair and maintenance support to allow the new M1A1 Abram tanks and M88A2 Hercules armoured recovery vehicles to be transported on Australian roads. As part of the contract with MAN, Brisbane-

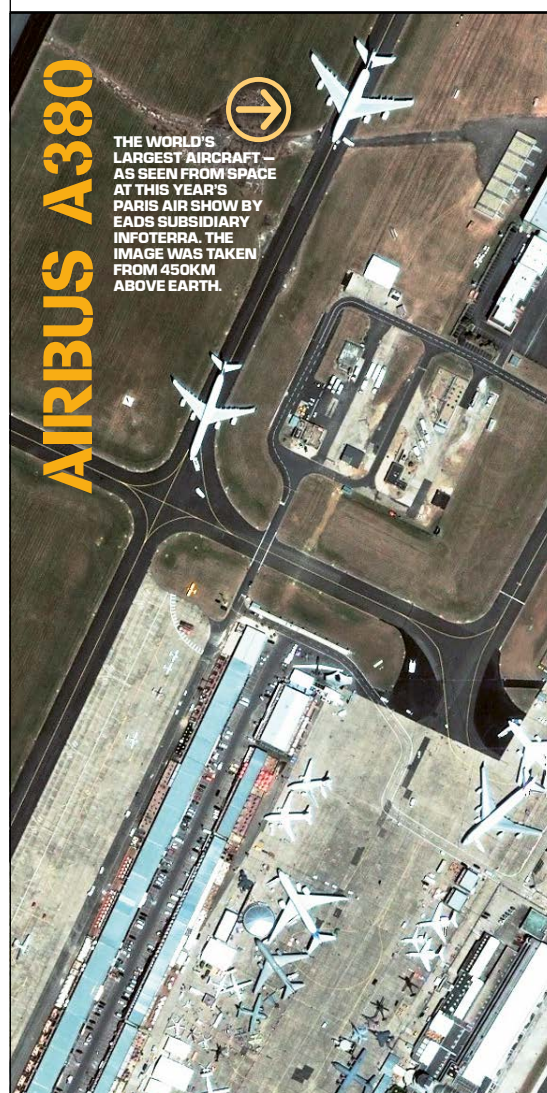
based Drake Trailers will manufacture and supply 14 heavy-duty trailers.

Last year, Australia purchased 59 refurbished and updated M1A1 Abrams tanks and seven M88 Hercules Armoured Recovery vehicles plus support equipment and spares. Delivery of the transporters will commence mid next year, in time to meet the first tank deliveries.



COMMUNITY PROJECTS FOR AL MUTHANNA

Australia will leave a lasting legacy in southern Iraq following approval of \$2.3 million worth of community projects to be coordinated from within the Al Muthanna Task Group (AMTG). Defence Minister Robert Hill said a range of projects are underway as part of a civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) program. "The projects were identified to fill gaps between large-scale reconstruction projects and are designed to deliver smaller-scale projects that will provide good services to the community and help to build relationships with the Iraqi people," he said. Areas such as veterinary services, grain storage, media equipment and community facilities are covered under the package. Australia has three positions on the nine-member AMTG CIMIC cell.



FIRST AUSSIE TIGER DELIVERED

The first Australian-built Tiger helicopter – A30-005 – was delivered to the Australian Army in July. Defence Minister Robert Hill used the occasion to announce that the government will invest \$25 million in an expansion of the Australian Aerospace production facility in Brisbane to allow the ADF's new MRH 90 Troop Lift Helicopter to also be produced at the site. Senator Hill said this would also open up opportunities for the production of variants of the NH 90 Helicopter for other regional nations, such as the production of New Zealand's requirement. Australian Army Aviation will receive 22 Tiger ARH aircraft plus flight and maintenance simulators and through-life support as part of the \$1.3 billion Project AIR87. The first four aircraft were manufactured in France, with the remaining 18 to be built in Brisbane. They will be operational by 2009. The first MRH 90 helicopter will be delivered in 2007, with all 12 aircraft to be delivered by 2010.

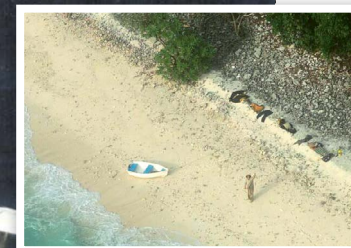


KIWIS DO FLY – LOTS

BY KIWIMAC

June proved to be the busiest month in 20 years for search and rescue missions carried out by the Whenuapai-based P3 Orions of No. 5 Squadron RNZAF. The 40-year-old aircraft were called out on 27 separate missions taking a total of 225 hours in the first half of 2005 – 82 hours spent searching in June alone. This compares to 19 searches in 143 hours for all of 2004 and 22 missions over 175 hours in 2003. The increase in demand came at a time when the squadron was operating with just four of the six aircrews it should have and were 30 per cent undermanned in maintenance staff. In addition, one aircraft and two crews were on exercise in Scotland for most of June. Commanding Officer John Lovatt said he couldn't remember a time when things had been so busy. "I can't stress enough how amazing the work done by the maintenance

section was, working through the night when required, keeping aircraft serviceable", he said. On 5 June, crew aboard a patrolling P3 Orion off Fiji were diverted when a distress beacon was detected 120nm north east of Suva. Solo Canadian yachtsman David Seaton's yacht Sweet Grace had run aground on a reef near Lau Island and the sailor was found safe and well on a remote atoll. Describing the overhead Orion as his guardian angel, Mr Seaton was eventually picked up by the Fijian Navy. June 10 sparked the busiest period of the month with six search and rescue missions in one week. Atrocious weather conditions with wind gusts up to 70 knots saw several yachties in trouble. The first mayday came from a solo yachtsman aboard the Gypsy Rose III, 450nm north east of New Zealand.



Found about 11pm, help was directed by an Orion crew to the stricken yacht. Bird of Passage was next, the vessel losing its mast in a heavy storm and running aground south of Tonga. Flight Lieutenant Glen Donaldson said two other vessels were found in difficulty during the search, with one skipper suffering a serious hand injury. Heading home, the Orion was turned around yet again to assist in the search for the yacht Scot Free, 399nm north east of New Zealand's North Cape. With ripped sails, no GPS or diesel, the two-person crew was facing sea state eight conditions. The skipper had split his head open and his partner was forced to stitch him up without anaesthetic. "Conditions were very stormy. We got hold of them on the radio and then remained overhead to give the crew some moral support," Flight Lieutenant Donaldson said. The pair were later picked up by a passing merchantman. As the first P3 headed back to Auckland, a second Orion was heading to capsized yacht the Ciru, south of Fiji. Guided by flares, the second Orion maintained an overnight vigil before being relieved by the first P3, whose crew had grabbed much-needed sleep and were now on their fourth search and rescue mission of the week. A successful rescue was carried out with the arrival of the container ship Baltimore Borea, and the P3 crew returned home. In that one week alone, the squadron flew more than 40 hours on search and rescue missions and coordinated the rescue of seven yachties.

TO RUSSIA WITH LOVE

BY KIWIMAC

In an historic first, two New Zealand warships visited the home of the Russian Pacific Fleet, Vladivostok in June. The ANZAC class frigate HMNZS Te Mana and tanker HMNZS Endeavour were escorted through the Eastern Bosphorus Strait by a Russian Corvette and tied up alongside Vladivostok on June 10 for a three-day defence diplomatic visit. While in port, the Kiwi sailors played their Russian counterparts in soccer. Both groups also took the opportunity to view each other's warships. A reception aboard Te Mana is said to have been the most attended function in quite some time and local dignitaries were thrilled to view a Maori concert party in full voice, for the first time. Sailors from both warships also spent time helping out with the maintenance of the Living Hope Day Centre, a Christian orphanage run by Aucklander Rachel Hughes. Departing Vladivostok on June 13 the two ships next port of call was the Chinese Navy's facilities at Shanghai for a five-day stopover.



NZSAS' SURPRISE DEPARTURE

BY KIWIMAC

A surprise announcement by Prime Minister Helen Clark that New Zealand's SAS would be deploying to Afghanistan for a third time was followed by another in early June – they were flown out of Auckland's Whenuapai airbase on 2 June by two US Air Force C17 Globemaster III aircraft.

Defence experts were caught on the hop by the announcement with a third deployment not expected for at least another month.

The C17s had arrived unheralded on 1 June and, with police ringing approaches to the airbase, were loaded with personnel, supplies and 11 of the NZ Army's 13 special operations variants of the Pinzgauer vehicle.

Defence Minister Mark Burton played down the significance of the USAF jets when the Prime Minister made the announcement, saying it was purely an operational decision to contract the USAF.

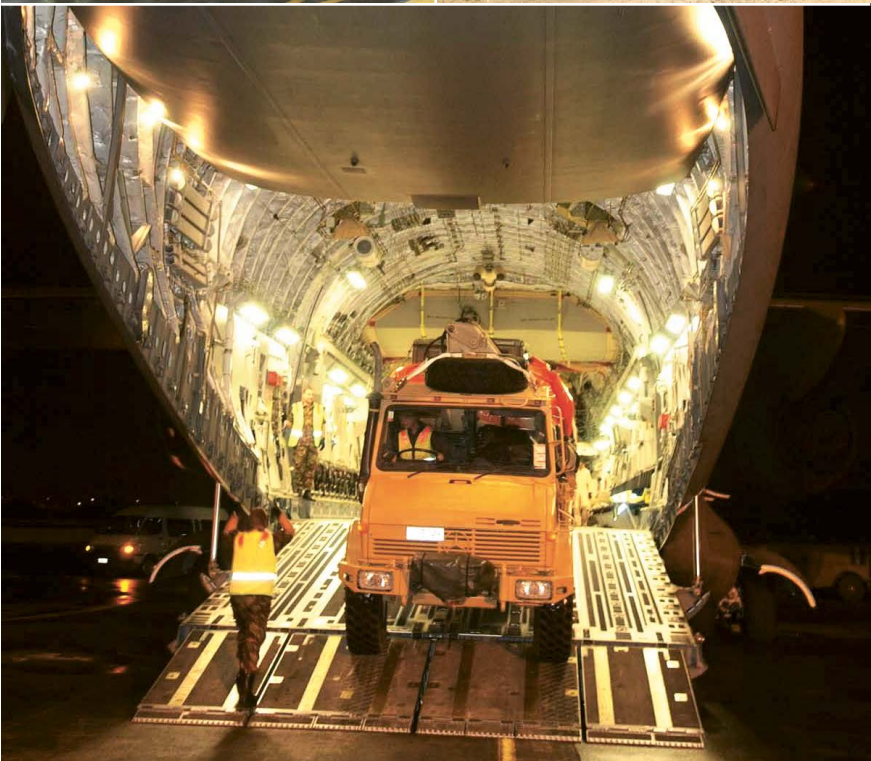
Apart from Antarctic operations out of Christchurch airport and the Apec conference of 1999, US military aircraft have not been seen in New Zealand skies since the Anzus rift in the 1980s.

The 50 1st NZ SAS Group soldiers will be deployed for six months and will be under command of a New Zealand officer. Working alongside special forces from various countries, the Kiwis will undertake long-range reconnaissance and direct action missions.

Mr Burton said the availability of the Pinzgauer special operations vehicles would provide the SAS much-needed tactical mobility.

New Zealand's entire Pinzgauer fleet had been grounded because of mechanical faults and were only cleared for service on May 21.

New Zealand SAS has suffered six wounded since the US-led invasion ousted the Taliban regime in 2001.



JUST ANOTHER DAY AT THE OFFICE

BY KIWIMAC

The departure of New Zealand's special forces troops in June heralded a display at the Queen Elizabeth II Army Museum in Waiouru celebrating the achievements of their forebears in the SAS over the past 50 years.

Titled 'Just another day at the office' the display traced the history of special forces in New Zealand from Von Tempsky's Forest Rangers in the Maori Wars to the creation of the newly formed Counter Terrorist Tactical Assault Group (CTTAG) this year.

Displays included the activities of Kiwi members of the LRDG in the Western Desert as well as operations in Malaya, Borneo and Vietnam.

Other conflicts covered included NZSAS operations in Bougainville, East Timor, Kuwait and earlier deployments to Afghanistan as well as the training and maintenance of a counter-terrorist capability.

On hand for the opening of the display were 20 members of the 'Originals' who commenced training in Waiouru on 7 June 1955 before embarking for Malaya.

The display was set up to coincide with the New Zealand Special Air Service's Golden Jubilee.

Former SAS officer and commander of all UK land forces in the Gulf War, General Sir Peter de la Billiere, visited the display on 8 June and also gave a lecture on his experiences as a young officer in Malaya to staff and cadets at the Officer Cadet School.

Calling themselves the pilgrims, members of the New Zealand Special Air Service Association came together at Rennie Lines in Papakura Camp on 11 June for an open day hosted by those current-day members not in Afghanistan.

No cameras were permitted inside the lines but visitors were treated to a number of static and active displays on the capabilities of the unit. The open day was followed by an official function at the Auckland War Memorial Museum.



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SABRE RATTLE

WORDS COMPILED BY BRIAN HARTIGAN PICS ADF AND USN

Shoalwater Bay Training Area rattled to the hum of heavy military hardware on the ground, on the sea and in the air as more than 17,000 US and Aussie soldiers, sailors and airmen came together for the mother of all exercises.

Australian and US forces converged on Shoalwater Bay in June for one of the biggest exercises on the ADF's calendar. More than 6000 Australians and 11,000 American personnel participated in Exercise Talisman Sabre '05 – a merging of the Tandem Thrust and Crocodile series of exercises.

Based on fictional scenarios, the exercise included combined Special Forces operations, massed parachute drops by day and night, amphibious landings, artillery and infantry manoeuvres, air combat training and advanced maritime operations – including an exercise to sink two decommissioned warships in international waters about 200km off the Queensland coast.

More than 100 aircraft, operating from RAAF Bases Amberley and Townsville, from Rockhampton regional airport and off-shore from the USS Kitty Hawk, conducted complex air combat and maritime training opportunities.

The Kitty Hawk Strike Group is the largest carrier strike group in the US Navy and is composed of the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk, the embarked Carrier Air Wing CVW-5, guided-missile cruisers USS Chancellorsville and Cowpens, and Destroyer Squadron 15.

Several Australian naval officers from Maritime Headquarters in Sydney and army officers from 5 Aviation Regiment in Townsville were embarked

on USS Boxer to assist in preparations for the exercise.

While on board, the Australians took the opportunity to tour and review the ship's capabilities and equipment.

Captain Steven Cleggett, a Black Hawk maintenance officer, said the knowledge and insight into large operations that the ship's aircraft maintenance officer could pass on was crucial.

"I was able to find out intricacies with ship-borne operations and determine what facilities the ship has, in case we needed support," Captain Cleggett said.

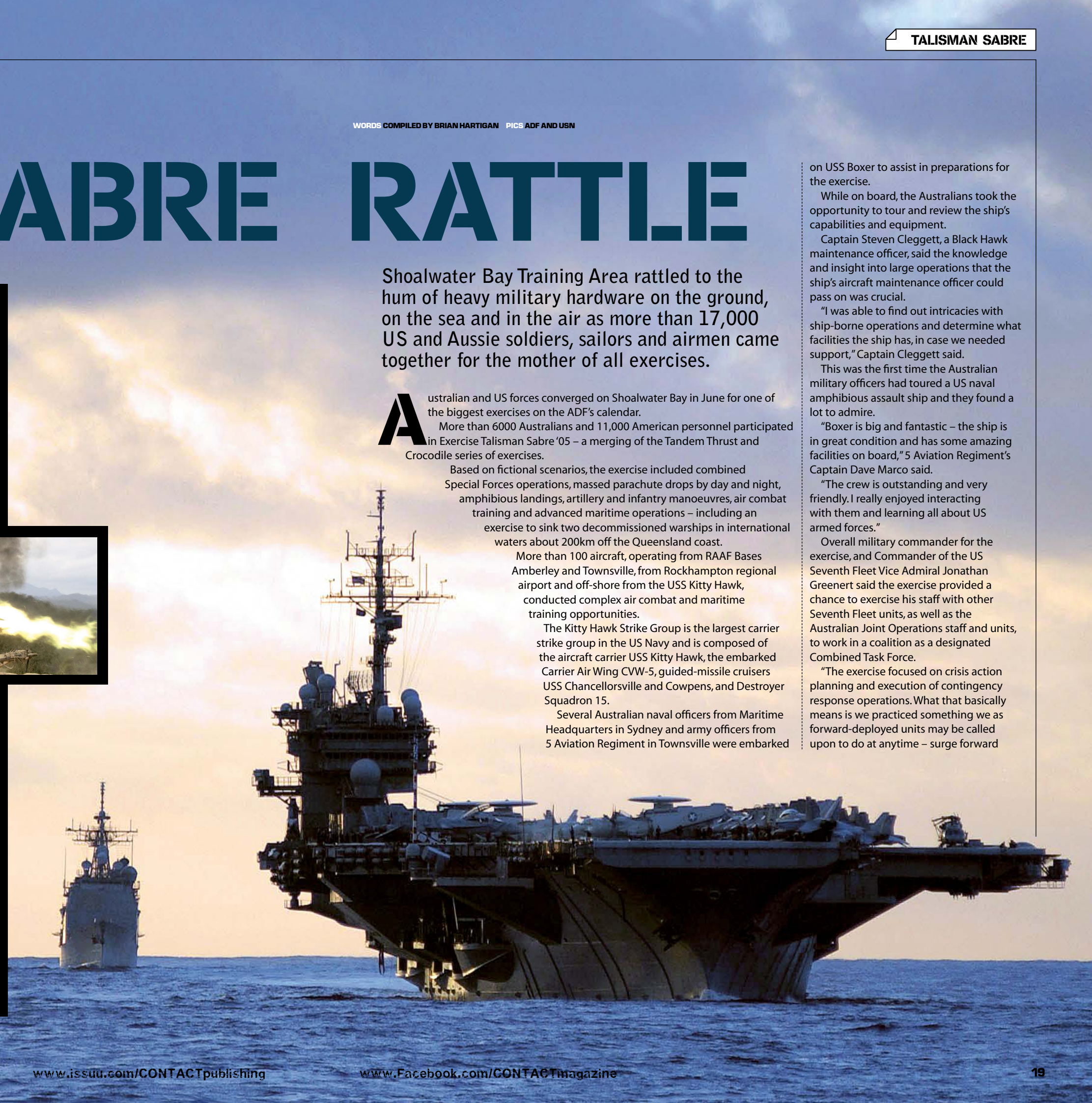
This was the first time the Australian military officers had toured a US naval amphibious assault ship and they found a lot to admire.

