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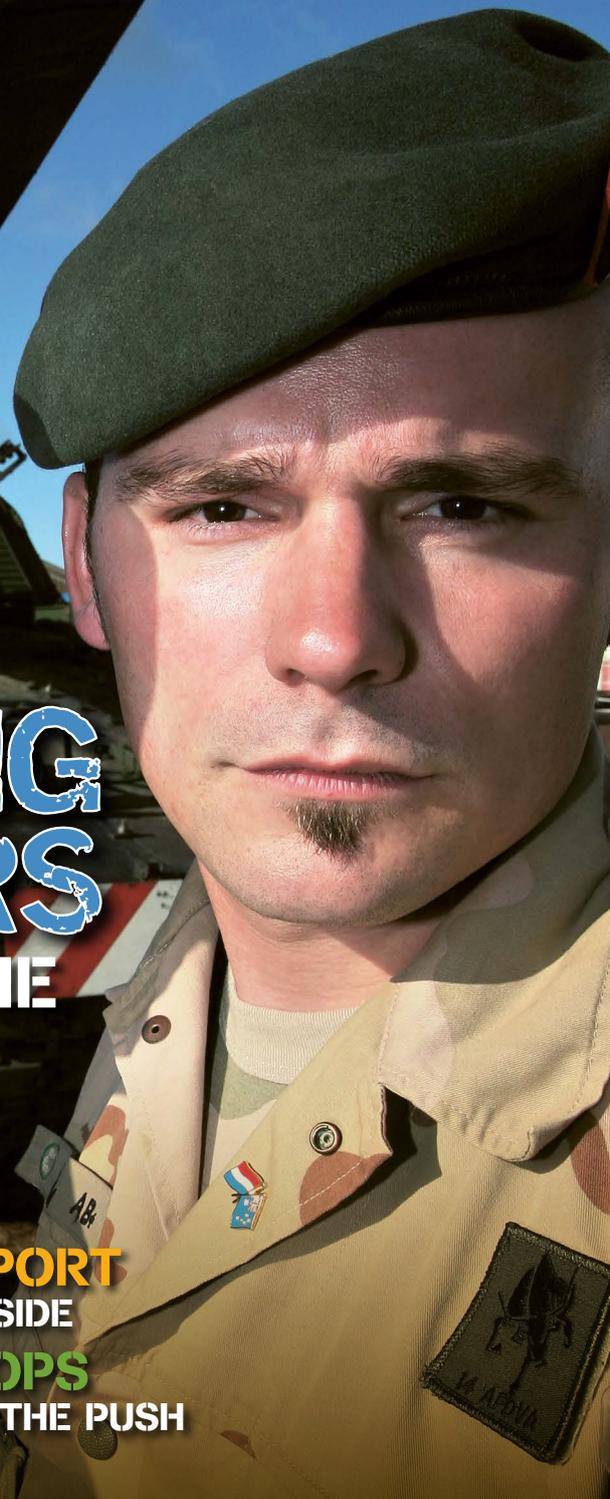
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Issue 14 - June 2007

CONTACT AIR, LAND & SEA



Cover Story

Sgt Mark O'Brien, 2/10 Fld Regt, Geelong, Vic, and Sgt Ingmar Palm, 14th Bn Arty, Dutch Army, with the PzH2000 self-propelled howitzer displayed at the Australian International Airshow.

Story page 38

Pic Brian Hartigan

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THE EDITOR'S LETTER

The International Airshow at Avalon has come and gone and I am happy to report that, for CONTACT magazine, it was a huge success. Thank you to all those people who popped by to say g'day and let us know how much you enjoy the magazine - your encouragement and support makes the whole endeavour worthwhile. As you can see from the photo below, Chief of Army Lieutenant General Peter Leahy is also a fan and took time out of his busy schedule to pop in and say, "Keep up the good work". We thank him for his support too. Most encouraging, though, was the fact that several Defence-focused companies sought us out to enquire about our advertising conditions. This not only bodes well for the financial security of the magazine, but speaks volumes for the level of industry penetration and commercial respect the magazine now enjoys. But again, that comes back to you, the reader, for your continuing support - without you there would be no CONTACT - so, thank you again.

When the Department of Defence asked me if I would like to go to the Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO) on a guided media tour, it didn't take much to decide. The trip is behind me now and I wrap it up in this issue with a look at the impressions and observations I came away with that didn't fit neatly into the two previous reports. While some of this report is light hearted, there is one message relayed that bodes ill for a happy ending in Iraq. Only time will tell, I guess.

In the mean time, however, and as we put this issue to bed, three Aussie soldiers were injured in a series of deliberate and seemingly not-so-random attacks in Dhi Qar Province, southern Iraq. It goes without saying that our best wishes for a speedy recovery go out to all three. The miraculous thing about these attacks, though, is that no one was killed. I guess the ASLAVs did their job!

Scanning it now, the magazine seems to have a very international flavour this issue - aside from the International Airshow and the trip to the MEAO, we also have a small piece submitted from the hallowed halls of the Pentagon, no less. While the yarn may not excite everyone, it is interesting (but hardly surprising) to find that the eyes of the Pentagon do actually scan the globe - and read CONTACT! Kiwi Mac has lots of news from across the pond, but also reports from State-side, after visiting the home of US Special Forces. With other reports from the Solomon Islands, Fiji, Afghanistan and the high seas, the 'lucky country' is lucky to rate a mention at all!

Happy reading.

Brian Hartigan
Managing Editor



CHIEF OF ARMY LIEUTENANT GENERAL PETER LEAHY SAYS "KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK" TO CONTACT BUSINESS MANAGER ROSIE HARTIGAN (LEFT) AND ADVERTISING MANAGER LOUISE BURTON AT THE AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRSHOW, AVALON

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FRIENDLY FIRE...