"Boxer is big and fantastic – the ship is in great condition and has some amazing facilities on board," 5 Aviation Regiment's Captain Dave Marco said.

"The crew is outstanding and very friendly. I really enjoyed interacting with them and learning all about US armed forces."

Overall military commander for the exercise, and Commander of the US Seventh Fleet Vice Admiral Jonathan Greenert said the exercise provided a chance to exercise his staff with other Seventh Fleet units, as well as the Australian Joint Operations staff and units, to work in a coalition as a designated Combined Task Force.

"The exercise focused on crisis action planning and execution of contingency response operations. What that basically means is we practiced something we as forward-deployed units may be called upon to do at anytime – surge forward





with speed and agility," Vice Admiral Greenert said.

Australian Major General Mark Kelly, deputy commander of the Combined Task Force, said readiness and interoperability were crucial to any operation, whether in the real world or in an exercise.

"We will have individuals working together that may have to get past differences not only in culture, but in the procedures they've used to complete operations in the past," he said.

"That will present some challenges, but that's necessary to come together as one cohesive unit. I can't think of any other setting or situation where this imperative is more critical than in the world we live in today."

Kelly, who serves as Commander 1 Division and the Deployable Joint Force Headquarters, added that the US/Australia defence relationship was strong and had a history of solidarity, especially in recent times.

Vice Admiral Greenert agreed.

"Australia is a strong ally and special partner in the Pacific. Their efforts in the humanitarian assistance and disaster relief mission after the December 26 earthquake and tsunami, support for a new joint anti-terrorism centre in Indonesia and its regional assistance mission to the Solomon Islands, spotlight their solid leadership and resolve to keep the region secure for all."

MORE THAN 6000 AUSTRALIANS AND 11,000 AMERICAN PERSONNEL PARTICIPATED IN EXERCISE TALISMAN SABRE '05

As USS Boxer docked in Darwin at the end of May, more than 80 Army, Navy and RAAF personnel embarked in preparation for the exercise – their primary goal the embarkation of equipment from 1 Brigade, including Leopard AS1 Main Battle Tanks, M113A1 APCs, command vehicles and ambulances.

"This exercise was a good opportunity to train with our American partners on the various equipment in our respective armed forces," Lieutenant Andre Le Masle, 1 Armored Regiment, said.

Helping with the embarkation of equipment were members of the "Swift Intruders," Assault Craft Unit (ACU) 5, from Camp Pendleton, California. During the two-day evolution, ACU 5 picked up Australian army Leopard AS1 Main Battle Tanks and M113A1 Armoured Personnel Carriers.

"Our main mission is to on-load and off-load mostly Marine equipment," Chief Operations Specialist Scott Wilson said.

"We transferred Australian vehicles to and from the ship and eventually dropped the soldiers off at Shoalwater Bay."

Thirty-three enlisted members and two warrant officers from ACU 5 make up the crew for two landing craft, air cushion (LCAC) vehicles embarked on Boxer. The

multipurpose hovercraft are used for high speed transfers of personnel, equipment and supplies from Boxer to a beachhead.

Another 700 or so Australians embarked on Boxer in Townsville – forming the largest concentration of Australian forces aboard a US ship since World WarII – before she joined the rest of the multinational force in the Shoalwater Bay training area.

"Setting up was pretty quick. We just dumped out and set up our gear and got settled in to our berthings," Corporal Brendan Brady, 1RAR, said. "All the American personnel have been extremely helpful directing us around this massive ship."

Pilots and crewmen from Australia's 5 Aviation Regiment completed amphibious landings during the exercise, along with members of the USS Boxer Amphibious Ready Group.

This exercise provided the first opportunity ever to operate Australian Black Hawks on board a US Navy ship. The Black Hawks, which Boxer embarked shortly after the ship departed Townsville, completed more than 1200 take-offs and landings, exceeding 160 hours of flight time.

Key operations completed by 5 Aviation Regiment members in the Shoalwater Bay training area included the deployment of



Australian troops from Boxer to selected landing zones for field training, vertical replenishments and search-and-rescue drills.

"Boxer is very different for us. We're used to landing on small ships in very tight spots," Captain Andre Smith said. "And this thing is huge."

Before the landings began, though, 5 Aviation Regiment pilots had to complete extensive deck-landing qualifications during day and night operations.

"Both forces have learned so much from each other. Being able to work this closely with the Australians has been a unique experience," Aviation Boatswain's Mate Second Class Steven Vlasich said.

Meanwhile, aboard USS Kitty Hawk, commanding officer Captain Ed McNamee said Talisman Sabre was a great test for all involved.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for Kitty Hawk to train with the Australian Navy," he said. "Given the pace of the exercise, those Kitty Hawk Carrier Strike Group sailors who are directly involved with the exercise had no need to worry about getting bored. We stayed busy, doing something different every day. It's just like the real thing."

Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 – "Island Knights" – provided search and rescue (SAR) support during flight operations on the exercise.

Hailing from Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, the "Island Knights" were directly involved in numerous evolutions, including vertical replenishments and personnel transfers, while SAR pilots and

swimmers constantly prowled the skies ensuring the safety of all personnel involved in the landing craft, LCAC and Australian Black Hawk helicopter operations.

"It is very important to keep our pilots and swimmers in the air during exercises like this," said Lieutenant Jerome Gussow, an HSC 25 pilot.

"With helicopters in the air, LCAC's on the water and soldiers and Sailors on the ship conducting potentially dangerous missions, it is important to have us ready to help if the need arises."

The HSC 25 detachment, embarked on Boxer, consists of 22 sailors, six pilots, one warrant officer and two MH-60S Knight Hawk helicopters. They worked in tandem with more than 2000 personnel in the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) that included USS Boxer and John Paul Jones, Assault Craft Unit 5 and Australia's 5 Aviation Regiment, 1 Brigade, 3 Brigade and HMA Ships Manoora and Ballarat.

"Our basic mission was to be prepared to salvage any craft or rescue any personnel in an optimal amount of time," Chief Aviation Structural Mechanic Mike Smith said. "The faster we respond to a casualty the higher the percentage chance of survival for our fellow service members is."

The knowledge shared between the participating forces during Talisman Sabre will serve as a solid foundation for future allied operations.

Talisman Sabre will return to Australia in 2007.



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INTO HARM'S WAY

IRAQI ELECTION SECURITY CONTRACT, JAN–FEB 2005

WORDS AJ SHINNER PICS SUPPLIED BY AJ SHINNER



ME AND THE BOYS.

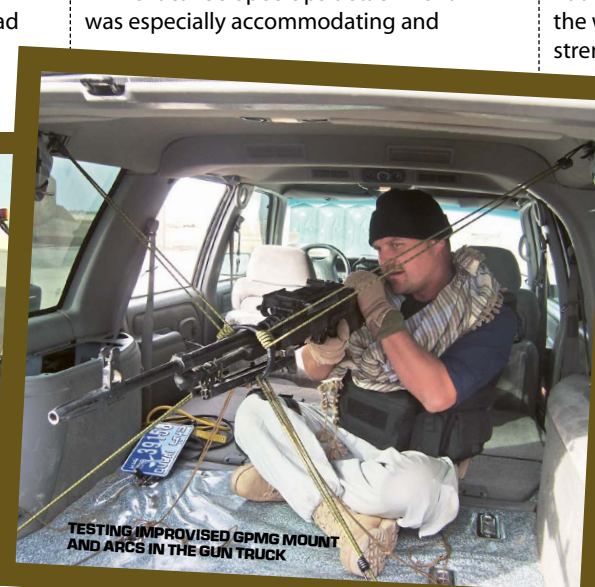


PRE DEPLOYMENT TO AL KUT AT BIAP NEXT TO SKYLINK CHOPPER.



LIVING LARGE AT CAMP VICTORY BAGHDAD.

SEALED BALLOT PAPERS.



TESTING IMPROVED GPMG MOUNT AND ARCS IN THE GUN TRUCK



MY KIT.

The brain can be a funny thing. After two days of flying, duty-free shops, fancy hotels, room service and mini bars you could almost be forgiven for forgetting that you were stumbling into harms way.

It's not until the Royal Jordanian Air F28-4000 gets thrown into a gut-wrenching corkscrew, plummeting down from 20,000 feet, finally rolling to a stop on the deck at Baghdad International Air Port (BIAP) that reality hits home – THIS IS IRAQ.

It's easy to pick the 'operators' on the flight, secretly loving every minute of the approach, eager to get their hands dirty, attempting to hide the grins and look bored, something that the press, tradies and assorted civvies attempt, but don't convincingly pull off, after nearly crapping their pants during the descent.

It had been a long time between drinks for me – enlisted in the Australian Regular Army in 1990, operational service in Somalia with 1 Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, back in '93 and then 4 Battalion, finally discharging in 1998.

At 35 with a wife and three kids – and a lot older but not much wiser – I was slowly going mental working security in clubs around Sydney trying to make ends meet. I finally bit the bullet and spent half of 2004 chasing companies and contracts, my heart set on Iraq or Afghanistan to make some serious coin.

Being a gear bandit from way back, and a great believer in Murphy's laws of combat, I'd gone out and purchased a few choice pieces of kit just in case things went pear shaped. A nice SOS Marine chest rig, a thigh pistol holster, a lot of cold-weather gear and a good pair of boots (much to the horror of my wife who will never understand the quality and price difference between a ratty pair of GPs and good pair of Belleville Gore-Tex combat boots).

So there I was in early January 2005, sitting in the dust at Camp Bristol – a smaller compound inside the Baghdad

International Airport military area, sorting out my kit alongside guys 10 years my junior who had only discharged from the ADF a few weeks before flying out. Although definitely not the oldest guy operating in the company, I certainly felt a bit over the hill and out of the loop as the boys, for the most part fresh out of 3RAR, 4RAR and the Regiment, swapped stories of common mates and unit celebrities.

We shared Camp Bristol with several other companies – one of whom was known as Custer Battles.

Custer Battles is – you guessed it – an American security company with the unfortunate knack of getting hit every time they went out the gate. I'm sure I'll never meet a more stereotypical John Wayne, gung ho group of guys in my life – or at least, here's hoping.

We were mostly Australians with a few Brits and South Africans thrown in. We were all contractors, our company employed by the Independent Electoral Commission, Iraq, to provide direct security for materiel and personnel involved in the January

elections. We would be tasked all over the country, deployed in teams of four expats with up to eight or 10 Iraqis. Two teams were tasked per province or major city, one providing protection for the materiel and ballot papers while being moved by convoy to and from the FOBs (forward operating bases) – all military air bases – to civilian warehouses where the second teams would provide security before the papers were distributed to the actual polling points just before the election date. Then, post election, securing and safely transporting the tally sheets and ballot papers back to Baghdad.

The first couple of weeks were spent sorting gear, weapons and vehicles, or training and getting to know our locally hired Iraqi crews (all of whom had worked with our company before or had passed rigorous security checks by us and local authorities).

Al Kut, was also flying on that fateful day in April. Although surviving the crash, he was brutally executed by terrorists soon after.

I got to know Lubo well by volunteering to accompany him on a few mail runs into the Green Zone from BIAP in the early stages of the contract. He was a truly gifted pilot and a great guy – he will be missed by all.

Camp Delta is the sprawling remnants of one of Sadams' old air-force bases. At the time we were there, it was home to a Ukrainian mechanised infantry brigade, a Polish attack helicopter unit and an assortment of American regular and reserve units. We were treated like gods and soon had full run of the place – it's amazing what an Australian accent can do.

The local US Spec Ops detachment was especially accommodating and

freely helped out with intel, kit and even extra ammo. As they said at the time, the elections were the biggest show in town and they wanted in on it. They were always keen for any kind of action but thought that we were totally nuts to set up shop off base in a warehouse in town. Their favourite shit-stir was to smile and say "see you on CNN", but we knew we could rely on them if things went bad.

Through "Jerry", the Spec Ops boss, we also organised for some close recces of the warehouse we intended to use, as well as a few runs along the 10km route – and alternate routes – the convoys would be using from Camp Delta into town.

By the time all the materiel was flown in – about 60 pallets of the stuff – we had the warehouse team in place and the warehouse suitably fortified and strengthened, thanks to some Ukrainian engineers – vodka well spent.

ONLY IN IRAQ DOES ROAD RAGE REGULARLY INVOLVE AK 47S AND GRENADES.

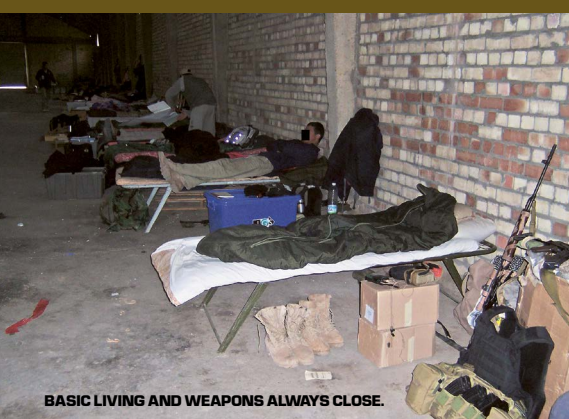
Our Iraqi team members were up to scratch as well as being familiar with all our contact drills and SOPs, so we loaded up our six semis, re-rigged the gun truck for the hundredth time and headed for the front gate.

As the team 2IC, I was in control of the gun truck at the rear of the convoy. It was a soft-skinned Chev Suburban with a GPMG (general purpose machine gun) and an LMG (light machine gun) in the rear.

Although the non-armoured vehicles were a source of concern, we soon learned that running with less obvious

Iraqi guys in the gun truck were more horrified by my speedy departure or by the actions of the Egyptian driver when I levelled my Glock at him and, in no uncertain terms, asked if he could very kindly get back in the truck and drive, please.

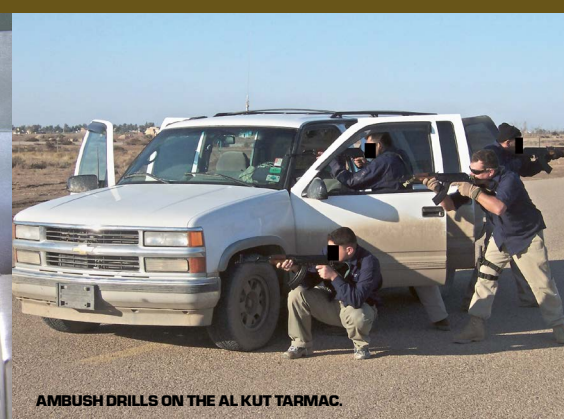
Back on the road the run went rather smoothly, apart from a few random shots in our general direction. On arrival at the warehouse, and with the aid of our interpreter and broken English, I learnt



BASIC LIVING AND WEAPONS ALWAYS CLOSE.



GONZO COVERING OUT ON THE FLIGHT OUT OF BIAP TO AL KUT.



AMBUSH DRILLS ON THE AL KUT TARMAC.

rides was a real plus. Tinted windows, armour plating and spraying everything matt black doesn't help you when a 500kg IED (improvised explosive device) is command detonated under you.

Our lead car was a BMW sedan, with the rest of the crew in mixed 4x4s spread through the convoy. Although, with the semis in our convoy, we weren't exactly stealthy, the whole rock show looked dirty, unkempt and less than impressive – just the way we wanted it.

The semi drivers were all western contractors, bar one Egyptian guy in the last truck. About 15 minutes into our first run, he slammed on the brakes in a very busy and dodgy part of town, climbed out and began an inspection of one of his tyres. We watched in horror as, failing to hear our radio calls, the rest of the convoy slowly disappeared in the distance.

I dived out of the gun truck and bolted down the road to where the driver was crouched down. I'm not sure whether the

that the Egyptian driver had seen a man come out of a crowd and throw a spike under the moving truck. On closer inspection, a welded six-pronged caltrop was found imbedded in one tyre. Although half hearted, it had been an obvious attempt to split the convoy.

After much discussion, it was still a loss to the Egyptian driver that the truck could have easily kept going with half of its 18 tyres blown out – he was definitely no rocket scientist.

There were other very interesting moments on our convoys but, by Iraqi standards, this was a walk in the park. Crazy local driving was more dangerous to us than the terrorists, on those runs. Only in Iraq does road rage regularly involve AK 47s and grenades.

Continued next issue...



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Today I am travelling with an Australian convoy from Camp Smitty, located near the Al Muthanna provincial town of As Samawah, to a major Coalition base where we will collect more troops for the Al Muthanna Task Group and some semi-trailers laden with rations.

I am riding in the lead vehicle to get the best opportunity for photographs as we travel through the Iraqi countryside – but that also means we could be the first to find trouble. Such thoughts are quickly forgotten though as the vehicle commander Sergeant Jeffery Rolfe strides up calling, “Start up. Ramp up”.