Another top edition with a great cover pic. However I couldn't find an attribution to Defence nor the photographer. For a front cover I'd expect to see a short par on the contents page or on the same page as your contact details.

This is not so much a Defence 'corporate' issue, more of overt recognition of the photographer.

Rob C-W, via email

Rob, Gunner Shannon Joyce was credited as author of the cover feature and its photos, on page 38. Point taken, though - I have incorporated your idea - Ed

Thank you for your email last year. I was the guy who was undecided, about being ADG or a ground defence officer. I've decided to start off my defence career as an ADG for a couple of years, then go through the officer training, so I can earn the respect of my colleagues, and the officers I will train under.

Thanks again for your advice, it has been very helpful.

Jason F, via email

I'm in the Australian Army Cadets, based at Camden, NSW. I've only recently started reading your magazines and I'm already hooked.

Issue #12 is really good. All these new tanks coming through, and the Australian Army expanding rapidly.

Anyway, I'll keep reading.

Shayden W, via email

Your recent informative article *Bring on the Guns* (March '07) makes a number of references to the 'crews' of the guns ('...protection for the crew' and so on). However, in the Australian Army, only armoured corps vehicles and (infantry) mortars are 'manned' by 'crews'. The guns and howitzers of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery are 'served' by 'detachments'.

I know the equipments in the article are not yet ours, however, we are talking about proposed Australian acquisitions, therefore I believe the terminology should reflect those of the Australian gunners.

Christopher J, Canberra

WOUNDED...

This morning [ANZAC Day], I stood by myself, inside the wire looking east as the sky lightened, and I thought of old times, places and friends far away. An American soldier stared at me through night-vision goggles from a guard tower and obviously wondered what I was up to. Finally, feeling a bit foolish and self-conscious, I walked back to my hooch and climbed into bed.

I laid for hours on my rack as the room grew lighter, the clothes I had ironed the night before, to look respectable for the dawn service, now thrown in the corner - the excitement of bumping into old mates still serving

now long gone, replaced by sadness that the spirit and meaning of the day had somehow been lost to politics and protocol.

You may ask yourself, as I do, why a once-proud returned serviceman spent ANZAC Day morning standing awkwardly by himself in Iraq while, only a few clicks away, the ADF held its own services for our fallen mates.

For the first time since proudly returning from Somalia so long ago, I feel confused and alone this ANZAC Day. The message was very clear from the ADF CO here - no civilians allowed!

AJ S, Iraq

ON TARGET...

Our star letter writer wins a 3ltr Hydrapak worth \$115, from *Cool Kit Australia* - visit www.coolkit.com.au

Thanks to you I went out and joined cadets. It was the best thing I have ever done. I have lost weight and have learnt a wide range of valuable skills. If it wasn't for you and your mag to inspire me I would still be sitting on my ass scratching my balls. And I have even convinced my mate to join.

Thanks for changing my life for the better. Keep up the great work.

Rhys B, via email



SUPPORT MISSION...

Published author currently writing the story of Lone Pine seeks info concerning infantry and light horsemen involved in this August 1915 battle. Info also sought on the 2nd and 4th Field Engineers, miners or fatigues involved with the excavation of B Group tunnels in this area. Original material, including unpublished letters, diaries or photographs, is sought for a book. Any info used will be accredited. Safe handling and prompt registered return of loaned materiel is guaranteed.

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Johannes O, Canberra

I'm just wondering, seeing you know info on the army, if flat-footed people can join the Australian Army? No one seems to be able to answer me.

Dylan N, via email

Dylan, I'm not an expert, so you can't hold it against me if I'm wrong but, I have fairly flat feet and I got in. The attitude of the medical examiner was that if the flat feet didn't actually cause other problems, such as leg or back pain, then there was no problem. I served for 12 years and my flat feet were never a problem. Good luck. I hope you get the career you seek - Ed

History and ceremony, brotherhood and mateship are the life blood of any Army unit, with men willing to fight and die for each other under the mantle of a flag – their own unit's flag, colours or guidons, second only to the Australian National Flag.

Here, members of the newly reformed 7th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (7RAR) proudly fly their 'new' flag while on operations in Afghanistan.

When 5RAR and 7RAR were linked in December 1973, to form 5/7RAR, their colours were retained as the joint colours of the battalion, but were eventually 'laid up' at the Soldiers' Chapel, Kapooka, in 2004.

Sir Roden Cutler VC originally presented the 7RAR colours on 6 October 1968 – and to 5RAR a year earlier. Both battalions went on to serve two tours of duty in Vietnam.

Now, under a \$10billion plan to expand the Army by 2600 personnel, 5RAR and 7RAR have again been de-linked, reforming to commence new and proud chapters in their separate histories.

For 7RAR particularly, regaining their proud name while on operations overseas is particularly poignant.



WORDS BRIAN HARTIGAN PIC CAPT LACHLAN SIMOND



CORPORAL GARRY CONNOLLY AND THUNDER FROM 44TH MILITARY POLICE, OAKEY, WORK HARD DURING A TRAINING SESSION AT THE HELI PORT, DILI

Members from the Military Working Dog detachment in Timor-Leste play a crucial role in security operations in the World's newest country. Handler and dog teams work as a unit and rely on each other during operations. Their contribution is described as a 'force multiplier', adding significantly to the efficiency of patrols.



A400M WINGS LOADING IN FRANCE BOUND FOR ASSEMBLY IN SPAIN

EUROPEAN JIGSAW FLIES TOGETHER

A pair of wings delivered from the UK to Spain in April marked a key milestone in the European A400M military transport aircraft program.

As the wings left Airbus' Filton site near Bristol on an Airbus A300-600ST super transporter aircraft – known as the 'Beluga' – Charles Paterson, Head of the A400M Wing Team said the event represented a major achievement in wing technology, as A400M features the first-ever composite (carbon-fibre reinforced plastic) outer wingbox for an Airbus-built aircraft and, he believed, the largest composite wing ever made.

The first set of wings to be delivered is destined for the A400M static test aircraft.

On arrival in Seville, the wings will be joined to the 'centre wingbox' which arrived from France in March.

When joined, as a single complete structure with a total span of 42.4 metres, the wing will be transported by road to Madrid, where it will be fitted to a static test fuselage.

The vertical tail plane for the aircraft was transported from Stade in Germany a week after the wings were delivered.

Firm orders for A400M now stand at 192 aircraft – Germany 60, France 50, Spain 27, UK 25, Turkey 10, Belgium seven and Luxembourg one, plus eight for South Africa and four for Malaysia.

BATTLE INJURY COMPENSATED

British newspaper the Daily Mail reported in April on a bizarre legal case in which it claimed the Ministry of Defence secretly paid £1million to a wounded SAS soldier in the first ever case of compensation for injuries sustained on the battlefield during wartime.

MoD privately settled a claim made by Soldier J, who was crushed beneath a US helicopter in Afghanistan, after a five-year legal battle.

Soldier J, a 37-year-old former corporal, is also banned from discussing details of the incident.

The soldier suffered severe throat, neck and shoulder injuries, which ended his special-forces career, when a Chinook helicopter landed on top of his vehicle.

An MoD post-incident report cleared the American aircrew and blamed the SAS patrol on the ground, a result SAS sources described as 'a whitewash' designed to dissuade Soldier J from suing the US government.

The Daily Mail said that settling out of court, the MoD avoided creating a legal precedent. Previous cases have been thrown out of court on the grounds that the employer's duty of care did not extend to the wartime battlefield.

IRISH HEAD SOUTH

Having completed a mission-readiness exercise in County Wicklow in April, troops from Ireland's 36th Infantry Group have deployed to south-east Lebanon for a six-month rotation.

Pre-deployment training included scenarios such as shelling, road-side bombs, first-aid testing, communications and vehicle-recovery procedures.

Seen as worst-case scenario training, the exercise allowed all ranks more

thorough preparation in command and control procedures in situations that may occur in the conflict zone.

Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Michael McCarthy, the group was drawn mainly from Dublin- and Dundalk-based units.

The troops will conduct reconnaissance, security and protection duties in support

of Finnish de-mining and reconstruction work.

More than 30,000 Irish troops served in Lebanon during a previous mission there between 1978 and 2001 – with 47 soldiers killed over the years.

Just days earlier, 214 members of the 35th Infantry Group departed for service in Kosovo.

HELICOPTER MINI-SIM LAUNCHED AT AVALON

GeoSim Technologies showcased a new Bell 206-based Rotor Wing Mini Trainer at the Australian International Air Show in March attracting wide interest including, the company claimed, a firm order from the Navy.

A large number of military and civilian pilots tried the trainer at the airshow, with the majority commenting on its realistic handling and its obvious training potential.

GeoSim synthetic trainers boast a CASA FSD2 Cat B accreditation, which means up to 20 hours can be accredited towards an instrument rating on the system.

The cockpit mock-up of GeoSim replicates that of a Bell 206 Kiowa with a fully functioning radio stack and instrumentation, but is reconfigurable to most helicopter models.

Priced at a modest \$89,000, and with rental options also available, the base system could affordably enhance many military as well as civilian training applications.

Company sources say the trainer was well received by industry and military pilots alike.

GeoSim is also in the process of obtaining CASA accreditation for a fixed-wing trainer.

The 206 Synthetic Trainer is in service with Chopperline, Australian Helicopters and Beckers Helicopters on the Sunshine Coast, and Down Under Helicopters in Cairns.



CHARLES DU PLESSIS, MANAGING DIRECTOR GEOSIM TECHNOLOGIES, ANSWERS QUESTIONS ON HIS COMPANY'S TRAINING SIMULATOR

NEWS IN BRIEF

SF SOLDIERS KILLED

Three Australian special-forces soldiers were killed when their car left the road and plunged into a river in Victoria in April.

Sergeant Craig Linacre, Corporal Michael McAvooy and Corporal David O'Neil were returning to base after leave when the accident occurred.

Special Operations Commander Major General Mike Hindmarsh said the deaths were a tragic blow to the Australian special-forces community.

"All three soldiers survived some of the toughest combat [in Afghanistan] the ADF has seen since Vietnam, yet they

died tragically in a motor vehicle accident," he said.

NEW RETIREMENT AGE

Australian Defence Force members may now serve until age 60 after the compulsory retirement age is expected to be raised on 1 July.

Defence Minister Brendan Nelson said the later retirement age better reflected community standards and allowed the ADF to retain the skills and experience of highly trained people longer.

"This is a significant and beneficial change, particularly when the ADF is facing the challenge of recruiting more

people and reducing its separation rate," he said.

This initiative also means new recruits may start military service at an older age – theoretically, 56yrs for a minimum four-year engagement.

The change also means reservists can now serve until age 65.

MAIDEN FLIGHT

Eurocopter's test crew were delighted with the performance of Australia's first MRH-90 when they conducted its maiden flight at Marignane, France, in March.

The first of four set for



delivery to Australia by the end of this year, the aircraft flew for more than an hour.

The Government announced the acquisition of 12 MRH-90 troop-lift helicopters in 2004, to bolster Australia's counter-terrorism capabilities by releasing a Black Hawk squadron to provide dedicated support to our special forces on the east coast.

In June 2006, it announced it would buy an additional 34

airframes to replace Army's Black Hawks and Navy's Sea Kings at a total cost of around \$4.2 billion.