There is a flurry of activity as helmets are donned and dust goggles are fixed in place, followed by the roar of the engine and the gentle jarring that tells us the ramp is closed.

With a slight lurch and a plume of exhaust gas our vehicle powers into motion and we leave Camp Smitty behind as we drive into the Al Muthanna landscape.

As we turn from the dirt entry track onto the tarred provincial road, I look across at our ‘Operator’, Trooper Dan Flynn.

Tall and thin, the 19 year-old is normally a driver, but today he got lucky. His vehicle is down for maintenance, but instead of being left behind he was tasked with being our Operator – the soldier who watches out for any threat that may approach from the side or rear of the vehicle.

Earlier he told me what happened when he was in the queue for breakfast and found out about the job.

“I jumped up and down and called out ‘yee-haa,’” he says.

“I like being an Operator, it’s a job that needs to be done well. You just can’t sit there and not do your job – that’s when bad stuff will happen.”

During the course of the day I will learn that when things are slack he is a typical Australian teenager – relaxed and always joking. But when he is on the job he is transformed into a typical Australian soldier – focused, quiet and professional.

That’s what I see now, and that’s how he will stay for the next two hours. Only when we are safe within the Coalition base will he start to smile and joke again.

Sergeant Jeffery Rolfe looks like he’s been a vehicle commander forever. Tanned and athletic, he has the air of a career soldier about him. At 34 the East Timor veteran is younger than me, but I wouldn’t hesitate to take orders from him.

In his crew helmet and shaded goggles he looks menacing – but he doesn’t stop to look at me. He is keeping an eye on his surroundings, and although I can’t hear his voice over the roar of the engine, I can see by the way he speaks into his microphone that he keeps his crew on the ball, his short sentences used only for instructions that will keep them alive.

I turn to look at the countryside, and for a moment I am transported back in time to the farming plains north of Moree in New South Wales. Childhood memories of working on my aunt’s farm return as the

smell of groundwater, sheep and crops reaches out to me.

The surrounding countryside is flat and almost treeless, but there is some greenery thanks to the complex of irrigation canals that feed water from the Euphrates River and other waterways.

Children run out to wave at us while adults stand and smile as they also wave – clear signs that we are welcome.

It strikes me that no one is making them wave, and more importantly, nobody is stopping them from waving. The Iraqis genuinely want to be friendly with us.

We move away from the greener, irrigated areas into the drier plains of the south-east. The countryside is arid and bleak, yet people still live here. There are the tents of nomads and flocks of sheep and goats with children and women in attendance.

The rural road gives way to a major highway and, suddenly, we meet the unreal convoys of Iraq. A seemingly endless line of petrol tankers cruise along the road, their drivers smiling at us as we speed by.

I am enjoying the smoothness of the road when Trooper Flynn suddenly swings around, his rifle pointed at the bridge ahead. As we pass under he swings back, watching for any gunman or a terrorist armed with a grenade.

It’s just routine for Trooper Flynn, but for me it’s a good reminder that you can’t let your guard down in Iraq.

We pass the Ziggurat of Ur, the 4000 year-old mud-brick stepped pyramid that was

THE AL MUTHANNA LANDSCAPE STRETCHES OUT BEHIND PRIVATE AIDAN ARCHER-O’LEARY AT CAMP SMITTY.

BY CORPORAL CAMERON JAMIESON,
DIRECTORATE DEFENCE NEWSPAPERS

They say it’s freezing cold on the moon, but in this lunar landscape the temperature regularly climbs to over 40 degrees Celsius.

Beneath the blazing sun, Private Aidan Archer-O’Leary stands guard at Camp Smitty in Iraq’s Al Muthanna province, his helmet, body armour and chest webbing strapped to his body like an astronaut’s protective suit.

There is mile after mile of nothing in this ancient land, but the soldier is still glad to be here – he has achieved his goal of serving his country on an operation as a soldier.

Private Archer-O’Leary is a member of Combat Team Tiger, one of two combat teams assigned to the Australian Army’s Al Muthanna Task Group (AMTG).

The Tigers are assigned to camp security, which includes a fair amount of patrolling into the surrounding terrain.

“The locals are pretty friendly – especially the children, who work as shepherds,” he says.

“They like to come up and chat with you, have their picture taken and share your chewing gum.”

“Their life seems hard by comparison to ours, but they’re used to it and we don’t want to interfere with that.”

The AMTG is in southern Iraq to support the Japanese Iraq Reconstruction and Support Group and to train the Iraqi Army as part of the Australian Government’s commitment to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq.

The Australians share Camp Smitty with the British Army’s Light Dragoons, and together they make up Task Force Eagle, a force that will number about 900 soldiers when complete.

“Camp Smitty is dusty and dry, and very busy with a lot of people and vehicles coming and going,” Private Archer-O’Leary says.

This means he’s often on duty, but whenever he has the chance, he makes contact with his girlfriend and his mother in Australia.

“They both miss me but they’re also happy for me because I’m doing what I set out to achieve when I joined the Army,” he said.

“They understand how important this is to me. It’s something that will stay with me forever.”

CONVOY DUTY

BY CORPORAL
CAMERON JAMIESON,
DIRECTORATE DEFENCE
NEWSPAPERS

The line of dusty Australian Light Armoured Vehicles stretches back for more than 50 metres, the crews either seated upon the steel hulls of their cavalry chargers or clustered around the vehicles’ tail ramp, waiting for the order to go.



TROOPER STEVEN MAXWELL (LEFT), SERGEANT JEFFERY ROLFE (CENTRE), TROOPER DAN FLYNN (RIGHT)

built for the Sumerian moon god Nanna. The ancient city of Ur is also the birthplace of Abraham, the ancestor of the Hebrews and a common patriarch for Jews, Christians and Muslims.

Then we trek past more open and dusty plains until we arrive at our destination, where we can unload our weapons and relax.

I speak to our driver, Trooper Steven Maxwell, who has spent the whole trip shut inside his cockpit, watching the world around him through his array of periscopes.

The friendly 20-year-old is all smiles as he offers me a lukewarm can of Coke and we chat about his job.

"You have to keep very alert, always scanning for possible vehicle and roadside bombs and suspicious people," he says.

"But the people seem to be happy to see us here, and hopefully they realise we are here to help them by providing security. But you always have to be alert for that one person who wants to cause us grief."

I also get to talk to Sergeant Rolfe, who turns out to be very polite and friendly.

"I really enjoy convoys," he says.

"I can't say there's anything I don't like about them. It gets you out and about, you're always covering new ground and seeing new faces."

He too is taken by the warm reception the Australians are receiving from Iraqi children.

"Kids are easily influenced and they'll do what other people are doing," he says.

"So if the kids are waving, that means other people are doing it around them and that's a good thing."

There has been a delay in gathering the passengers and trucks, and the sun is low in the sky before we leave the base for the return journey to Camp Smitty. I offer my hatch to our passengers so they can see Iraq first-hand, but none of them stays crouched for long in the hatchway.

"There's not much to see," is the usual comment.

I resume my watch but the light is failing so I exchange my camera for rifle. As we pass the darkened villages the men are gathered by the dusty coffee shops to talk about the days events while the women finish outdoor chores.

Soon it is dark and I can see Sergeant Rolfe is keeping an eye on the targeting monitor of his remote weapon station, which allows him to see far ahead of the convoy for possible dangers.

Suddenly he stiffens and I see Trooper Flynn point his rifle towards an object looming in the dark. Up ahead I see a car parked on my side of the otherwise deserted road, sitting at an odd angle and facing us.

I can see two small points of light in the car like the lights of a CD player – but these



seem far more sinister. Trooper Maxwell takes evasive action and we speed safely past the vehicle without incident. The entire convoy passes harmlessly and we continue to Camp Smitty through the moonless night.

Finally we arrive at the camp and unload the passengers.

The Regimental Sergeant Major is there to meet us and later, in the mess hall, Commander of the Al Muthanna Task Group, Lieutenant Colonel Roger Noble, checks on the welfare of his soldiers.

Like the shepherd in the bible, he wants to make sure his entire flock is safe. It is late when I return to my bunk, and I can see the look of relief on the faces of my tent-mates. I strip off the body armour and stow away my equipment – and reflect on the day's convoy duty.

There were so many positive things, but they were always shadowed by the menace of the few who want to make life a misery in Iraq. But it is with the help of organisations like the Al Muthanna Task Group that the Iraqi Army will be trained to protect their country, independent of foreign help.

Slowly I ease myself onto my sleeping bag, and ask myself – was today's trip worth the danger. "You bet," I answer.

Just like Trooper Flynn, I'd do it all again in a heartbeat.

RIDING THE BAGHDAD BULLET

BY CORPORAL
CAMERON
JAMIESON,
DIRECTORATE
DEFENCE
NEWSPAPERS

The Royal Australian Air Force Hercules cargo aircraft materialises from the sandstorm like a ship from fog.

I am sitting in a four-wheel drive at an air base in southeast Iraq, momentarily protected from the clouds of dust as I wait to join the aircraft for its Baghdad run. I was half expecting the flight to be cancelled because of the storm, but there it is, sharply descending onto the coalition airfield.

"It's too close," I accidentally say out loud. "It won't make it." But I am wrong. Like a pelican on a lake, the large Hercules lands and pulls up quickly.

The engines are left running as a few passengers are offloaded – and then there are hands waving at me, telling me to get a move on and get inside.

While the wind whips around me I stagger with my bags into the cavernous hold of the mighty Hercules where willing hands grab my kit and lash it to the floor.

I take a seat along the side of the fuselage and strap myself in – already the aircraft is moving back to the runway.

The engines roar and I lean towards the cockpit to counter the inertia as we scream into the sky.

I have been granted permission to accompany the flight to Baghdad and then back to the base used by the C-130 detachment in the Middle East.

The aircraft I am riding in is one of two J model aircraft from No 37 Squadron, based at RAAF Richmond in western Sydney. They are in the region as part of Operation Catalyst, the Australian Government's commitment to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Iraq.

These aircraft regularly fly missions to Baghdad and other locations in Iraq as they move Australian and other coalition troops and cargo around the country.

Any memories of training flights vanish as I take in my surroundings and accept the reality of what is a dangerous situation.

I am sharing the aircraft with infantrymen from the 6th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (6RAR) who are heading to Baghdad to take over as the Australian Security Detachment (SECDet) there.

They have their body armour and helmets on with their rifles firmly grasped between their knees. Their faces are stern as the aircraft is buffeted by ground turbulence and, for a moment, the seriousness overtakes me – but only for a moment. Suddenly there is laughter, cheering and pointing and I strain to see what has happened – the first soldier to throw up is using his airsickness bag.

I look towards the rear of the aircraft to see someone who is far too busy to share the infantrymen's humour. Flight Sergeant Gary Suthers is one of two loadmasters assigned to the aircraft. Seated by the starboard rear door, he is intently scanning through its window for any sign of ground fire as his thumb hovers above the firing button of a flare and chaff dispenser. The aircraft is fitted with advanced countermeasures to counter any threat, but the mark 1 eyeball hasn't been made redundant yet.

I look out a window across from me and see that the ground is falling away and soon Flight Sergeant Suthers leaves his window vigil and tells the passengers they can remove their helmets.

I take the opportunity to ask him about what goes through his mind when he is watching for trouble during their takeoffs and early manoeuvring?

"You don't have time to think about the dangers," he says.

"You're concentrating on doing your job and getting back safely. I think about it afterwards sometimes but it's a daily occurrence here so you just keep going."

He tells me he draws strength from the



FLYING OFFICER
PAUL MCASKILLWARRANT OFFICER
MURRAY GEORGEFLIGHT LIEUTENANT
AARON BARKER

aircrew camaraderie that is prevalent in the squadron.

"The pilots and loadmasters are a tight-knit group," he says. "We always look after each other and watch each other's backs."

I also talk to Warrant Officer Murray 'Skip' George, our other loadmaster. He has previously served in Somalia, East Timor and in the Middle East, but he still approaches the job with the enthusiasm of a teenager with his first car.

"I've got the best job in the world," he says. "I've been doing it for 28 years and I still love my job. That's why I keep coming back."

I sense that the aircraft has started to descend which is confirmed when Flight Sergeant Suthers tells the passengers to don their helmets again.

The ground is rushing towards us now and the loadmasters have resumed their vigil through the windows.

The Baghdad bullet is approaching its target.

The cargo hold comes alive with noise as the aircraft prepares for landing. First there is a rushing sound of air as the cabin pressure is changed to suit the altitude. Then the flaps squeal as they are lowered and always there is the rattle of aircraft fittings as potholes of ground turbulence jar the airframe.

Above me there is an incredible sight as light shimmers and moves along the cabin roof like the reflection of a flowing stream. I later ask what causes it but no one can explain — it is a ghostly dream with no known reason.

I am woken from the watery spell by the grinding of gears as the undercarriage is lowered. This is followed by the bump and lurch as the aircraft touches down and the engines roar into full reverse.

We quickly taxi to the military parking area of Baghdad International Airport and unload the infantrymen and their equipment.

Our stay at Baghdad is short but there is enough time for me to meet the pilots.

The aircraft captain is Flight Lieutenant Aaron Barker who says that flying in Iraq involves the most exciting and challenging flying available to Hercules aircrew.

"It's a fairly big aircraft and we fly it at around its maximum speed," he says.

"It's very responsive given its size, and its advanced avionics greatly help us to do our job."

Flight Lieutenant Barker is at pains to stress the teamwork involved in safely flying the Hercules to its extremes.

"There is a lot of teamwork involved during the arrival and departure phase," he says.

"I'm expecting the co-pilot to back up the captain with both the flying and the observing for threats. The loadmasters also play a big role by maintaining a picture of what's happening around us. And it's not just anti-aircraft threats we are all watching for — terrain and obstacle avoidance are just as important."

Flying Officer Paul McAskill is the co-pilot, and his presence on the flight deck is the realisation of his dream to fly with the RAAF.

"I started flying before I joined the RAAF," he says, "but my goal was always to join because military flying appealed to me more than civilian flying."

Like the rest of the crew he is pleased to be in the Middle East doing what he enlisted to do.

"It's great to come over here and do something worthwhile," he says.



"Although we're a small contingent, we're still moving a lot of people and equipment for both the Australian and coalition forces."

While we have been talking, the ground crew have worked swiftly and the aircraft is ready to depart.

I am now in the observer's seat, slightly behind and between the two pilots as we taxi past a sand-coloured Iroquois helicopter of the new Iraqi Air Force, some US Apache armed reconnaissance helicopters with painted shark mouths, and more US Kiowa reconnaissance helicopters than I can count.

We turn onto the concrete runway with its centre blackened for its full length by streaks of rubber from the tyres of innumerable aircraft.

The engines surge to full capacity as we launch down the ribbon. As we rise into a sky, darkened by an approaching dust storm, I am distracted as Flight Lieutenant Barker points to a hovering Apache helicopter to our left — its shark mouth grinning insanely at us. We bank hard to the left and I am looking straight down into the back yards of Iraqi homes.

Another turn and we have levelled off, blasting across the countryside and into the clouds of dust.

Suddenly I am pushed deep into my seat as we climb towards cruising altitude.

Then there is a moment of weightlessness as we nose over and fly level.

The automatic pilot is engaged but the pilots don't relax until we leave dangerous airspace.

We leave Iraq and Warrant Officer George climbs up to the flight deck to announce we can take off our body armour. I take mine off with surprise to see how damp it is from the sweat brought on more by tension than by heat.

Later, as we cruise over the Persian Gulf, I can't help but be amazed at how the aircrew can do this job day in, day out.

For me this trip has been a sensory landslide but for the crew it has been just another Baghdad bullet trip.

And they'll do it all again tomorrow.

PIGS GONE BUSH

For the first time since its official opening in 1998, RAAF Base Scherger has been fully 'stood up' to host full-blown operations.

RAAF Base Scherger, one of six strategic air bases ranged across the north of Australia, was brought to life in July as part of Exercise Kakadu.

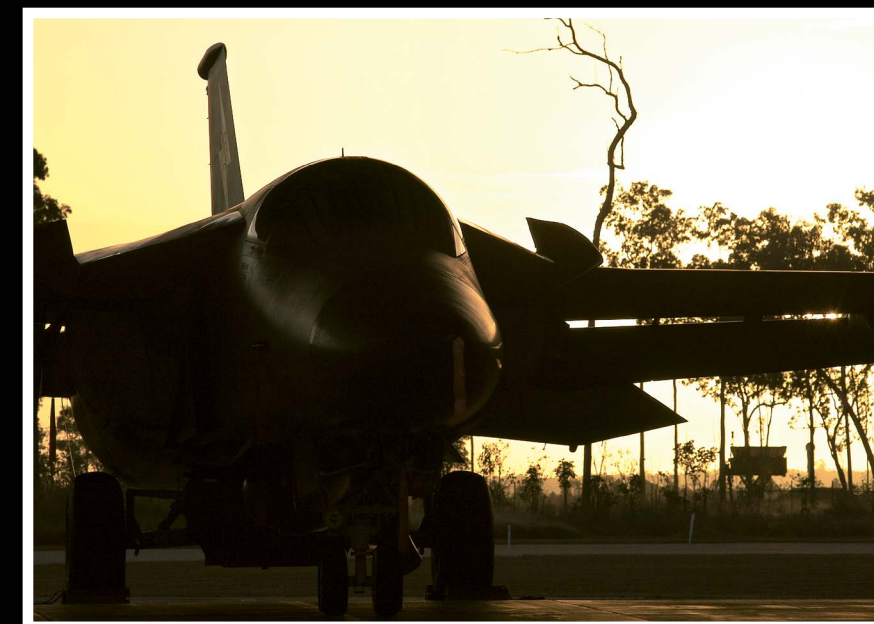
Significant in its own right, this "standing-up" of an otherwise bare base in remote north Queensland, was an important element in the bigger picture — not just of this exercise, but in the defence of Australia.