TURKEY PICKS MONGOOSE

Turkey has selected AugustaWestland's A-129 Mangusta as the winner of its army's multi-billion-dollar attack helicopter project after more than 12 years of stop-start negotiations.

Worth about US\$2.7 billion, the project should equip the Turkish Army with 50 attack helicopters.

However, given that the army sees an immediate need for the capability, and first

deliveries under this project are not expected before 2013, it is speculated that the country will make an interim purchase of up to 30 helicopters from America.

Apache and Super Cobra were excluded from the current project because of a catch 22 situation over contract conditions, but these conditions do not prevent an off-the-shelf purchase.

EUROCOPTER'S INDIAN WIN

Unconfirmed media reports suggest Eurocopter has won the Indian Army's long-awaited contract for 197 light helicopters worth more than

US\$550 million.

Eurocopter's AS 550 C3 Fennec was reportedly chosen by the Indian Army in preference to Bell's 407 after trials in hot, humid and high-altitude conditions.

The European manufacturer will supply 60 helicopters in fly-away condition from French and German plants, while the remaining aircraft will be manufactured in Bangalore.

NAVAL GIFT

The Royal Australian Navy has gifted a retiring Fremantle Class Patrol Boat to the Townsville Maritime Historical

Society in order to preserve the cultural heritage the city shares with the RAN and Defence generally.

To be preserved and exhibited in dry-dock facilities next to Ross Creek at the Maritime Museum of Townsville, HMAS Townsville will provide a valuable educational facility for students, and create a memorial interest for visitors and tourists.

HMAS Townsville was launched on 16 May 1981. During nearly 26 years of distinguished service, her main role was in border and fisheries protection.



SAS COIN LAUNCHED

Major General Michael Jeffery, Governor General of Australia, has unveiled an Australian legal-tender coin issued by The Perth Mint to mark the 50th anniversary of the Australian SAS.

Struck from 1 ounce of pure silver, the coin depicts SAS soldiers in action in a variety of operational contexts and includes coloured images in its design.

Perth Mint CEO Ed Harbuz thanked the Governor General, Honorary Colonel and former Commander of the SAS, for his support.

"The Governor General has been tremendously supportive from the outset of the plan to create an Australian legal-tender commemorative for the SAS," he said.

"His assistance, together with the invaluable advice we received from the SAS Association, helped The Perth Mint create a unique piece of Australian military memorabilia."

Perth Mint will release just 7500 of the coins, each accompanied by a numbered Certificate of Authenticity, guaranteeing its weight, purity and limited mintage.

Renowned as the 'eyes and ears' of the Australian Defence Force, the SAS was established on 25 July 1957.

Universally recognised as one of the best special-forces units in the world, it has made many vital contributions in numerous international hotspots during the past 50 years, including Borneo, Vietnam, Somalia, Kuwait, East Timor, Afghanistan and Iraq.

The new silver coin, which retails for \$78, is available from The Perth Mint's online store at www.perthmint.com.au and other selected outlets.

AWDS VISIT

Sydney Harbour and other ports around Australia played host to two foreign warships over recent months, both on promotional tours ahead of a next-phase decision on the Air Warfare Destroyer (AWD) Program for the Royal Australian Navy.

First visitor was the Spanish Navy's F100 Class Alvaro de Bazan visiting as part of a circumnavigation of the globe – the first such voyage by a Spanish warship in 142 years.

F100, designed by Spanish company Navantia, is the basis of a so-called Existing Design option being developed by the AWD Alliance consisting of the Commonwealth, ASC AWD Shipbuilder and Raytheon Australia.

Second option for the project is the so-called Evolved Design

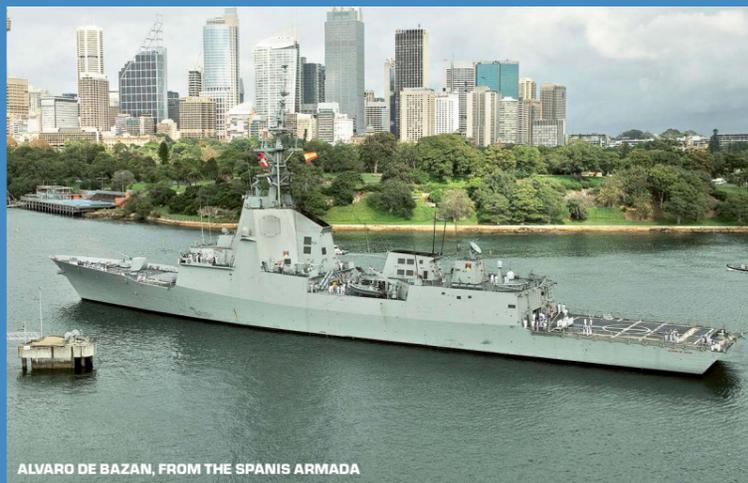
by Gibbs & Cox, based upon the Arleigh Burke Class Destroyer in service with the United States Navy.

USS Lassen, representing the Evolved Design, visited in time for ANZAC Day.

Both ships conducted at-sea air warfare exercises for senior Defence and AWD Alliance personnel to exhibit the ships' advanced combat capabilities.

No matter which option is selected, the Australian Defence Force is set to be equipped with one of the world's most capable air warfare destroyers. The project will provide the flexibility to deliver continuous air and missile defence beyond the range of supporting land-based aircraft.

AWD is the largest, most complex naval procurement in Australia's history.