Located 26kms east of the coastal mining town of Weipa on the Cape York Peninsula, and at the end of more than 650kms of dirt road, occupation and activation of the base was a major exercise in its own right.

More than 600 personnel travelled from Williamtown, Amberley and Townsville with more than 70 vehicles and thousands of tonnes of supplies and equipment.

Given the nature and condition of the only access road, the major movement was by civilian barge from Karumba in the southern Gulf of Carpentaria.

But that was just the start of it...



... **CONTACT** will report in much more detail on operations at RAAF Base Scherger — and from Exercise Kakadu in general — in the next issue, out 2 December.

WORDS & PICS BRIAN HARTIGAN



MILITARY WORKING DOG DARCEY AND LEADING AIRCRAFTSMAN CLINTON GIGG ON GUARD DUTY AT RAAF BASE SCHERGER



F-111 @ RAAF BASE SCHERGER

AIR-MOBILE OPERATIONS



Townsville-based Australian Army Aviation corps assets pulled off one of the biggest lift jobs of its kind, during Exercise Talisman Sabre, while operating aboard USS Boxer off Shoalwater Bay.

Assets from B Squadron, 5 Aviation Regiment racked up an impressive statistics list...

- B Squadron, 5 Aviation Regiment (10 Black Hawks) and 5 Aviation Regiment HQ operated from the USS Boxer

throughout the exercise.

- B Squadron conducted 581 sorties, lifting more than 1320 personnel, 67,300lbs of equipment and flew 331 hours. The squadron airlifted the amphibious assault personnel from USS Boxer and continued to support their operations on the ground.

Meanwhile, a composite squadron consisting of C Squadron, 171 Aviation Squadron and 162 Reconnaissance Squadron operated from a land base

within Shoalwater Bay Training Area.

- One troop (four Black Hawks) from 171 Aviation Squadron flew 76.7 hours, carried 422 personnel, lifted 22,800lbs of equipment and conducted 127 sorties.

- A troop (three Chinooks) from C Squadron, flew 31.2 hours, carried 929 personnel and lifted 159,000lbs of equipment during 133 sorties.

- 162 Reconnaissance Squadron (eight Kiowas) flew 204 hours and conducted 97 sorties.

WINNERS' CORNER

BOOTED

Sonyabee (via email) will be wearing a new pair of M790 Belleville boots very soon, thanks to your friends at Cool Kit Australia. Congratulations and happy stomping. Visit www.coolkit.com.au for all your kit needs – and tell them, **CONTACT** sent you.

DOOMED

Winner of the DOOM3 (PC version) giveaway was John Adams, currently on RAMSI deployment. Thank you to Activision for this prize. Xbox version still available – beg editor@militarycontact.com

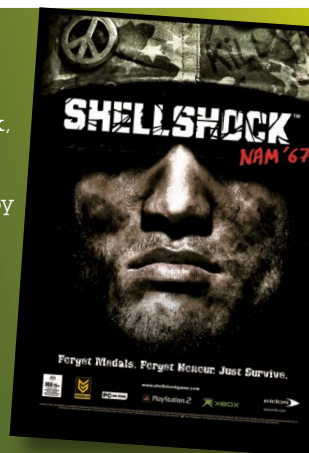


SHELLSHOCKED

The two winners of our Shellshock: Nam '67 giveaway are Mick Tebeck, Karama, NT and Christine Wilkins, Waroona, WA. Congratulations – your copy is in the mail, thanks to **CONTACT** and Eidos.

NEXT ISSUE:

TWO FULL VERSIONS OF VBS1 - DON'T MISS OUT!



Limited Edition

Anniversary Medallion



Thanks to the ANZAC Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland **CONTACT** has two of these 90th Anniversary commemorative medallions to give away. Tell us in 25 words or less, what ANZAC Day means to you and you could get one of these collectors' items, with certificate of authenticity, delivered in time for Christmas. Or visit www.anzacday.org.au to purchase one.

Send entries to editor@militarycontact.com marked "ANZAC Day" before 15 November. Include full name and postal details. Entries will be judged on merit by the Editor. The Editor's decision is final. Winners will be notified by mail and names published on our web site.

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WORKING TOGETHER FOR PEACE AND STABILITY

WORDS KATHRYN FITCH PICS DEFENCE AND BRIAN HARTIGAN

JOINT OPERATIONS TAKE ON A SUCCESSFUL NEW DIMENSION

In July this year, the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) celebrated its second anniversary — and by all reports there was a lot to celebrate.

Two years ago, rival ethnic militant groups had made the Solomon Islands a no-go area – thugs with guns ruled the capital Honiara, the Prime Minister was living in fear of his life, and the government was effectively bankrupt. The Royal Solomon Islands Police (RSIP) had broken down under the pressure, struggling with internal corruption and unable to match militant firepower.

Following an appeal for assistance from the Solomon Islands' Government, a combined force of soldiers and police arrived on 24 July 2003 to a warm welcome from the locals. RAMSI comprised a whole-of-government response from Australia, as well as police contingents from 11 countries and military support from five countries.

Assistant Commissioner Paul Jevtovic, International Deployment Group – the area responsible for managing Australian Federal Police (AFP) international deployments – believes that much of

RAMSI's success can be attributed to this combined approach.

"Everyone recognised very early that the problems in the Solomon Islands could not be addressed by any one arm of government, that it really needed a collective approach," he says.

"From a law and order perspective, the combined approach of Defence and police has proven to be a successful formula. I have no doubt that without that combination, we wouldn't have enjoyed the rapid manner in which we were able to achieve a much safer environment in the Solomon Islands."

Assistant Commissioner Ben McDevitt echoed this sentiment during his presentation at the recent Rowell Seminar; *Confronting Asymmetry: Military Conflict in the Early 21st Century*. He acknowledged that having a military presence in the Solomon Islands was necessary to give the mission 'teeth'.



Lieutenant Colonel John Frewen, who commanded the military forces deployed to the Solomons during the first four months, spoke at the same seminar. He explained that unambiguous rules of engagement were necessary in order to ensure that the military would not be portrayed as an invading force. In accordance with this, it was determined that the police would be the public face of RAMSI and would always be present when the military interacted with the islanders. As such, the military role was strictly to provide security and support for the police.

A good example of how this relationship worked is the first patrol that took place in the market place – only one hour and 40 minutes after arrival on the island. To establish RAMSI's presence, two unarmed policemen – one from the participating police force (PPF) and the other a Royal Solomon Islands Police (RSIP) officer – patrolled the markets, a high-profile

trouble spot. While they presented a friendly face on patrol, heavily armed riot police followed in a car with the windows up so that no guns were visible. Behind the scenes, military support was on stand-by should it have been required.

The partnership worked well. According to Ben McDevitt, there was a high level of awareness amongst the people of the Solomon Islands that RAMSI was arriving. In fact, people had started to hand in guns before the RAMSI contingent arrived and there were even stories of cars that had been stolen years before suddenly turning up in driveways. While there was widespread support for the mission from the general public, this was counter-balanced by the large number of well-armed militants and thugs present throughout the Solomons. For this reason, the surrender of warlord Harold Keke, was regarded as a turning point for the success of the mission.

EVERYONE RECOGNISED VERY EARLY THAT THE PROBLEMS IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS COULD NOT BE ADDRESSED BY ANY ONE ARM OF GOVERNMENT, THAT IT REALLY NEEDED A COLLECTIVE APPROACH



Communicating and engaging with the people of the Solomon Islands was an important part of the mission's success. Much time was devoted to meeting with local leaders and community members to promote an understanding of the why, who and what aspects of RAMSI.

"If we didn't have the support of the community, law and order would still be a significant issue. But the good will, and the desire to fix the problems existed within the community itself – RAMSI built on that," Federal Agent Jevtovic says.

"When we work in the provinces, we very much work with the local chiefs of villages and the elders, and without them we wouldn't be successful. So it is very much a self-acknowledgment of the problem within the country, and then the willingness to work with us. I think that's been the key to the success."

The results achieved by RAMSI since 2003 are impressive:

- 17 police posts established throughout the Solomons within 28 days of arrival – seven with a military presence;
- 3275 weapons and 305,959 rounds of ammunition surrendered and destroyed under the weapons amnesty; and,
- more than 6500 arrests with more than 9600 charges laid.

With the restoration of law and order, the main focus is now on capacity building – this means rebuilding both the Solomons' police force and public service. Federal Agent Jevtovic says that Commander Sandy Peisley, who took over from Assistant Commissioner Ben McDevitt [and recently replaced by Federal Agent Will Jameson], is working hard to ensure this phase is as successful as the first. From a policing perspective, this means there is a focus on rebuilding the law enforcement skills of the Royal Solomon Islands Police and restoring public faith in the force.

To date, 400 corrupt police – or 25 percent of the force – including two Deputy Commissioners, have been removed and 74 arrests covering 378 criminal offences charged. New standards of operation have been introduced and 30 recruits across all ethnic groups, including 16 females, have recently been inducted.

"I think there has been good work done, but there is still a lot of work to be progressed in continual capacity building. Mentoring and coaching are going to be a significant part of the phase that we're in and in future phases," he says.

According to Federal Agent Jevtovic, Defence's role has been pivotal to the success, and the lessons learned for both Defence and the AFP will carry over to future missions.

"I think there has been a lot of learning take place in the two years that we've been in the Solomon Islands. We needed to learn and understand Defence culture



WITH THE RESTORATION OF LAW AND ORDER, THE MAIN FOCUS IS NOW ON CAPACITY BUILDING – THIS MEANS REBUILDING BOTH THE SOLOMONS' POLICE FORCE AND PUBLIC SERVICE

RAMSI: THE DEFENCE PERSPECTIVE

WORDS KATHRYN FITCH

The dramatic change to have been brought about in the Solomon Islands is particularly noticeable to Brigadier Paul Symon, Director General Pacific, International Policy Division.

"I was there for the first 100 days, and going back two years later, seeing the people's pride in their country restored and the optimism in their faces, is the best testament to success. It's fantastic," he says.

"When you step back and look at the situation on the second anniversary, you can see how far we've come from the predicament that the Solomon Islands' Government found itself in July 2003. It's a very, very impressive achievement."

He says the Army has progressively drawn down to a point where the Australian Defence Force foot-print is now quite small.

Logistics support – which was initially handled by ADF due to their ability to deploy and establish a logistics framework quickly – has been successfully outsourced and is now operated by a civilian company.

The ADF is still providing some security support, however. Australia is currently sharing the responsibility for providing a quick-reaction force of 32 men with the four other regional countries – troops from a new country take up the responsibility every three-months.

The ADF also provides an external security presence at the prison. There is concern that if the high-profile prisoners who are being held there were liberated it would very much signal a backwards step. But Brigadier Symon says he is keen to ensure that the Royal Solomon Islands Police commence focused training to enable them to take responsibility for providing that presence.

He stresses that the ADF won't leave prematurely. As long as there are militants with weapons out there, the ADF will continue to "overmatch their capability". He does say, however, that the security provided by the ADF is not a long-term option and that it is important for people to understand that the ADF is not part of the long-term vision. He is firm in his agreement with Paul Jevtovic (from the AFP), that the focus should now be about training local capability.

"The Solomon Islands are a military-free country. It is important to understand that the vision the Solomon Islanders have for themselves isn't inclusive of an army," Brigadier Symon says.

"They have got to have respect for their own institutions and we've got to help them professionalise – for people to gain that respect. That's got to be the main effort now."

"In the early stages of the operation the police simply didn't have the equipment to overmatch the threat. That threat has been substantially neutralised but there are still a small number within the community who have access to weapons – and, as I say, our intent is to remain overmatched in capability."

"We're working very hard on this, and our assessment is that the equation is close to reaching the point where the police forces are capable of dealing with all known threats in the Solomon Islands."



This story first appeared in the July issue of *Defence* magazine and is reproduced with permission.

and processes. Likewise, Defence has had to understand how we work as a law enforcement agency," he says.

"This is a whole new world for all of us. We have police going and doing work in some difficult environments offshore. Environments where some of the criminals have firepower that far exceeds some of the things that police are accustomed to in normal community policing. So it was extremely important that we had a Defence presence – it still is extremely important. Working together gives us all confidence in our ability to execute our duties on the ground. That's something you can't measure.

"This lays the basis for the future as well. We've now got a better understanding of our roles, what we can deliver and how we deliver it. This prepares us for future Australian assistance packages anywhere in the world."



THIS PREPARES US FOR FUTURE AUSTRALIAN ASSISTANCE PACKAGES ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD

COMMUNICATION AS A TACTIC

WORDS LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN "JJ" FREWEN

In July 2003, I commanded the regional military intervention force as part of the Australian-led 'strengthened assistance' mission to the Solomon Islands. I was responsible for the military operations of Combined Joint Task Force 635 from 24 July until 18 November 2003 – during which time we achieved a dramatic turnaround in the law and order situation in the Solomons.

The mission was a good example of the subtle employment of military force in support of other government agencies in a synchronised way, with careful regard to the tone of military operations and how they are perceived.

Police are the appropriate force to deal with law and order – but a firm yet friendly military force in support permitted them to do so. We were prepared for the worst on arrival but fortunately no resistance was offered.

Much of the success of this operation depended on messages – on us communicating intent, ability and resolve while retaining public goodwill. In striving to maintain the almost universal popular support we were afforded on arrival, we placed particular focus on an information campaign with associated engagement activities.

The Special Coordinator, the Police

Commander and I conducted numerous visits to remote areas to convey the mission's aims personally. This included meetings with community groups and the all-important local chiefs to hear their questions and concerns.

While still carefully managing military presence in public areas, we conducted public displays, or open days, from quite early on in the mission. We played sports against the local community and later organised a major public concert to celebrate 100 days of the mission. We sought projects that helped people help themselves without developing an aid mentality. Unexploded ordnance disposal was one example of such a project. Another highly visible one was the sponsorship of a Clean-up Honiara Day that relied on local participation.

The open days proved particularly effective. The first open day in Honiara – held within 10 days of arrival – attracted more than 10,000 locals and cemented our firm but friendly reputation. Throughout these events, we promoted awareness of our technological edge over potential adversaries. Public displays of our capabilities, particularly those that could lead us to hidden weapons, such as ground detection radar and our

night-vision capabilities had a profound effect on the local people and were very popular.

Our working dogs were a tremendous psychological tool that emphasised skill and sophistication. Highly trained, powerful dogs resonate deeply in the psyche of those who might face them. Similarly, our tactical unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs, were also a potent psychological tool that clearly played on people's minds. We openly displayed our abilities and the imagination of the locals took over from there.

Rumours, or the 'jungle drums' as we called them, passed quickly through towns and villages. Soon many knew not only of our capabilities, but were trading in fictitious tales of our success in locating concealed weapons. Our decision to advertise these capabilities, and possibly overstate their merits, was deliberately taken to place pressure on those considering concealing weapons beyond the end of the amnesty. It was a gamble, which fortunately proved successful.



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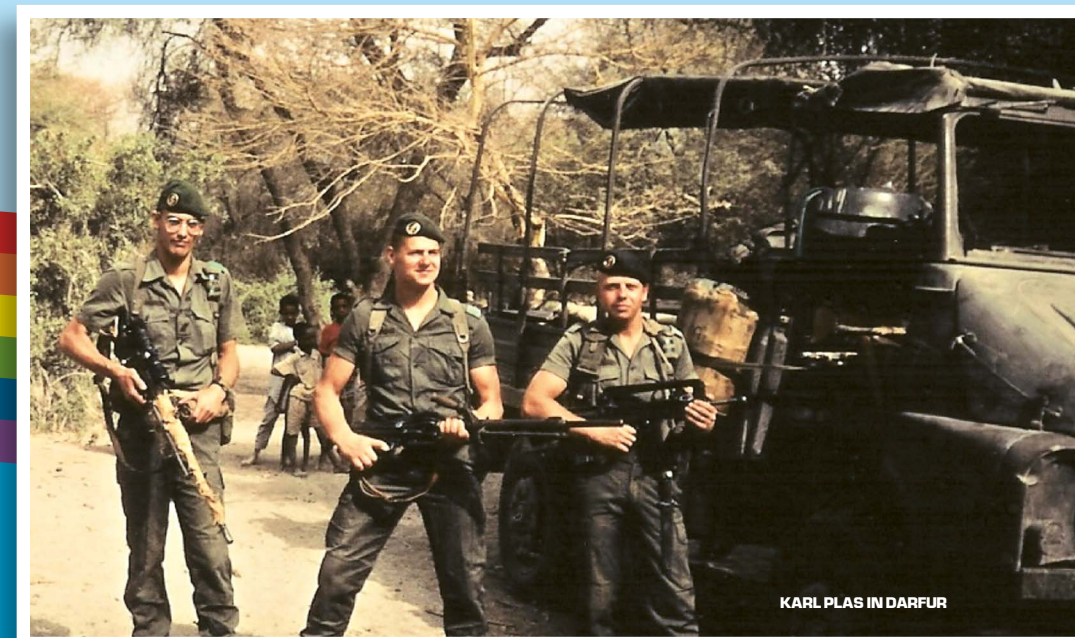
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MEMBERS OF THE DGSE (DIRECTION GENERALE DE LA SECURITE EXTERIEURE – EXTERNAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE) WHO TRAVELLED TO NEW ZEALAND BY PLANE AND ON BOARD THE YACHT OUEVA, HAD PLACED TWO LIMPET MINES TO THE HULL OF THE RAINBOW WARRIOR AND SUNK HER.



LA BELLE FRANCE

WORDS KIM MAC
PICS SUPPLIED BY KARL PLAS

**WARRIOR VERSUS
WARRIOR IN
A BATTLE
OF LOYALTIES**



On 10 July this year, New Zealanders observed the 20th anniversary of a notorious act of government-sanctioned terrorism – the bombing of Greenpeace vessel the Rainbow Warrior by French agents in Auckland Harbour. While the modern media rolled out its usual leftist rhetoric, and the hairy heads of the protest movement basked in a fresh helping of 15-minutes-of-stardom, one Kiwi quietly toasted the ghost of friends past.

But his musings are overshadowed by news of contemporary attacks – the bombings of the London Underground.

Reminiscing over old deeds and old friends, Karl Plas reveals how the bombing of the Rainbow Warrior in Auckland was just one option considered by France and how agents originally tried to disable her in Rotterdam.

The 43-year-old former French Legionnaire could speak with some authority on the subject; at the time of the Rainbow Warrior bombing, he was seconded to France's 11th Shock Brigade.

"I was a member of the Commando de Renseignement et d'Action Profondeur or the CRAP as they were known," he laughs. "The acronym is misleading though, because they were anything but crap."

"At the time, I was involved with the hunt for members of Action Direct who'd been letting off bombs all over France."

In November 1985 Plas was flown to the French military's sports academy at Fontainebleau to assist with debriefing members of Operation Satanik – the code name for the Rainbow Warrior mission.

Members of the DGSE (Direction Generale de la Securite Exterieure – External Intelligence Service) who travelled to New Zealand by plane and on board the yacht Ouvea, had placed two limpet mines to the hull of the Rainbow Warrior and sunk her.

Portuguese photographer and Warrior crewmember Fernando Pereira died in the attack while trying to recover camera equipment after the first blast.

Two DGSE agents, Major Alain Mafart and Captain Dominique Prieur, travelling under cover in New Zealand posing as a Swiss couple, were captured by local police after making some basic mistakes.

Four back-up members of the mission Jean Michael Barcelo, Roland Verge, Gerard

Andries and Xavier Christian Manquet sailed out of Auckland to Norfolk Island on the Ouvea.

"New Zealand police also caught up with them on Norfolk Island but, under international law, they had to be released after 24 hours – and disappeared," Plas says.

"It's no real secret – they sailed the Ouvea out to sea, scuttled her and were picked up by submarine. Ironical when you think New Zealand's current prime minister justified not upgrading our Orions, claiming the last submarine in our waters was in the second world war."

The combat swimmers who actually planted the two limpet mines on the Rainbow Warrior have never been identified by New Zealand police. It was these men Plas helped debrief at Fontainebleau.

"They told me the original intent was to disable the Rainbow Warrior in Rotterdam, either by contaminating the fuel or by blowing it up," he says.



TWO DGSE AGENTS, MAJOR ALAIN MAFART AND CAPTAIN DOMINIQUE PRIEUR, TRAVELLING UNDER COVER IN NEW ZEALAND POSING AS A SWISS COUPLE, WERE CAPTURED BY LOCAL POLICE AFTER MAKING SOME BASIC MISTAKES.



KARL PLAS IN SHADE

"It's well known now the DGSE had infiltrated a female operator into Greenpeace but they missed the ship by 24 hours and had to head out to New Zealand."

Allan Galbraith, who headed the New Zealand police Rainbow Warrior investigation in 1985, says he had heard rumours of the Rotterdam plot.

"I think I may have heard it referred to as a possibility in French government planning circles," he says, "But I don't think it ever surfaced as something we considered in the investigation."

On the 10th anniversary of the bombing in 1995, Galbraith confirmed he knew it wasn't Mafart and Prieur who planted the bombs, but believed that navy frogmen were involved.

Plas says he was correct about the frogmen but they weren't navy – they were combat swimmers from his unit, CRAP.

As part of the debrief at Fontainebleau, Plas was asked to provide some insight into why New Zealand was acting so hostilely towards France and so warmly toward Greenpeace?

"The French command element had no idea the effect the bombing had on the public psyche in New Zealand," he

explains. "In Europe at the time, you had the IRA bombing London, Bader Meinhof in Germany, ETA in Spain, Italy's Red Brigade and of course Action Direct all letting off bombs.

But New Zealand had never experienced anything like this and it affected them deeply."

The former Legionnaire says both countries would probably never understand each other's perspectives during those turbulent Cold-War days.

"New Zealand had opted out of the western alliance – as had France. But whereas New Zealand created a Ministry of Disarmament, France had an established nuclear weapons' capability.

"France suffered defeats twice in the 1800s and was invaded in both World Wars – so the call from the top was "never again, at any cost," Plas says.

"In 1983, a French intelligence investigation resulted in the expulsion of 48 Soviet diplomats and, at that time, they discovered evidence of Soviet funding of western peace groups. With that evidence in mind, there was never any doubt that France would go to any length to ensure Greenpeace would not disrupt their testing program in the South Pacific."

Now working in the security industry, Plas says he is a proud Kiwi but also draws pride from having served as a Legionnaire.

Joining as a 21-year-old in 1983, he had tasted military life as a territorial in the New Zealand Army but wanted more – he felt the New Zealand Army was too tame.

Signing up on a five-year contract, his first posting was to the ill-fated Lebanon peacekeeping operation. He still carries a souvenir of the time he narrowly cheated death.

"It was a day of house-to-house combat in Beirut – I peeped over a parapet and that's all the sniper needed. The bullet went through my helmet taking skin and hair with it," he says.

Serving in such tourist hotspots as Chad, Lebanon, French Guiana, Surinam, El Salvador and Nicaragua, Plas eventually saw enough to dilute his craving for action.

One epic battle never to appear under media spotlight, was the Battle of Wadi Doom.

"Actually it's spelt Ouadi Doum – it was 1986 and we were part of France's Operation Epervier, assisting the Chadian FANT government against Northern GUNT rebels and Libya's Colonel Qadhafi."

Official records show French troops were forbidden from taking part in the fighting because of elections back home, but Plas has a different version.

"The Libyans attacked with two armoured columns out of Ouadi Doum towards Kouba and Oum Chalouba. Our under-strength company was tasked to act as a delaying force.

"Using Milans, and with mobile FANT fighters attacking their flanks, the Libyans nose was bloodied, the tide of battle turned and they lost their hard-top runway at Ouadi Doum," he says.

"It's estimated Libyan losses were in the region of 155 T55 tanks and 120 BMPs in that battle."

Plas says his Legion experience changed his view on the world.

"Your past is left behind and you're given a chance to start afresh. After five years I had the option of a French passport and citizenship, but I didn't take up the offer.

"Once I was a sacristan – now after where I've been and what I've seen, I'm agnostic – I have a more realistic view on the world," he says, and raises his glass in nostalgic salute.



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BY IAN BOSTOCK

LOADS OF POTENTIAL

Army's new infantry mobility vehicle has finally – after its fair share of fits and starts – emerged from the workshop into the real world. Bushmaster has not only survived the occasional calls for outright cancellation emanating from both within and outside the ADF, but has succeeded in making the transition from prototype to proven-on-operations.

The six Bushmasters on the ground with the Al Muthanna Task Group (AMTG) in Iraq (it is understood that several more are being held in reserve at a nearby secure location) are reported to be doing the job required of them. Anecdotal reports filtering back from Iraq indicate that the troops are very happy with the vehicles. In particular, the Bushmaster's high on-road speed, generous internal volume and excellent air conditioning system are proving most popular among the end users.

This should come as no surprise to anyone who has been watching the Bushranger project and the subsequent development of the Bushmaster over the last few years – it has been designed from the ground up to provide high levels of crew and passenger comfort and safety, useful interior space and outstanding on- and off-road mobility. The first three attributes in particular are taking on increasing priority in the design of new generation armoured vehicles of all types worldwide.

It is also no accident that the Bushmaster is handling, with apparent ease, the conditions in the AMTG area

of operations. It is big, ruggedly built and meant to cope with the rough stuff without missing a beat.

The operating environments of Iraq and northern Australia are very similar, particularly during our dry season. Sun-baked earth, blistering temperatures and unrelenting dust mean that the very same physical environments in which the Army originally required the Bushmaster to excel under the now largely defunct obsession with responding to incursions across our north has, by default, made it eminently well suited to operations in the wide open spaces of places like southern Iraq.

Automotively, ADI Limited and Army have put various Bushmaster prototypes through more than 250,000km of engineering and reliability trials – so poor availability due to mechanical failure is highly unlikely to be an issue on any deployment.

Pack Leader

If this article is reading like a promotional blurb for ADI, it is unintentional – and pretty much unavoidable. The difficulty in taking a major piece of military kit – whether it be ship, aircraft or vehicle – from concept through to prototyping, initial production, full-rate production and then

entry into service is a long and tortuous road for virtually all defence companies that have the smarts, insight and will to attempt it.

For achieving this milestone, ADI should be applauded. It is a true Australian industry success story, with all its trials and tribulations, that has yet to be fully told.

Central to that story is the fact that the Bushmaster is not only the first Australian designed and built armoured vehicle since WWII to make it as far as operational service, but it's a leader in its class on the protected 4x4 world stage.

We know that both the US Army and US Marine Corps have expressed initial interest in the vehicle. So too has the fledgling Iraqi Army undertaking re-equipping programs with the US Army. The reason for this early interest is fairly simple – Bushmaster has all the essential elements required by forces that have suffered significant casualties from improvised explosive devices (IED), mines and ambushes rather than direct fighting (fire-fights) with the enemy:

- protection for occupants against small arms fire (5.56mm and 7.62mm ball rounds), mortar/shell fragments and mine blast;
- enough space in the back to carry a tactically meaningful number of fully-

COMMAND



THE PURPOSE DESIGNED FITOUT OF THE COMMAND VARIANT.

The Infantry Mobility Command Variant (IMCV) will carry a battalion/company headquarters element comprising six personnel (including the driver). A seventh passenger can be carried if required. Space and internal fitout is provided to accommodate the necessary equipment such as radios and other communication systems, map boards, computers etc. Virtually indistinguishable from the IMTV from the outside (a good thing), the IMCV features the same hull but with three of the rear troop seats replaced with a sizeable workstation. This features ergonomically configured workspaces for four command post operators, with dedicated stowage for laptops, maps and cryptographic equipment.

Provision has been made to supply the vehicle with external power for periods of prolonged use while stationary, without compromising the ballistic integrity of the hull.

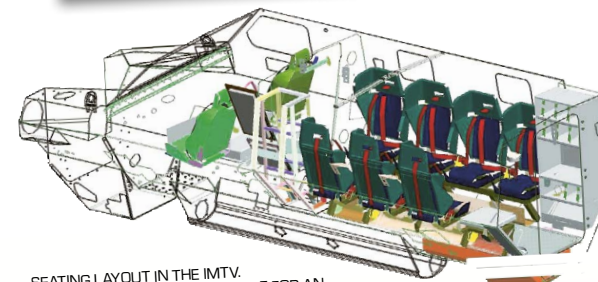
- equipped troops in relative comfort;
- low acquisition and through-life costs; and,
- simple to operate and train on.

Couple these to excellent all-round mobility on firm ground (you wouldn't try driving one through a rice paddy for instance) and the ability for vehicles to self-recover (via a 10,000kg capacity hydraulic winch) and continue driving with a couple of tyres shot out (run-flat inserts and central tyre inflation system), and it is clear the Bushmaster has a better than average chance of picking up export sales in the short to medium term.

While you'd think Middle Eastern soldiers would be accustomed to the heat, apparently they place a lot of value in a roof on vehicles and a robust air-conditioning system. And the Bushmaster's aircon (from personal experience) is outstanding, rivalling that of any commercial 4WD. The 250 litres of drinking water stored under the floor is also likely to be appreciated by forces that train and/or operate in hot/humid environments.

In parts of the world where funding for capital equipment acquisitions is often scarce or at best sporadic and where conscription armies are the norm, the wheeled Bushmaster may well

TROOP



SEATING LAYOUT IN THE IMTV. NOTE THE TENTH SEAT SET ASIDE FOR AN EXTRA PASSENGER IN THE REAR LEFT CORNER OF THE TROOP COMPARTMENT.

The Infantry Mobility Troop Variant (IMTV) is designed to carry a nine-man infantry section. This total includes the driver. Additional space is available for a tenth seat for an occasional passenger. Its role is to carry the section's stores (food and water) and equipment as required for operations of up to three days duration without the need to re-supply.

The production version of the IMTV carries one spare wheel/tyre and 250 litres of drinking water for refilling of water bottles on the move. Large and lockable external stowage bins provide additional space for gear and are expendable in the event the vehicle detonates a mine. This helps to deflect and dissipate the blast away from the centre of the hull, aided in large part by the V-shaped, oil-welded monocoque steel hull. Army, and the RAAF's Airfield Defence Guards, will share 158 IMTVs between them.

ASSAULT PIONEER

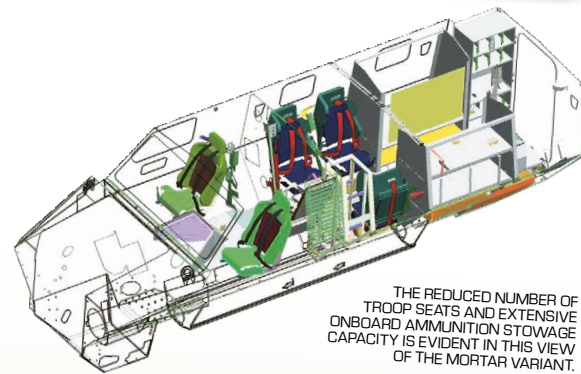


COMPUTER-GENERATED IMAGE OF THE ASSAULT PIONEER VARIANT.

The **Infantry Mobility Assault Pioneer Variant (IMAPV)**, formerly known as the combat engineer variant, is to carry five combat-ready assault pioneers (including the driver). Sufficient space is also provided inside the vehicle for carriage of the necessary stores and gear required by an assault pioneer section.

With the same hull as the IMTV, the IMAPV has four seats removed and replaced with additional internal racking and storage areas for equipment such as a rock breaker, mine detection kit, extra shovels, picks, axes etc. External lockers are slightly different to the standard bins in order to carry heavy equipment such as a generator. A fold-away work bench is also provided.

MORTAR



THE REDUCED NUMBER OF TROOP SEATS AND EXTENSIVE ONBOARD AMMUNITION STORAGE CAPACITY IS EVIDENT IN THIS VIEW OF THE MORTAR VARIANT.

The **Infantry Mobility Mortar Variant (IMMV)** is not a mobile mortar platform able to perform shoot-and-scoot missions like numerous types of turreted and hull-mounted mortar vehicles in service elsewhere. The IMMV will provide mobility for a mortar team and carry its weapons, ammunition and equipment. The mortar would be removed from the vehicle and fired dismounted, not through the roof as might be imagined. The IMMV will carry five personnel (including driver), one 81mm mortar tube and support equipment in the same hull as the IMTV. A sixth seat is optional. Internal racks securely stow the 81mm mortar rounds. The vehicle will also be capable of functioning as a command vehicle, with room for two personnel, a work table and map board facilities.

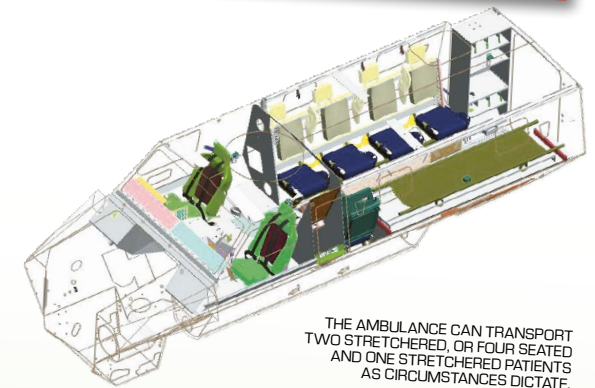
DIRECT FIRE WEAPONS



AN INTERNAL VIEW OF THE RACKING ARRANGEMENTS INSIDE THE DIRECT FIRE WEAPONS VEHICLE.

The **Infantry Mobility Direct Fire Weapons Variant (IMDFWV)**, like its mortar carrying brethren, is not a fighting version of the Bushmaster as the name implies. Rather, it will provide transport for four combat-ready troops (including driver) from a direct fire weapons section and their weapons and stores. Standard onboard weapons would include the 84mm Carl Gustav recoilless assault weapon, Javelin anti-armour missile system and tripod-mounted MAG-58 7.62mm general purpose machine gun. Other assorted goodies might include Claymores, grenades and significant quantities of ammunition.

AMBULANCE



THE AMBULANCE CAN TRANSPORT TWO STRETCHERED, OR FOUR SEATED AND ONE STRETCHERED PATIENTS AS CIRCUMSTANCES DICTATE.

The **Infantry Mobility Ambulance Variant (IMAV)** features a slightly different hull to the other variants with a larger rear door which opens from the opposite side and a unique internal layout. As such, it is the only Bushmaster variant that cannot be reconfigured into any other variant.

Designed to carry just two personnel (driver and medic), the IMAV is able to accommodate two patients on litters as standard. Alternatively, four seated casualties can be carried in place of one stretcher position after some reconfiguration.

Equipment stowed onboard includes piped oxygen with outlets at each patient position, provision for a heart monitor, stretchers and back boards, as well as an ergonomic method of loading patients onto stretchers.

prove enticing as an alternative to more expensive and more complex tracked armoured personnel carriers.

While the Bushmaster in its current guise cannot be classed as a fighting vehicle, it most assuredly beats walking or riding on a bench seat in the back of a soft-skinned truck.