ALVARO DE BAZAN, FROM THE SPANISH ARMADA

REPRESENTATIVES OF BOTH CAMPS IN THE AIR WARFARE DESTROYER PROJECT



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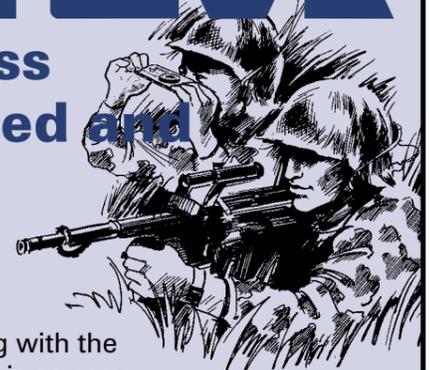
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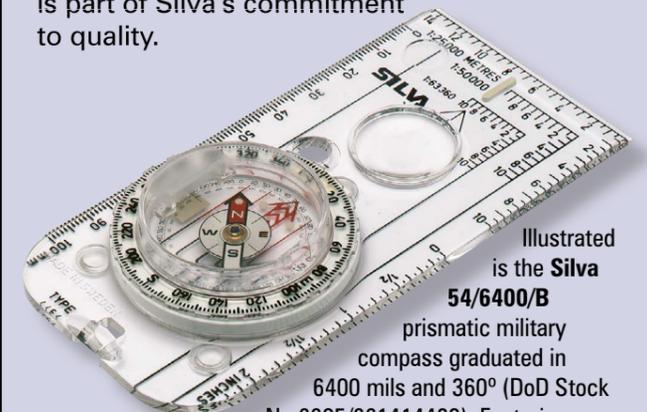
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SAF JOINS AFGHAN KIWIS

Prime Minister Helen Clark announced that New Zealand is set to remain in Afghanistan's Bamyan Province until at least 2008 and that Singapore is set to join the Kiwis.

She committed the New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team in Bamyan until at least 2008 just days before her visit to the US for talks with President Bush, in March.

Under NATO's ISAF command, the Kiwis have been in Bamyan for close on four years and have been heralded for setting the benchmark for PRT performance.

Another 124 defence force personnel left for Afghanistan in early April to relieve those who had spent a chilly six months braving an Afghan winter with temperatures as low as -25C. In a land of extremes, the new contingent will have to adjust to working at altitude in temperatures over 40C as they patrol around the province on reconstruction and security tasks.

This latest deployment, CRIB 9, is a first in that the security element will come from the Royal New Zealand Artillery Regiment. Earlier security platoons came from 1 & 2/1 Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment.

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Phil Goff welcomed an announcement by Singapore's Defence Minister Teo Chee Hean that Singapore would be sending troops to work alongside the NZ PRT in Bamyan.

Singaporean Armed Forces will undertake two humanitarian reconstruction projects, including a dental clinic at Bamyan Hospital, while five engineers will work alongside Kiwi sappers and local contractors building and maintaining bridges.

New Zealand has a long history of working alongside the Singaporeans. The two countries exercise together in each other's countries and SAF troops worked alongside the Kiwis in East Timor from May 2001 until November 2002.

KIWIS MISSION A BLAST

The accommodation's a bit spartan and the tucker takes a bit of getting used to, but the 10-man Kiwi battlefield clearance team has settled into its six-month tour of Lebanon well.

Based in three rented apartments in the southern city of Tyre, the unarmed team, under the command of Lieutenant Commander Steve Lenik, has passed its theatre accreditation and begun work in earnest.

The six army engineers and three navy divers have primarily been dealing with unexploded cluster munitions that are either blown in situ by wrapping plastic explosives around them and lighting a fuse or by removing them to a safe place for destruction.

Their first mission was the disposal of cluster bomblets just 10km east of Tyre.

Cluster bombs are canister-like devices dropped by aircraft that spread thousands of softball-sized explosive bomblets over a wide area. Years after hostilities end, those that fail to detonate pose a danger to civilians repopulating contested areas.

UN estimates say that more than a million cluster bombs and other unexploded ordnance remain in Lebanon after years of fighting.

The current UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) moved into the area after a truce was brokered between Hezbollah and Israel last year. The truce took effect in August and the UNIFIL troops moved in as the Israelis moved out.

The Kiwis work in support of the UN Mine Action Co-ordination Center based in southern Lebanon. Lieutenant Commander Lenik says the team has a bi-partisan approach with the engineers

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER TIM MCKENZIE IN FULL PPE (PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT) IN LEBANON



surveying and marking sites while the divers use their specialist demolition skills to dispose of the munitions.

"We have settled in well and we're getting stuck in to the job," he says.

"It's going to be challenging, but it'll be worth it to see the Lebanese moving back into cleared areas in safety."

Despite working unarmed in such a volatile part of the world, their job is not particularly dangerous. Ordnance disposal has proven a Kiwi forte over recent years with previous missions of a similar role being completed in Afghanistan, Cambodia and Mozambique.

In December, Defence Minister Phil Goff committed the NZDF to two six-month tours in Lebanon.

MINISTER VISITS TSUNAMI MISSION

Kiwi Defence Minister Phil Goff flew by New Zealand Air Force C-130 Hercules to Honiara in April with a team of NZDF cargo-handling specialists deploying to assist post-tsunami-relief efforts in the Solomon Islands.



"The flight is in response to a request from the Solomon Island's government for an air-loading team (ALT) to provide assistance with managing and handling the large volume of relief supplies arriving at Honiara", Mr Goff said.

"The ALT will be a key asset to enable relief supplies to be quickly and efficiently distributed. Their work is likely to involve breaking down pallets of supplies from larger military and civil aircraft and repacking the material into smaller loads for freighting to affected areas."

The eight-person team was made up of six Air Force air-load specialists and two Army loadmasters. They took a forklift and freight pallets to Honiara to assist in their work.

BUSY MONTH FOR FLIERS

March was a busy month for the P3 crews of the RNZAF's No 5 Squadron with a week-long Pacific surveillance mission and a number of successful rescues.