Don't be surprised if a few Bushmasters also find their way over to Afghanistan in support of the second ADF deployment there in April or May next year, by which time more than 100 vehicles will have entered service. Just as it made sense to deploy a small number of Bushmasters for logistics elements within the AMTG, where they continue to provide protected mobility during patrols, troop lift and stores transportation, so too will they prove useful for the engineers and logistics personnel earmarked for Afghanistan.

Crystal ball gazing aside, a look at the Bushmaster in Australian service as contracted under Project Land 116, might be in order. Army units earmarked to receive Bushmaster include 6RAR from 7 Brigade and B Sqn, 3/4 Cav.

The 300 vehicles that will come off ADI's Bendigo production line by 2007 are to consist of six variants (see boxes above).

With most of the variants looking very

similar to the untrained eye, the doubt cast in an adversary's mind about whether all the Bushmaster vehicles in a convoy are carrying a full section of diggers ready to spit fire or simply an ambulance with a driver and his offside will only work in Army's favour in situations where movement by road is susceptible to command-detonated IEDs and ambushes.

The Future

While it is known that both Army and ADI are focused on ensuring that all 300 vehicles enter service on time and on budget, there will doubtless be a select few on both sides of the fence who are already thinking about possible future Bushmaster variants that might have applications outside those already nominated.

What sort of other applications might a reworked Bushmaster meet in the years ahead? Basically, it applies to those capabilities which require a base mobility platform able to self-deploy long distances at high cruising road speeds; possess good off-road mobility; incorporate maximum commercial off-the-shelf components; base-level protection for the crew against small arms and shell splinters; mine-proofed against anti-personnel mines; adaptable

rear compartment/deck to permit reconfiguration depending on mission; and that is economical to purchase and support in service for a minimum of 20 years.

Broken down further and with Bushmaster possessing all these characteristics, the following Bushmaster variants – with heavily modified upper hulls but with the fully enclosed crew cab, powertrain and running gear unchanged – might prove feasible. Readers should be aware that the following examples are the author's own considerations and do not reflect in any way the views of or information received from either Army or ADI.

- **Direct Fire Support:** Would feature a cut-down rear hull with weapons mounted on a flat rear deck. Suit low-recoil weapons such as heavy machine guns, automatic grenade launchers, 20-30mm calibre cannon able to provide fire support outside normal small arms range (800m plus). Crew would remain protected during vehicle movement.
- **Mortar 120mm:** Using existing hull structure, a turntable-mounted 120mm mortar would be installed on the rear floor, with a large two-piece roof hatch to fire through. Vehicle mass and armour thickness should be able to cope with

generated recoil forces. Capable of shoot-and-scoot tactics, internal volume would allow for three-man crew (including driver) and 20-30 rounds of 120mm ammunition. Additional ammunition could be towed in a heavy-duty trailer.

- **Air Defence:** Mounting a medium-range air defence missile/gun system on a cut-down rear hull, missiles could be launched/guns fired from the protected cab. Missile reloads stowed in bins along the sides and at rear of deck.
- **Combat Resupply:** Not dissimilar in configuration to the new Armoured Logistics Vehicle from the upgraded M113AS3/4 tracked family of vehicles designed by Tenix Defence, this vehicle would carry bulk quantities of ammunition, fuel and water to resupply combat elements. It would feature a cut-down rear hull with a large rear floor acting as the cargo deck. It could tow a large cross-country trailer for additional payload. Suit a 6x6 version.
- **Multiple Rocket Launcher:** Current 4x4 chassis would suffice, with a six or 12-tube turntable-mounted rocket launching system on flat rear deck. Rocket reloads could be towed in a heavy-duty trailer.

- **Medium Recovery:** Ideally using a 6x6 chassis for increased off-road mobility and payload, would operate close to forward edge of battle area where the vehicle/crew are likely to come under fire.

Ian Bostock is an independent defence analyst and the Australian correspondent for Jane's defence magazines.



A VIEW OF THE BUSHMASTER AMBULANCE WHICH MOST DIGGERS HOPE THEY NEVER SEE.

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

The bare rock stood like a giant monument to emptiness, towering over the bleak north-African landscape. The formation made up part of a line of ancient volcanic cores that were the only significant feature through hundreds of kilometres of the Somali interior. The town of Buurhakaba huddled at the base of the giant as if seeking the protection of a benevolent god from the evils that roamed its desolate surrounds.

WAYNE COOPER PHOTO WAYNE COOPER & ADF

The Australian Army had been in town for several days and the novelty for the local population was yet to subside. They gathered in large groups outside the wire of our compound to watch the peculiar activities of their strange guests. Children giggled and mimicked the Diggers, women whispered and pointed, and men scowled and spat as we tried to ignore the strange sensation of being on the wrong side of the zoo.

The soldiers' reactions to this situation varied through the gamut of possible responses. While, for the most part, we were usually able to put the constant scrutiny out of our minds, there were times when it got to most of us. The persistence of the leering mobs would eventually drive someone to distraction, usually resulting in some form of frustrated response from one of the paranoid lab rats.

All these years later it seems rather silly to think that some of us were motivated to react to what was perfectly reasonable curiosity.

In most situations, meeting someone's gaze was usually enough to deter them from continuing their stare, but in Somalia it seemed it was more likely to challenge them to attempt to stare you down.

On top of the constant vigilance of the mob was the unrelenting hawking of the ever-present merchants vying for your attention.

"Australia, Australia you buy sarong, 10 dollar. Australia you buy!"

Our discomfort stemmed mainly from the inability to have privacy in any form. Privacy, in the military sense, means being able to shut out what is going on around you and be alone with your thoughts while in the midst of your comrades, who were trying to do the same. After long days of tension the few moments of relative safety and quiet inside the compound were often frustrated for those of

us unable to ignore being under the constant scrutiny of those dark eyes and aquiline faces.

Some of the ways in which we choose to deter the ever-present observers may now seem rather excessive – even to those of us who were there. But the passage of time tends to dull the memory in regard to emotions and trivialise what was once a source of great frustration.

We learnt pretty quickly that the locals were not deterred by normal means. The Somalis in turn had learned that the Diggers, unlike the bandits, were not going to harm anyone for simply being curious and, as such, were not intimidated by harsh language or bombastic threats. In a land ruled by unbridled violence and murderous intent, the people knew the disciplined Australian soldiers would not back up threat or bluster with real violence.

There were other less belligerent methods that could be used to convince our audience to leave us in peace. We learnt that hardened, but modest Somalis were susceptible to the flash of certain parts of the anatomy and the age-old Anglo-Saxon tradition of the bare-buttocks salute could often be very effective in dispersing a mob. Though sometimes even more devious measures were required.

On one occasion in Baidoa my driver and I had come off a long and arduous patrolling cycle. After a full 24 hours of activity Pete and I finally had some time to get our heads down for some much-needed sleep. The problem this day was that our APC section was parked outside – rather than inside – a small compound off the main street.

By this stage of the operation, the people of Baidoa had gotten over their natural scepticism and had learnt the Aussies could

be a pretty generous lot. No one had learnt this more quickly than the town's children. When caught out in the open, any unfortunate Aussies were nagged incessantly for anything and everything.

As Pete and I tried to complete our morning hygiene, the knocks at the back door of our APC began. We begrudgingly gave the first couple of callers some of our stash of the awful American chocolate brownies, well aware that handing out treats was a double edged sword. As luck would have it the first lot of kids promptly ran off to tell their mates about the soft touches in the alleyway and we soon had a gaggle of noisy children at our door.

Neither of us was in the mood for dealing with the throng of chattering kids and after exchanging a tired look with Pete I slammed the door shut. However, this was not about to deter the young entrepreneurs who then laid siege to our vehicle, banging

mouth. The trap was set.

"Ok then, come back by the door and we'll give you some stuff," Pete said, appearing to concede defeat.

At first bemused by the apparent turn in events, a group of four older, braver boys gathered outside the door and resumed their demands for sweets and chocolate.

After a wink from Pete I threw open the door and screamed my most blood-curdling growl into the faces of the young bandits. With eyes bulging and mint-scented foam flying from my mouth, I drew my hands up over my head and curled my fingers into claws. As the imitation saliva dripped from my chin the group exhaled a cry of pure terror. The foam-specked face of the closest boy remained frozen in horror as he stumbled backward while his more quick-witted mates turned and fled.

As the group fled behind its routed leaders, their squeals of laughter replacing

1 Troop and the infantry company they had been working with, we resumed a busy patrolling regime through town and the surrounding country side.

Vehicle patrolling in a town the size of Buurhakaba, with its small streets and alleyways, was not really feasible and the task was left to the infantry. The three APC sections that made up 2 Troop were put to work conducting vehicle control points along the main service route between Baidoa and Mogadishu, and doing raids with the infantry on surrounding villages.

The time in Buurhakaba had its advantages over Baidoa for the Cavalry soldiers in that the night patrolling through town was carried out solely by the grunts. This meant the section whose assigned platoon was working in town had a relatively easy night on standby in the compound. While we had to be ready to come to the aid of the foot patrols within

the machineguns and picked up my night vision goggles (NVGs).

The rock rose nearly 100 metres and provided exceptional observation over the flat landscape. As such, it had been identified as a prime location for snipers and posed a significant risk to people patrolling on foot. While our intelligence was fairly confident the enemy had no night-vision capability, the first minutes of daylight might provide a short opportunity to pick off a member of a returning patrol.

As the light increased, NVGs became unusable and I struggled to pick up the movement again. Switching to binoculars I could make out two figures moving slowly. As they breached the top briefly, I saw the unmistakable silhouette of weapons.

With my heart rate increasing rapidly I went through the night's orders again in my mind and satisfied myself that there had been no mention of a patrol up

light breaking over them, they would be relatively easy targets for a sniper on the rock. Had I just seen someone strolling up there I would have been unconcerned, but as the figures I had seen were armed and moving tactically, I was sure it was not a local out for a morning walk.

After another yell, Pete was awake.

"Get over to the boss' car and find out if we have any Pedes up on the rock. There's two blokes with guns up there and I can't tell who they are."

As Pete dashed off I began to see more clearly through the improving light. I could make out the shape of a rifle barrel appearing from the crevice. I released the bolt on the .50cal machine gun, slamming it forward to chamber a round. Locking the gun cradle against my shoulder I raised the barrel and estimated the elevation required to bring fire onto gunmen over the 400 metres that separated us.

"This is India Zero-Alpha, we have friendly elements on the feature to the east. I say again, we have friendly elements on the feature to the East...acknowledge over."

Fuck! My heart skipped a beat.

"Two-Three Charlie, acknowledged," I replied curtly.

My hand instantly released the pistol grip. They were our guys – I had been just about to fire on our own blokes! Making my gun safe, I began to swear out loud as the boss came running over.

Standing in the turret, I raised my hands into the air and glared at my troop leader.

"What's going on Boss?" I demanded rather insubordinately. "I almost opened up on those blokes!"

Fortunately for me, Captain Shaun Voss was not a particularly regimental officer and let my indiscretion slide.

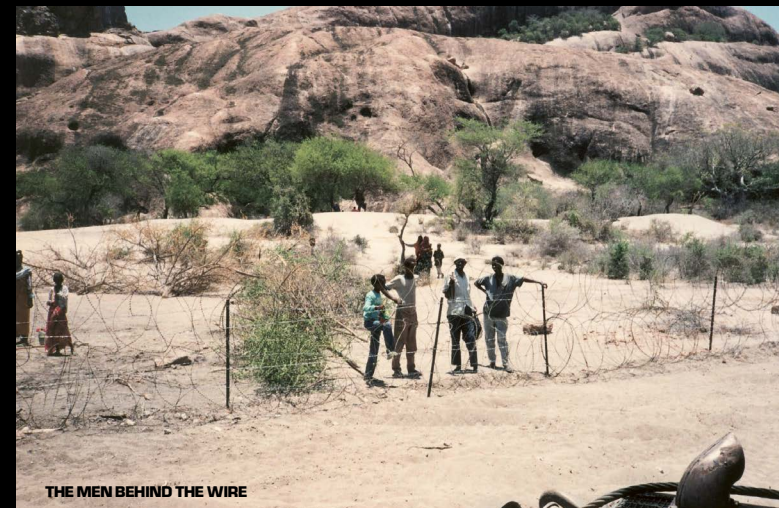
"Sorry Coops, the Company OC didn't tell us he was placing snipers in overwatch



WAYNE COOPER KEEPS AN EYE ON THE ROCK



SET UP CAMP FOR THE BEST SHOW IN TOWN



THE MEN BEHIND THE WIRE



PETE REEVES AND FRIENDS

on its hull chanting for bounty. Fed up, Pete grabbed an antenna and, leaning through the cargo hatch at the top of our M113, tapped roughly on small hands.

"Sicko Somali!" he growled, using the local term for 'bugger off' we had all come to know by heart.

"Go on, piss off ya little bastards," he barked again, barely able to stop himself laughing at the cheeky throng taunting and laughing at him from just out of range.

It was apparent that a more devious course of action was required to break the siege. If a sharp rap on the knuckles with a fibreglass antenna was not going to deter them, maybe a scare of another kind would work. Calling Pete back inside the vehicle we hatched an evil plan.

After a minute, Pete stood up and smiled benevolently at the rascals jeering outside, while inside, I applied a tablespoon of toothpaste on my brush and began working up a good lather of foam in my

AS THE MOVEMENT CAUGHT MY EYE AGAIN I SLIPPED DOWN INTO THE TURRET BEHIND THE MACHINEGUNS

yelps of alarm, Pete and I fell about the floor in hysterics.

While these behaviours may seem extreme and even contemptible in polite society, they must be viewed in context. Though I would once have not believed I would ever have had to resort the lengths I did for some peace and quiet, I am comfortable in the knowledge that my actions did not cause the trauma they may have here in Australia. In a place of extremes, sometimes even the simplest things require extreme actions.

Despite our frustration at being the latest attraction at the zoo, the job of chasing down the bad guys went on. With my Troop's recent arrival in Buurhakaba we began work immediately. Taking over from

minutes, our only other duty through the night was to run a picket.

After one quiet night in the compound, I found myself on the last shift of the night picket as the sun rose behind the great rock. Sitting on the lid of my turret, I watched the first beams of daylight silhouette the monolith and admired the red glow of the African dawn gathering momentum behind it. Somali sunrises and sunsets were always a sight to behold.

My early morning reverie was broken by barely discernable movement high on the rock. My vehicle had been positioned in the corner of the compound specifically to cover the huge mass that towered above the town. As the movement caught my eye again I slipped down into the turret behind

there. Slipping my helmet onto my head I watched the figures continue to move stealthily just below the peak.

"India Zero-Alpha this is Uniform Two Three-Charlie, over," I said into the mouthpiece of my helmet.

As I waited for a reply from the infantry headquarters, I strained my eyes in the dim light trying to discern the identity of the two figures. With the glare from the sunrise directly behind it, it was impossible to make out anything other than basic shapes.

"India Zero Alpha, this is Uniform Two Three Charlie, over..." No reply.

The two figures made their way to a large crevice and disappeared from view.

I yelled to Pete down through the turret, trying to wake my sleeping driver while keeping my binoculars locked onto the position I had last seen the two gunmen.

I was aware that a section would soon be returning from patrol along the open road on the edge of town. With the dawn

Seconds ticked away as I waited for an answer. With no indication that the gunmen could be friendlies, I resigned myself to the fact that I would have to open up if they fired.

"India Zero-Alpha, this is Uniform Two-Three Charlie over..."

Pete came running back with news that the boss didn't know about friendlies on the rock and was trying to confirm with the infantry HQ on another radio network.

It seemed more and more likely that the gunmen were not on our side but, under our rules of engagement, I could not fire first unless I could confirm the identity of the target. More anxious seconds went by as my hands became sweaty on the pistol grip of the gun cradle.

"Uniform Two-Three Charlie, this is India Zero-Alpha over," the radio burst into life in my headset.

"Two-Three Charlie, over," I replied anxiously.

before dawn. I didn't know anything about it," he explained.

I shook my head and mumbled my opinion on infantry hierarchy.

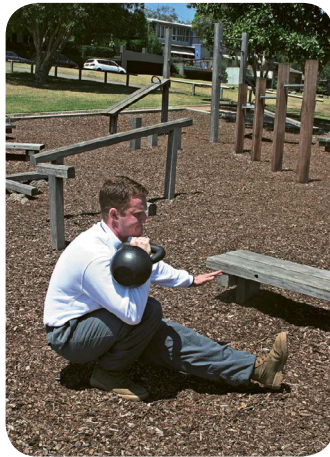
Squinting into the sun as it broke over the top of the rock behind me, Captain Voss beamed his most cheeky grin.

"Anyway, good observation and nice fire control Corporal Cooper, well done," he offered in mock approval, and walked away.

I stared down at Pete, unable to communicate my indignation.

"Fuckin' Pedes," he said despondently and threw me a cigarette. "I'll make a brew."

Sitting back down on the turret lid, I lit the smoke as the adrenaline washed through me. We had been lucky that the snipers had not had cause to fire while I was observing them. The communication breakdown between the two units had almost proven very costly. Unfortunately, and perhaps inevitably, it was not to be the last time this would happen.



Military fitness – are you combat fit?

BY DON STEVENSON

Hello and welcome to CONTACT's first fitness column. In this column I'll be covering a range of topics relating to military fitness in the barracks and in the field.

My aim is to provide information that will assist both current and prospective military personnel develop a high level of fitness and resistance to injuries. This column will at times push the boundaries of conventional fitness wisdom but I assure you all the advice I give has been tested by military personnel both in Australia and overseas and I never recommend a training program or method without trialing it on myself first!

In this edition we'll take a look at a number of common (and not so common) fitness programs and see how they shape up against the fitness needs of military personnel.

Fitness needs of military personnel

Unlike the average exerciser, military personnel have a highly specific set of fitness requirements that are rarely met by mainstream fitness programs. Where the average gym user will be happy with looking good on the beach, a soldier, sailor or airman can't afford to let vanity guide their fitness program.

The demands of military training and operations require a set of fitness goals that are far removed from the common goals of Herculean muscle mass, marathon aerobic capacity and yoga-level flexibility. Military operations offer a randomised mix of challenges which are largely anaerobic, involve the whole body and which are often carried out under load and repeated rapidly in a short time frame.

Military tasks seldom demand long aerobic efforts or isolation of specific muscle groups! Therefore the goals of a military fitness program in order of importance are:

- Injury prevention – posterior chain strength, core strength and flexibility;
- Work capacity – the ability to perform as much work as possible in a given time;
- Maximal strength – the ability to handle heavy loads;
- Speed and power – the ability to move fast and with force; and,
- Cardiovascular endurance – a low priority.

Pitfalls of common training programs

Having outlined the demands of military fitness and defined the goals of a military fitness program it should be fairly

obvious to see that many popular fitness programs fail to address the unique needs of military personnel.

Listed below are some common training methods and the reasons they aren't suitable for military personnel. Most personnel use a combination of these methods in varying forms.

- Bodybuilding programs

Bodybuilding programs are a very poor choice for military personnel. Combat does not offer up sets, reps and rest intervals and the enemy is not interested in how big your biceps are.

The fundamental problem of bodybuilding is an emphasis on looks over functionality and a complete disregard for injury prevention. Bodybuilding aims to build up the individual parts of the body without regard to strengthening the core and posterior chain (glutes, hamstrings, lower back) and it is these areas that are placed under the most stress by military tasks.

- Long-distance running

While everyone would agree that running is an important military skill, the pursuit of aerobic capacity is often taken too far. The reality is that most running in combat is carried out over short distances and in

repeated bouts. To train for these repeated sprints, long distance running just will not do the job.

- Circuit training and unit PT

These types of training come a lot closer to achieving the goals described above. Circuits and PT generally develop work capacity and endurance but more often than not there is little variation in load or intensity from week to week and therefore they miss out on developing maximal strength.

So what's the solution?

Recently there have emerged a number of fitness programs which are ideally suited to the needs of military personnel and which address all of the requirements described above. I'll briefly describe these programs here and, over the next few editions of CONTACT, I'll be bringing you more information on each one.

Each of these methods has been used extensively overseas and adopted by units such as the US SEALs, Rangers, SWAT teams and Marines.

Kettlebell training

Using a weight shaped like a cannonball with a handle on top, kettlebell training has been used in the Russian army for years and is now being used in the US and Australia by people

who need to develop extreme levels of fitness in minimum possible time.

Kettlebell training is divided into two main areas:

- Pressing and core drills, which develop maximal strength, injury resistance and core stability; and,
- Ballistic drills, which develop work capacity, endurance, speed and power.

This powerful combination prepares kettlebell users for a wide range of situations and, as an added bonus, instead of a room full of equipment, all you need is a single kettlebell to achieve all these benefits. This makes kettlebells an ideal way to stay fit while deployed.

Crossfit workouts

Crossfit is another unique training program that has proved to be far superior than traditional methods for developing combat fitness. Numerous police, firefighters and military personnel from the US have adopted crossfit over the past few years and all of them attest to its efficacy.

Crossfit takes a huge range of exercises from Olympic weight lifting to running to gymnastics to bodyweight exercises, and distills them into a series of potent workouts that develop all of the components of fitness.

Crossfit uses a lot of common gym equipment and is therefore a good choice for training while in barracks or in preparation for joining the Australian Defence Force.

Conclusion

The demands of military fitness are highly specific and are poorly served by common training programs found in commercial gyms or men's magazines. For developing optimal combat fitness you need a program that more closely relates to the demands of operations and training.

For more information on military fitness programs, kettlebells and crossfit, visit my website at www.octogen.com.au or send me an email to fitness@octogen.com.au

ADF close-quarter fighting and military self defence

BY MAJOR TRAVIS FAURE

The Australian soldier is renowned throughout the world as a fierce and determined exponent of close-quarter fighting. This deserved accolade is a legacy of consistent success against formidable odds under the most arduous conditions. Originally, this type of training was called unarmed combat and was introduced in conjunction with the formation and training of commandos during WWII.

In 1940, a British officer, Lieutenant Colonel J.C. Mawhood, arrived in Australia with a team of British commandos to assist in the establishment of special-forces units, which were initially known as independent companies, but in late 1943 were redesignated commando squadrons. Initially, professional boxers and wrestlers had been used to train the troops, however, after the first exchanges of hand-to-hand combat with the Japanese, it became obvious that drastic changes to the techniques and methods of unarmed combat were necessary. There was only limited knowledge and expertise in the martial arts in Australia, but personnel with the required knowledge were found and these new techniques were incorporated into the unarmed-combat training of the day.

Immediately after WWII, in the euphoria of a return to peace, the haste to demobilise saw many well-developed fighting skills, including unarmed combat, dispensed with. It was not until the formation of the Commonwealth Military Forces (CMF) Commando Companies in 1956 that unarmed-combat training experienced a revival under the leadership of instructors such as Ken 'Blue' Curran and his like. A number of the original commandos, who had WWII experience, retained the rudiments of unarmed combat, but outside expertise was also gained from exponents of Judo, Jiu-jitsu and Karate. Unarmed combat was taught during the period of the mid 1960s and early 1970s by physical

'Into the warren of dark tunnels the men leapt, followed by wave on wave of reinforcements until the trenches were choked with dead and wounded men. No bombs were used. The fighting was too close for this. Rifles, but mostly bayonets and, at times, hands did the killing. By 6pm Lone Pine had been taken'

Lone Pine, The ANZACS
Patsy Adam-Smith, 1978

training instructors within units and formations to all infantry soldiers in preparation for the conflicts in Malaya, Borneo and South Vietnam. Interested individuals gained a greater knowledge of unarmed combat techniques through this exposure and the interaction between allied armed forces. But with the end of the Vietnam War, unarmed combat training began to decline and by the 1980s only a few interested personnel maintained the skill.

In 1984, an unarmed-combat training package was developed by 1 Commando Regiment. During this period, training was restricted principally to special-forces soldiers, although a number of unarmed-combat courses were also conducted in north-Queensland units from 1986 to the early 1990s. These courses, and those personnel that participated in them, helped to retain the skill within the Army.

In 1992 the then Army Chief of General Staff directed that the conduct of self-defence training be investigated. This led to the raising of the Military Unarmed Combat

Wing at 11 Training Brigade. The primary driving force for the redevelopment and modernisation of military unarmed combat during this period was Major John Whipp AM (since retired).

In 2000 the Special Forces Training Centre developed a Close-Quarter Fighting Exponent and Supervisor Course after an operational need for CQF skills was identified during operations in East Timor.

Close-quarter fighting uses lethal and non-lethal techniques to capture and control an enemy combatant.

The Chief of Army directed that CQF training was only to be delivered to arms corps and units or personal deploying on operational service. However non-arms corps and the wider Australian Defence Force retained a training requirement to be taught personal self-defence. Major Travis Faure, Captain David Bradley, Warrant Officer Class Two Shane Cassidy (since retired) and Corporal John Badman developed and conducted the first Military Self Defence Course at the Australian Defence Force Academy that focussed on non-lethal control and capturing techniques suitable for employment to wider ADF members.

The present training packages are a result of continuous study and validation over the years and incorporate new training methods adopted from the previous Military Unarmed Combat Course. Increased study of the various martial arts, defensive tactics, security training, personal experiences, and the study of other armies methods have helped refine the package to its present form.

■ Major Travis Faure is a serving RASIGs officer with 15 years experience instructing unarmed combat within the ADF.

TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

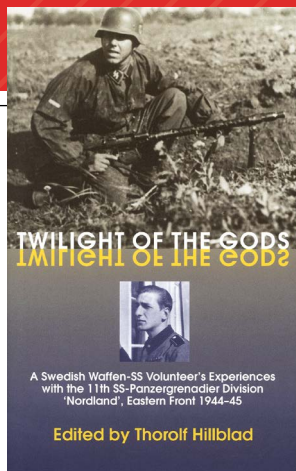
Edited by Thorolf Hillabald
Helion & Co (UK)

www.crusaderbooks.com.au

RRP \$60

Reviewed by Wayne Cooper

Twilight of the Gods is an account of the German Army's fighting withdrawal from the Eastern Front as told by a member of the 11th-SS 'Nordland' Division to editor, and former SS soldier, Thorolf Hillabald. This well-written book describes in detail the desperate battles fought by



CONTACT has one copy of *Twilight of the Gods* to give away. Tell me in 25 words or less why the Germans were beaten on the Western Front (hint: humour works best). Entries to editor@militarycontact.com

the Waffen SS, is to try and understand what motivated the German soldier. To hopefully get some insight into what drove them to their remarkable feats of soldiery and despicable acts of inhumanity. Upon receiving Swedish-born Erik Wallin's book I was relishing the prospect of reading the account of a non-German SS soldier, and what it was that inspired him to fight for the Reich.

Though the book gives an excellent account of

the German's desperate last stand in the face of the overwhelming Russian onslaught, it does not provide any real insight into the SS mindset.

Though obviously well enamoured with the Nazi ideology, short of the declared resolve to halt the Asiatic horde from the East, Wallin's account never really explains why he volunteered to side with the evil that laid waste to Europe.

That said, the book does have its merits. If you want to read a well-written and interesting account of the last days of one of history's greatest fighting entities, then *Twilight of the Gods* delivers in spades.

CLOSE COMBAT: FIRST TO FIGHT

DESTINEER STUDIOS AND
ATOMIC GAMES

www.firsttofight.com

Reviewed by Sapper Gameboy

One of the surprise hits in the past 12 months was The US Army-inspired *Full Spectrum Warrior*. Its release coincided with some of the most intensive room-to-room fighting US soldiers had participated in. While the title was somewhat realistic, the strategic third-person approach left many hankering for more. *Full Spectrum Warrior* grabbed players by their head and immersed them in a world of fighting within complex terrain but gamers still felt somewhat detached from the events.

Never an organisation to fail to capitalise from its bigger cousins' shortfalls, the United States Marine Corps had been quietly working away on a tactical decision trainer

in conjunction with a couple of well-known commercial companies. The Marines have embraced simulation as a viable training method to maximise their (relatively) small budget for decades. Through a stroke of genius (and like *Full Spectrum Warrior*) the developers have been able to produce a commercial version of the program to give gamers the chance to use close renditions of real training tools.

Close Combat: First to Fight (despite the heritage of its name) is a first-person, fire-team-level, tactical operations simulation. Player's take on the role of a lance-corporal fire-team leader in a series of increasingly difficult missions within a strife-torn Beirut – a situation that up until a couple of months ago looked to be quite a possibility. The game espouses the USMC doctrine of Ready-Team-Fire-Assist – a mantra for small-unit actions within complex terrain. It is also modelled on the realities of war as we know it today.

Media provide an all-intrusive (and often tactically limited) commentary of the war, civilians are increasingly caught in engagements, hospitals are no longer off-limits to combatants while new constraints such as Mosques have entered the field. One constant however has remained the same – 19- to 20-year-olds deciding whether to turn left or right, squeeze the trigger, throw a grenade or observe suspicious activity.

While the fundamentals are similar to the real-world, an analysis of just what the player's four-person fire team is expected to do in a few weeks highlights the "game" aspect of *First to Fight*. At about the half-way point, my fire-team had engaged and killed well over 100 insurgents, captured several high-value targets and directed numerous offensive fire-support activities. If each Marine fire team in Fallujah accumulated similar statistics, there'd be no more insurgents to fight in Iraq (or much left of Fallujah for that matter).

It's this sense of individualism that was the major drawback for me – no commander in his right mind would send four 20-year-olds led by a lance corporal (the equivalent of an Aussie infantry private proficient) into a large multi-story, multi-room warehouse with several entry and exit points, that is known to contain several insurgents and who knows what else. It's little wonder I often lost at least one fire-team member at some stage during a heated gun battle on a rickety staircase, in low light, while insurgents emptied 100s of rounds at me. Perhaps this is the reason the developers make it quite clear that neither the USMC nor the US Department of Defense have approved, endorsed or authorised the game.

For armchair commandos, *First to Fight* offers intense immersion in the complex-terrain fight. Military types, however, may want to check their work skills at the door.

Score 3.5/5



T72: BALKANS ON FIRE

www.battlefront.com/products/t72/overview.html

IDDK/Crazy House and Battlefront.com

Reviewed by Sapper Gameboy

Decent tank simulations throughout the history of gaming can be counted on a single hand: *Steel Beasts*, *M1 Tank Platoon II* and *Panzer Elite* top the list. As an avid fan of the genre I eagerly watch for new developments and dream up new ways to satisfy my inner Wittman. It was with some trepidation that I loaded a beta of *T72: Balkans on Fire* a few months ago and jumped into the release version for this review. Could this game break the drought and perhaps pave the way for greater commercial development in the genre?

Never shy in backing niche developments, Battlefront.com have assisted in bringing a joint Russian design team's dreams to life.

The game is everything a true tank sim fan could want; a level of technical complexity in damage modelling and physics that is unfathomable to all but the most dedicated "tank spotters", environments and terrain that test not just the capabilities of the vehicle but the tactical prowess of the vehicle commander, an intelligent and unrepenting enemy using combined arms and quality weapons and, short of the smell of diesel, an immersive simulation environment.

T72: Balkans on Fire offers players the chance to command and fight three Russian tanks during the early 1990s crisis in the former Yugoslavia. Starting with a war-weary T34-85, the player progresses through a T55A before tearing across the European landscape in one of the greatest fears of the Cold War, the T72B. Each tank, often thought to be the pinnacle of Russian automotive and weapons engineering at the time, offers a dramatically different experience and highlights the effectiveness of technical development since WWII. Progressing from the tried-and-true reticule-based sighting system of the T34-85 that usually involves a flurry of shots in order to bracket a target before a killing blow, through to the completely stabilised, auto-loaded, laser-assisted main gun of the T72B is akin to moving from a Sopwith Camel biplane to a F117 Stealth Fighter.

Balkans on Fire is a simulation devoted to fighting and surviving in a single tank. The game does include supporting infantry and armoured elements but the crux of

the game comes down to achieving that first-round kill that tankies the world over train for. The game allows a player to jump in the driver's seat, wedge their forehead against the sight rest or relive their favourite Blitzkrieg scene from the commander's cupola. A variety of display options provide a restrictive in-the-seat view through to the increased situational awareness offered by an external camera. Depending on where the player chooses to occupy the tank, competent AI will perform the duties of the other positions. Swapping between jobs throughout the game is easy (in fact it was the only way I could survive) and the remainder of the crew do a good job of keeping everyone alive.



It is the level of technical detail that makes *Balkans on Fire* stand out from the crowd. Damage modelling is so detailed that no two hits are the same. Of course, as real crews are well aware, it is not just the enemy that can ruin a tank's day. In *Balkan's on Fire* a mistimed turn at the wrong speed can leave a 50-ton killing machine stranded as a track shears off for reasons only the tank gods can explain.

The game is easily the most complex and demanding of its genre, but its commercial success is yet to be decided. It covers a war that in the West is mostly taboo, the player fights for an army that, of the three involved, is popularly considered the worst for humanitarian atrocities, and it concentrates on Russian equipment – at one stage I was even engaging Leopard 1A4's in a surreal twist of realities. These facts all conspire to leave even the most hard-core sim fan thinking twice. What it does do, however, is prove the capability of the design team and perhaps offer them the cash and incentive for a follow-on title with wider appeal. For this, we can only hope – recent events in Iraq or even the tank and mechanised infantry battles of the Northern Alliance and Taliban in Afghanistan beg to be simulated.

Score 4/5

YEAR OF THE CARRIER

Keith Webb

imagecontrol

Reviewed by Brian Hartigan

Each year, for the past 29 years, military enthusiasts of the vehicle-collector kind have gathered in Cowra NSW to show off vehicles, swap spare parts, (tail?) tales and good tips.

Themed differently each year, the informal, laid-back gathering, that attracts enthusiasts from all over Australia and as far afield as the USA, last year saw the WWII-vintage Bren Gun Carrier, dusted off, oiled up and driven on a statutory 3.2 mile parade through the main street of the rural town to make their own entry into the *Guinness Book of Records*.

Nineteen of the pocket battle tanks set the record – despite the twentieth falling by the roadside – in a procession that saw more than 120 vehicles in all on parade.

And there to catch all the action was acclaimed documentary maker Keith Webb.

In an hour-long DVD doco titled *Year of the Carrier*, Keith explores all the intricacies of these cool little machines of yesteryear and gets down to brass tacks with the people who love them.

This is a well-made presentation (and the "extra features" on the DVD are very entertaining too) that gives a very nice insight into the world of military collectors. It won't be everyone's cup of tea, but if you're into military vehicle history, this DVD – and others in the series – are a must.



CONTACT has two copies of the "Year of the Carrier" to give away. Tell me in 25 words or less why a Studebaker is prettier than a Blitz. Hint: Humour works well. Send entries marked "Carrier" to editor@militarycontact.com

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT LINE

In this issue, Henry finishes off a long letter from a hospital bed in England after being seriously wounded at Gallipoli. Though his body is damaged, his spirit is far from broken...

I managed to scramble down to the ridge and crawled to a place of safety. My wound was dressed and the leg began to get stiff. We had no

not downhearted and that he was satisfied when he saw our boys had taken the position.

That night when we started to make for the beach, we had plenty of bullets humming around us. I'm afraid we looked a sorrowful pair. I hobbling along and my poor mate hanging on to the back of my tunic. We had a lot of spells on our way down and reached the hospital ship at dawn. We had a nice warm bath and got between nice clean sheets.