The surveillance missions involved looking for illegal fishing vessels in the waters between Samoa and the Cook Islands while the exercise was a multi-agency affair involving Australia, the Cook Islands, New Zealand, Samoa, the Forum Fisheries Agency and the US Coastguard.

Acting No 5 Squadron Commanding Officer Squadron Leader Nick Olney said the 12 crews had completed more than 24 hours flying over the week-long Operation Northern Patrol.

"It was a relatively quiet operation in that all of the fishing vessels which were sighted and photographed were found to be fishing legally. What we did achieve, though, was a visible presence, which will act as a deterrent to any individuals or companies considering breaking the rules in the future," he said.

Northern Patrol is run up to 10 times per year. It is one of many Pacific surveillance and search-and-rescue roles P3-K Orions undertake.

Meanwhile the three-man crew of a Nelson fishing vessel, which sank 380km from New Plymouth were singing the fighting Fifth's praises early last month. The crew of the Walarua K were forced to



abandon their 19m fishing boat when it started taking on water in the engine room.

They put out a distress call before manning their raft and were spotted by an aircraft alerted by the National Rescue Co-ordination Centre. The rescue was then taken over by the crew of an RNZAF P3-Orion and the men picked up from their raft by a passing Japanese container ship.

The next week a solo yachtsman received medical attention but decided to stay on his yacht after activating his emergency beacon while suffering from food poisoning.

An Orion located the man's yacht about 240 nautical miles east of Lord Howe Island and the Australian merchantman Yarrunga diverted to meet him.

LAVS IN TROUBLE

While the exact number may be contested, one thing is certain, there are serious problems with the NZ Army's fleet of LAVIII vehicles.

In March, media reports claimed as many as one-third of the country's 105 LAVs are suffering from welding cracks on brackets connecting the steering and suspension to the vehicles hulls.

Defence Minister Phil Goff said the fault was discovered during routine maintenance and said the repair process was relatively minor. He said that in the first week of March, there were six vehicles undergoing repair while another 20 awaited fixing.

"The repair program is running to timetable and should be completed by the end of the month [April]," he said.

"At all times during the repair process, an adequate number of vehicles have

been available for training or operational use."

Mr Goff said a similar vehicle used by the US Army, the Stryker LAV, had also experienced weld-failure problems.

"The US vehicles have all returned to service after undergoing a repair program."

A spokesman for Mr Goff's office said the Government was meeting with the Canadian manufacturers who would be billed the cost of repairs.

Crewing the vehicles is also proving a problem. Sources told CONTACT the reason 2/1RNZIR is reverting to light

NZDF COMMITS MORE IN TIMOR

New Zealand's commitment to East Timor has been expanded with the announcement in March by Prime Minister Helen Clark that the Kiwi's contribution to the Combined Joint Task Force is set to increase.

Two RNZAF Iroquois helicopters have been deployed to East Timor for up to 12 months while a third is on stand-by, while a senior New Zealand officer will be taking up an appointment as Deputy Commander CJTF.

"The increase in our commitment to the CJTF comes ahead of what is expected to be a particularly volatile time in the lead up to, and following elections in April," Ms Clark said.

"The helicopters will provide additional transport to the CJTF as it supports UN operations in what is a mountainous country with a poor road network, where helicopters are essential for moving personnel."

New Zealand has had 150 troops contributing to the Australian-led CJTF since returning to Timor Leste in 2006.

In addition to the CJTF mission, two NZDF and 25 NZ Police personnel are working with the UN mission while another two soldiers are attached to the Timorese Defence Force.



AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN...

WORDS AND PICS
BRIAN HARTIGAN

It was my very great pleasure to meet the men and women of the Australian Defence Force on duty in various locations around the Middle East Area of Operations (MEA0) in October/November last year. In the previous two issues of CONTACT I reported on the activities and circumstances of those I met and, hopefully, gave you the reader, some sense of what day-to-day life is like for Australian service men and women on very foreign soil.

In this final wrap-up of my experience, I want to relate some of the things I found a little more exciting, interesting, unusual or noteworthy, but didn't necessarily fit into the flow of the previous reports.

I caution that much of what is to follow is personal observation, opinion and hearsay and not necessarily verified or verifiable, but nonetheless interesting – at least to me.

Never let the truth get in the way of a good story, as they say!



When I was asked if I'd like to go to the MEAO for three weeks on a guided media tour, it took me about a nanosecond to decide – followed by several hours of fast talking to get permission from the home front! What was the big deal I thought? It's not like it's dangerous or anything. No Aussies have been killed by enemy action over there yet.

My personal philosophy was, as always, if it's good enough for others, then why should I shirk my responsibility? And, yes, I do see it as a responsibility to tell their story as best I can. I chose this job, after all, and I can't just pick and choose the easy bits.

Besides, think of the stories I can tell around the barbie. "Did you go anywhere special on your holidays, Brian?" "Just Iraq and Afghanistan," I reply, casually.

Waiting at another airfield one hot dusty evening, I met one very large, very nice, African-American gentleman with a really cool story he felt he just had to tell us about the exploits of our own SAS.

With great glee and obvious admiration he told it like this...

"Our (US) airforce guys had this UAV they were using. Every day, they patrolled up and down this valley and never saw a damn thing. Eventually they gave up and decided to fly it somewhere else. That same day, human intel came in suggesting that the valley they had just given up on was swarmin' with Taliban. Reluctantly, they sent the UAV up the valley for another look-see. Anyway, sure enough, there in the valley where it was empty for weeks, were about 200 blokes in traditional dress and obviously heavily armed. Our guys sent the UAV back for a second look, and on this pass the damn thing got shot down. Well, our air force guys were in a quandary. They didn't want the bad guys to get their hands on all that technology and intel, but their own ground-forces guys were off somewhere else on another task. So they asked some special forces dudes, from a country I won't name, to go out and get the bird back. These guys said, 'Hell, no – we saw what was on that video feed. We ain't going out there. No way'. So our USAF guys went and found an Aussie real quick and told him



WO2 JED WATSON BUILDS ON THE WISDOM OF KEEN AFGHANI ENGINEERS

AFGHANISTAN/IRAQ

what happened and asked if they could go get the plane back. So this Aussie says, 'Sure, mate. We ain't doin' much at the moment'. So they did!" he finished, with a huge white-in-black smile, leaving the finale to the listeners' imagination.