We steamed away from the Dardanelles and went on to Lemnos - one of the islands forty miles away. We were here for two days, then put on a sister ship to the Lusitania and on the 24th August we started for England, called in at

Malta for a day and Gibraltar five day's, and finally reaching Devonport on September 8th.

We travelled by hospital train to Paddington, about 230 miles, then motored to Hampstead (New End) Military Hospital where we are looked after splendidly. When the boys are able to walk, they are allowed out from 2pm to 6pm. They are often taken for motor trips all over London. The people are very kind, and invite the boys to afternoon tea.

The Old Bull and Bush Inn is only 10 minutes walk from here. Little did I think I would one day see the original. I will write to you again about the different places when I can get about.

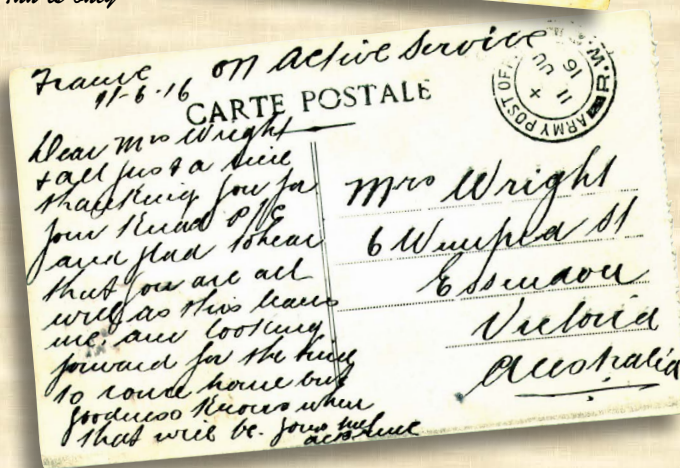
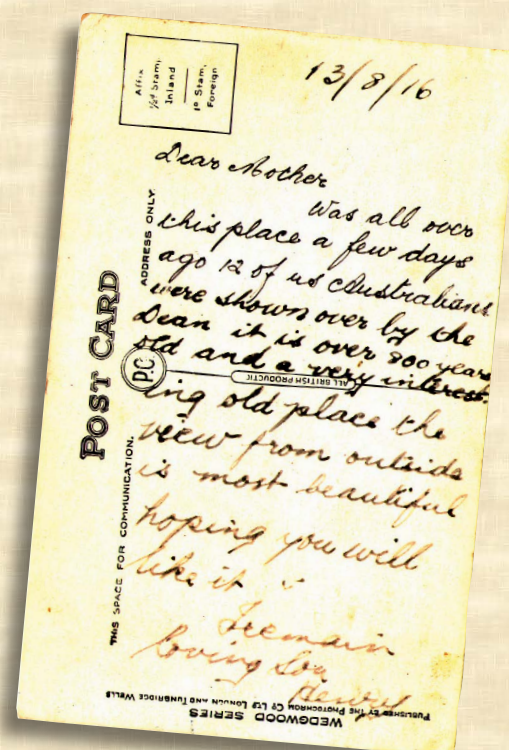
Don't worry about me, my wounds are not serious. I expect to be about in a couple of weeks. I have an appetite like a horse. I should think so after bully beef and biscuits for four months.



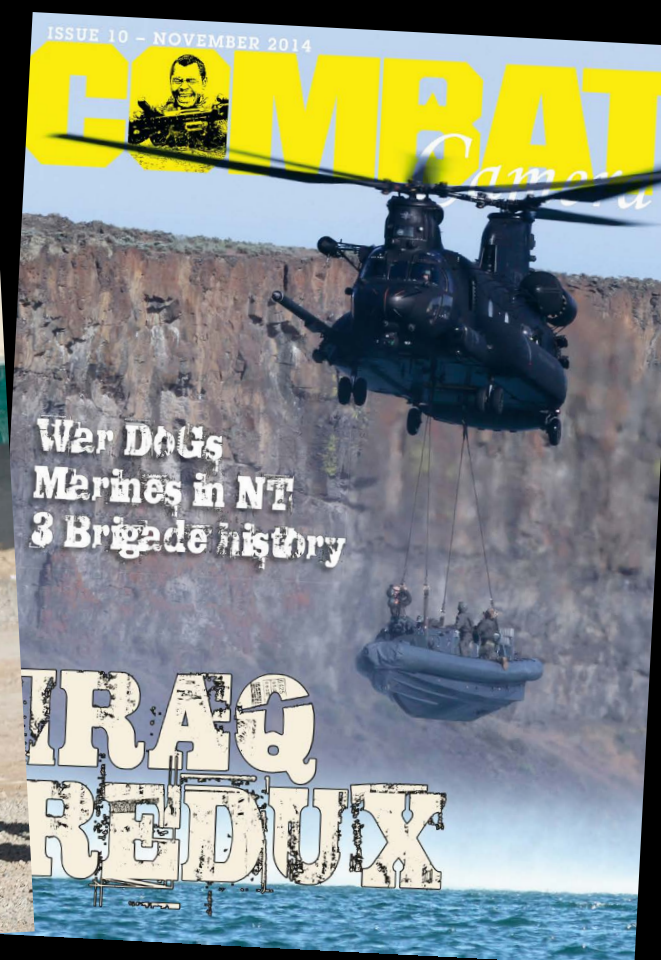
hope to get back to get a doctor until dark, so just had to lie there and wait. I did not mind waiting but we were getting Jack Johnson's shrapnel and bullets dangerously close. Anyway, I had the satisfaction to see that we had gained our position, and our fellows were busy digging in.

While lying here, I was in full view of the hill we came down. It was a terrible sight. Men were lying around in dozens, some groaning terribly, and the Tommies were coming over. It is only then that a fellow realises the awfulness of it. They came over in a rush, and were cut up like chaff, but they would not turn back.

I, and a lot more wounded, were waiting in this place to be taken away when we saw a poor chap staggering towards us. I found he was one of the 14th - a chap I knew well. A machine gun had made a horrible sight of him. The bullets entering his mouth, cutting away the bottom teeth then passing through his neck breaking the collarbone and making a nasty gash in his shoulder. He could not speak but wrote down on a piece of paper that he was



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CAPTAIN FRANK BETHUNE, MC

FIGHT TO THE DEATH

BY WO1 DARRYL KELLY PICS AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

With the collapse of the Russian Armies in 1917–18, more than 70 fresh German Divisions were deployed against the Allied front. In April of 1918, the German Army launched these troops in a last ditch effort to seize the Channel ports of France and cut off the British Expeditionary Force. If they were successful, they won the war, but standing between them and victory were determined Australian soldiers, who would rather die than admit defeat.

Frank Pogson Bethune was a quiet, unassuming clergyman from Tasmania. He enlisted in the AIF in Hobart on 1 July 1915 with the rank of second lieutenant.¹ For reasons of his own, Frank chose to take up arms instead of serving as a padre. He embarked for the training camps in Egypt in February 1916 and in late March, he boarded the troopship Transylvania bound for France. The reputation of the Australian Diggers' passion for hard soldiering and even harder play had preceded them. The ship's captain was ordered to arrange not only for inoculations against typhoid, but was also directed to arrange inspections for venereal disease. The men were furious. They were here to fight, not to be treated like some second-class citizen and the mood aboard ship became tense and uneasy.²

With no padre aboard, Bethune requested permission to conduct a service for the troops. Addressing an assembly of at least 1000 men who gathered on the well deck, he gave the following speech:

We know what we have come for and we know that it is right. We have all read of the things that happened in France. We know that the Germans invaded a peaceful country and brought these horrors into it. We come of our own free wills – to say that this sort of thing shall not happen in the world as long as we are in it... And

what if we die? If it were not for the dear ones whom he leaves behind, might not a man pray for death like that... We know we are not heroes and we do not want to be called heroes... Did not every one of us, as boys, long to go about the world as they did in the days of Raleigh or Drake and didn't it seem beyond hope...? Here we are on that great enterprise and with no thought of gain or conquest, but to help to right a great wrong... With our dear ones behind and God above, and our friends on each side and only the enemy in front – what more do we wish than that?³

At the end of the service, the troops returned quietly to their bunks.

Bethune was promoted to lieutenant in August of 1916 and his unit was active in many of the campaigns on the Western Front. At times he was called upon to take temporary command of his company.

In March of 1918, the German Army was on the move. The Australians were sure that a major enemy attack was brewing – and attack they did. As the Germans poured through gaps in the British and French fronts, some units were simply obliterated. The Allies suddenly faced new German tactics. The enemy advanced in a 'flying wedge' formation, with bombers and machine-gunners up front and specially trained 'storm troopers' deployed to encircle and wipe out their enemy from the flanks.

Many of the towns that earlier had been won with Allied blood were now lost to the enemy. When the city of Albert was seized by the

German forces, they appeared invincible. The Australian Divisions were rushed to seal the breaches in the lines, but would it be too late?

One of the units at the fore was the 3rd Machine Gun Company. Their mission was to defend an area of the Ypres Salient known as Spoil Bank. On his reconnaissance, Bethune, commanding the company's No1 Section, found his position to be untenable. His guns had a field of fire of no more than six metres and if the enemy attacked, the gun crews would be killed almost before they could bring their guns into action.

Bethune complained to his commanding officer and asked to be allowed to choose a better position. His request was denied – orders were orders. As a matter of honour, Bethune asked if he could be placed in charge of this most dangerous post.³ This was agreed. He recorded:

Accordingly I ordered No1 Section to be fallen in and told them that I was taking the guns to a position where there was no field of fire. I asked for volunteers to take a step forward. The only result was that the whole section, with soldierly precision, advanced with one step forward, so I was forced to make the selection. I am taking in three good men and three new ones, as I do not want too many of the old section to get scuppered if we get it in the neck, while at the same time we must be good enough to extract payment before we are blown out, and there are plenty of Mills grenades for the final flutter.

As they moved forward, the group was overtaken by a runner, who informed Bethune that his orders had been changed,

this section was to defend Buff Bank. This area was more to Bethune's liking. It was the perfect position for a gun fight.

At this time, the Australian and British infantry had been at strength near the guns, but they were moved back to prepare for the attack. This left Bethune's guns dangerously exposed and on their own. With the responsibility for the safety of this section of the line in his hands, Bethune felt it necessary to issue his men with written orders. They read:

Special Orders to No1 Section 13/3/18

- (1) This position will be held, and the Section will remain here until relieved.
- (2) The enemy cannot be allowed to interfere with this programme.
- (3) If the Section cannot remain here alive, it will remain here dead, but in any case it will remain here.
- (4) Should any man through shell-shock or other cause attempt to surrender, he will remain here dead.
- (5) Should all guns be blown out, the Section will use Mills grenades and other novelties.
- (6) Finally, the position, as stated will be held.

F.P. Bethune Lt

O/c No1 Section.³

And hold they did – for 18 days the section repulsed attack after attack. They were subjected to constant artillery barrages of high explosive, shrapnel and gas shells, but they held their ground.⁴

The headquarters of the 1st Division AIF, and later other staffs circulated Bethune's Special Order. To the American forces undergoing training on the Western Front,

copies of the order were distributed as 'an admirable model of all that a set of standing trench orders should be'.

Lieutenant Bethune was awarded the Military Cross for... conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He carried out several daring reconnaissances and obtained most valuable information. Later he fought his machine-guns with great gallantry and fine example to his men.⁵

In the dying days of the great German offensive, Bethune was wounded in both the left knee and the left foot. He was transferred from the field hospital to the 5th Auxiliary Hospital, London, where he recuperated well, but the wounds left him with a permanent limp.

Lieutenant Bethune pestered the doctors to let him return to the front and in September of 1918 his persistence was rewarded and he embarked for France. He attended a course at the 4th Army Infantry School for which he received a personal letter from his divisional commander, congratulating him on his excellent report from the school.

He was promoted to temporary captain on 23 September 1918 and to substantive captain on 21 October. As the guns fell silent on 11 November, Captain Frank Bethune MC contemplated his future as a civilian.¹

On 28 December 1918, Frank was readmitted to hospital – his old wounds had become infected. On 3 January 1919 he was admitted to the 3rd General Hospital and underwent surgery to amputate the big toe of his left foot. He was subsequently sent to No2 Command Depot in preparation for his return to Australia.

On 16 May 1919, Bethune limped down the gangplank of the troopship Dongola. Home at last, his duty done.¹

¹ National Archives of Australia: B2455, WW1 Service Records, FP Bethune

² Bean, CEW, The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918, Volume III, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1936

³ Laffin, J, Australians at War: Western Front 1917–1918, Time Life Books, Sydney, 1988

⁴ Coulthard-Clark, CD, (Ed) The Diggers: makers of the Australian military tradition, Melbourne University Press, 1993

⁵ AWM 28, Recommendation Files for Honours and Awards, AIF, 1914–1918 War

LIEUTENANT BETHUNE WAS AWARDED THE MILITARY CROSS FOR... CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY AND DEVOTION TO DUTY.



AWM HD1961



AWM G01527

NOBBER ON GUARD

WORDS JONATHAN GARLAND ILLUSTRATION GREG@TWIST

The incident occurred during an asset-protection exercise. For the purpose of the exercise, the unit had been designated a vital asset in need of protection from terrorist forces that had penetrated the area. Nobber's section was briefed that the enemy was active and that the likelihood of attack in the next few hours was high. And, the section commander added quietly, word was that the CO was taking a keen interest in the exercise. As such, it was likely that points would be awarded towards the Best Section competition, so nobody had better screw it up for the section.

Nobber shifted uncomfortably under the gaze of his peers.

After a couple of hours of night patrolling and walking around every building in the unit twice, Nobber's best intentions to remain alert and focused were slipping and his thoughts were more about the value of warm bedding than the need to thwart the evildoers that threatened his nation. So, he was taken completely by surprise when a shadow detached itself from the gymnasium and laid its hand on his shoulder.

The hand, as large as a phone book and with fingers like high-tension steel, was all that kept our intrepid hero from becoming a danger to air traffic as he was prevented from jumping into the next postcode. This, Nobber quickly realised, was not the worst of the situation, as the stony hand was attached to his equally stony, and currently not-very-impressed CSM.

An indescribable period of time later, ears scorched and hair parted, Nobber was left quivering in the wake of the CSM's departure. He then got a similar chat from his section commander, though it couldn't be heard through the white noise still filling his ears. The only thing that filtered through was "extra picket".

At the other end of a night filled with insufficient sleep, a bleary-eyed Nobber was again on patrol when there was a loud explosion nearby. The section sprang into action, haring towards the source of the blast.

Nobber was doggedly tailing the group when he spied movement in the shadow of a nearby building. His knuckles tightened on his weapon and he launched himself at the shape, determined to redeem his

previous failure by bringing the villain to justice.

The figure let out a whoosh of air as Nobber charged like an irate buffalo, leading with his shoulder and catching the enemy squarely between him and the wall.

Demanding immediate surrender at the top of his lungs, Nobber brought his weapon to bear. His opponent made no sound but a breathless wheeze and started towards him in threatening fashion.

Nobber acted immediately. He grabbed a handful of the bad guy's shirt and hurled him to the ground. With ninja-like reflexes, our hero threw himself onto the enemy's

back and wrestled his arms into a pair of plastic cuffs. Buoyed by his success and anticipating the congratulations of the section, our hero dragged his captive upright and frog-marched him in the direction of the blast.

Their reaction was not what he had hoped.

Nobber rounded the corner of the HQ building to find his section on the job with a captive of their own. The CSM was on hand, congratulating the section commander on a job well done, when Nobber and his captive advanced into the pool of light to be greeted by the suddenly red face of the CSM, suddenly white face of the section commander, and suddenly trying-very-hard-not-to-bust-a-gut-laughing faces of everyone else.

Nobber looked uncomprehendingly at his comrades, a familiar sinking feeling settling over him like a wet blanket. The CSM wordlessly pointed to Nobber's prisoner. The hapless digger released the captive and gulped audibly when the man turned and Nobber found himself looking into the bruised and bleeding face of the CO.

The section received no points or advancement for their night's work, although Nobber found himself advanced to the top of a number of duty lists during the next few weeks.



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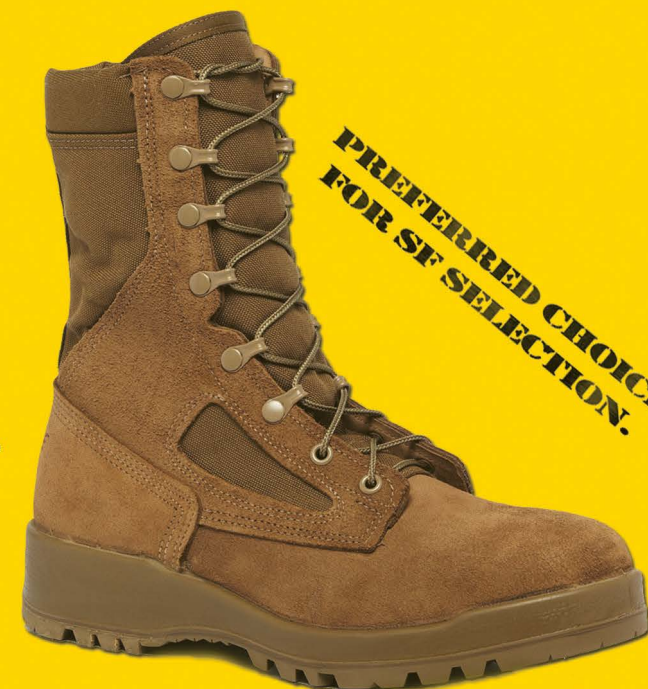
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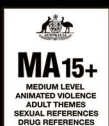
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