Keen to find out a bit more about the places we visited, we found some people were willing to step outside the prescribed message. In Baghdad, two men – one Australian the other Iraqi – attempted to educate us a little deeper than the here-and-now of the next headline.

The Australian – an officer, more than adequately qualified to comment on the history of Iraq – told us it was important to understand that Iraq was a very violent country long before any western involvement. He said the country had more than 150 tribes as well as the various religious divides. Aside from the various Muslim sects, Christianity is also prevalent – and there's even a group in the far west of the country that worships the Sun. It is also important to understand that most Iraqis are tribal first, religious second and patriotic third.

SCARY STORY

Seeing and hearing a bomb go off just three blocks from where I stood – awaiting the 'promised' rocket attack in the middle of the night – standing, exposed on the roof of the old Baath Party Headquarters in downtown Baghdad – these things did not scare me. But one incident in Talil, southern Iraq, did cause my heart to try and escape through my mouth.

At the end of a long day, we had stood atop an ancient archeological site and taken photos of each other in a perfect sunset – necessitating the use of flash.

After piling into our bus, we had just started to move when, out of the darkness, four American Hummers appeared, without lights, and formed an instant roadblock in front of the car in front of us.

At first I was concerned for the car driver – the shopkeeper at the trinket stall who had just sold us our souvenirs – a local.

But then it suddenly dawned on me that the machineguns in the turrets on top of the Hummers were pointed at us, and I was not at all comfortable sitting in a soft-skinned vehicle with heavily armed Americans staring at me.

Nothing happened for what seemed like a long time – no shouting, no instructions, no gestures. Eventually, our guide, the Australian Army chaplain said, "bugger this" and went to find out what the problem was.

After a considerable time he came back to report that the Yanks had seen

our flashes and were sure we were photographing 'their' base – which we all knew was a no no – and they had insisted on confiscating our cameras.

The padre, naturally, didn't accept the demand, which was at first downgraded to confiscation of all tapes, film and digital storage cards. But, eventually, they agreed to simply view our photos and have us delete any that contravened their security policy.

So, there we were, on the side of the road with angry Americans looking at our slide shows while the padre took his only photo of the day – of angry Americans viewing Aussie slide shows on the side of the road!



OFFENSIVE PHOTO? APART FROM THE UGLY MUG, I DON'T THINK BASE SECURITY WAS COMPROMISED, DO YOU?

Despite the difficult and dangerous conditions and despite the problems the country was facing, most people he knew, including Americans, were passionately and genuinely concerned for and empathetic to the plight of the Iraqi people, and were determined and willing to work hard to make what little difference they could.

On a personal note, he told us how he felt frustrated and angry with family and friends when he went home on leave because they seemed to obsess over relatively trivial things. It took a lot of soul searching and some help from a psych to realise how lucky we are in Australia exactly because it is trivial things that concern us.

The Iraqi – a senior advisor at the American Embassy – had a much tougher message for us to swallow.

Agreeing that Iraq was a complicated country, he explained that the current unrest in Iraq was as much a legacy of Saddam as it was a direct consequence of poor early tactics by the allies.

When Saddam realised his days were numbered he put money and orders in place to ensure the failure of his successors. He also let all the criminals out of jail to add to the mayhem.

On the other hand, when the allies invaded Iraq and dissolved the armed forces, they instantly made four or five million new enemies, when the extended families of those affected were counted. Also, with no defence force to guard the borders, there was an uncontrolled influx of money, weapons and people from countries that desperately wished to see a democratic Iraq fail.

However, with the past in the past, Iraq and its allies must look to the future.

This senior Iraqi advisor agreed with US General Casey who was reported as saying, about that time (October '06), that the Iraqis would be capable of assuming control of their own security within the next 18 months.

He said, in his opinion, that for any new Iraqi government to succeed, it must rule with an iron fist and this would, inevitably, cause a blood bath in the short term.

"But, it is better to kill half a million now than to let it drag on, killing two or three million in the long run," he said.

"This iron-fist approach is the only solution that can fit with the culture of Iraq."

He said that while the Americans and their coalition partners were aware of his theory, they weren't at all comfortable with that line of thinking, but, he believed, they were resigned to the inevitability of it.

Do the Yanks really take McDonalds to a war zone? This and other important questions abound around Aussie barbies.

Well I can tell you, yes, they do – and KFC, Subway, Pizza Inn, Hole-in-One Doughnuts, Green Beans Coffee, barber shops, beauticians, tailors, supermarkets (PX stores), banking facilities, gymnasiums, libraries and much much more.

Before you scoff, though, there's a very sound logic behind it. Apart from, 'because we can', it also makes the soldiers feel more at home.

Given that most American soldiers are over there for at least 12 months and that they get no extra pay or allowances for being there, making them feel more at home during downtime makes a lot of sense.

"Junkfood Alley" isn't the only place to go for a feed, though. The DFAC (equivalent to our mess) is the place to go for a free feed. Well, when I say equivalent, I mean in theory, because the sheer size of these things (and there are dozens of them) puts our mess' in a whole different (little) league.



The first evening we used the DFAC we got lost. Literally. We had to send out search parties, and coordinate a rendezvous point and time, to round up the hapless stragglers. The second time we used it we were much more organised and had a plan in place to prevent such disasters.

I'm not joking either.

One evening I noticed a Dyna-tape label on the wash basin I used for pre-dinner hand washing that said 'Washhand basin number 562' – and it wasn't the last hand basin in the line.

There were other statistical tidbits over there I just had to write down and bring home too. Like, the American superbase in Baghdad I mentioned last issue is so big it has 32 bus routes on it. There are more than 150 American chaplains tending their flocks in theatre – covering every imaginable religious denomination, including Jedi. There are 30,000 HMMWVs (Humvees) in Iraq. I saw a car park that, I was told, held more broken-down vehicles awaiting repair than there are good vehicles in all of the ADF. The war effort in Iraq alone costs the US \$6billion per month to run.

And, the month I was there, 100 American soldiers were killed in action. RIP.

P.S. In the Scary Story on the previous page, the angry American was actually a very petite, apologetic female sergeant – "Just followin' orders, sir".

P.P.S. While my colleagues were showing their photos to the petite sergeant (and having several of them deleted), I was at the back of the queue swapping out my near-full Compact Flash Card for an empty one.

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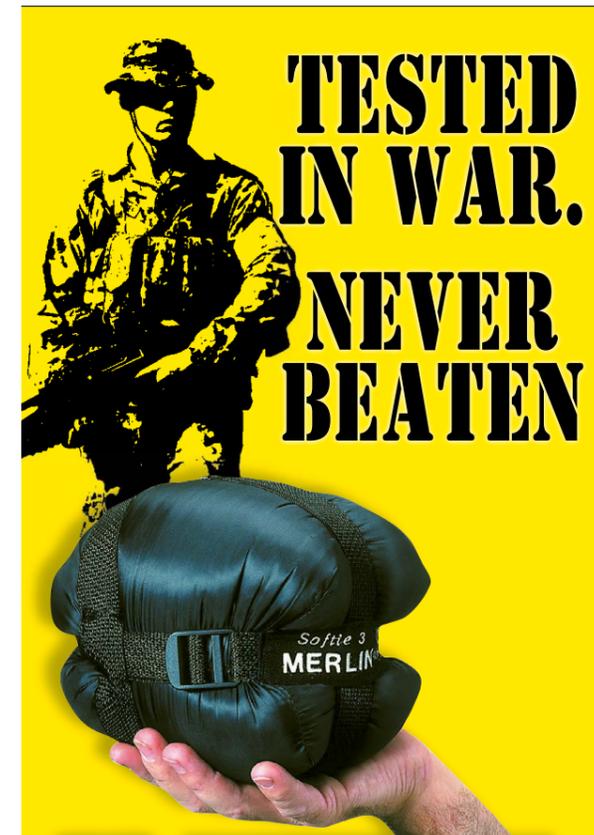
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EASTERN ENCORE

SFTG RETURN TO AFGHANISTAN

WORDS BRIAN HARTIGAN PIC ADF DIGITALLY MODIFIED BY CONTACT

Less than a year after the Australian Special Forces Task Group was withdrawn from Afghanistan, they are going back in.

Initially, about 300 extra personnel, bolstering the 400-strong Reconstruction Task Force already in country, will be deployed for at least two years. The total ADF deployment to Afghanistan will reach about 950 by mid this year and will peak at approximately 1000 personnel by mid-2008.

Making the announcement, Prime Minister John Howard said Australia had a clear national interest in helping to prevent Afghanistan again becoming a safe haven for terrorists.

"This decision is based on the government's steadfast commitment to helping Afghanistan's democratically elected government create a secure and stable environment in that country, and on Defence's advice that the increasing threat posed by the insurgency requires the deployment of additional force protection and support elements," Mr Howard said.

The government says the role of the Special Forces Task Group will be to enhance provincial security "by disrupting Taliban extremists' command and control, and supply routes" – a proactive seek-and-destroy mandate similar to its previous modus operandi. Operations will be targeted on the Taliban, disrupting Taliban operations and going after the Taliban leadership.

Expansion of the Australian forces in Afghanistan will see the existing RTF Protection Company Group (about 120 personnel) extended.

An RAAF air surveillance radar capability (about 75 personnel) will also deploy to Kandahar Airfield, where it will assume control of a portion of Afghan operational airspace.

Our expanded force in Afghanistan will also be supported by additional logistics and intelligence capabilities, including the deployment of another C-130J Hercules to the Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO).

The government's announcement, made just two days after two Chinook

helicopters arrived back in Townsville from Afghanistan, also includes the planned redeployment of two Chinooks, with 110 support personnel and crew, mid next year.

Our forces will operate within the ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) framework but will remain under Australian command.

Prime Minister Howard said the inherent danger in this mission should not be underestimated.

"Advice received by the government points to an elevated threat environment in Afghanistan," he said.

"Our personnel are very well equipped and superbly trained, but we should all be fully conscious of, and prepared for, the possibility of casualties.

"Any theatre of operation where you have people who are trying to kill you, is dangerous."

Chief of Defence Air Chief Marshall Angus Houston said the Special Operations Task Group will comprise members of the Special Air Service Regiment, the Incident Response Unit and commandos and would have a very solid inbuilt intelligence capability.

"It is tailored for the purpose. It's a more robust group than last time," he said.

"We've applied all the lessons learnt from last time and I think we've got a very good, very well-led, very well-equipped group to deal with the very challenging environment that we face out there."

Prime Minister Howard said it was important that we not deal too passively with the Taliban and that the force being sent to Afghanistan would have the capability to engage them.

ANY THEATRE OF OPERATION WHERE YOU HAVE PEOPLE TRYING TO KILL YOU, IS DANGEROUS



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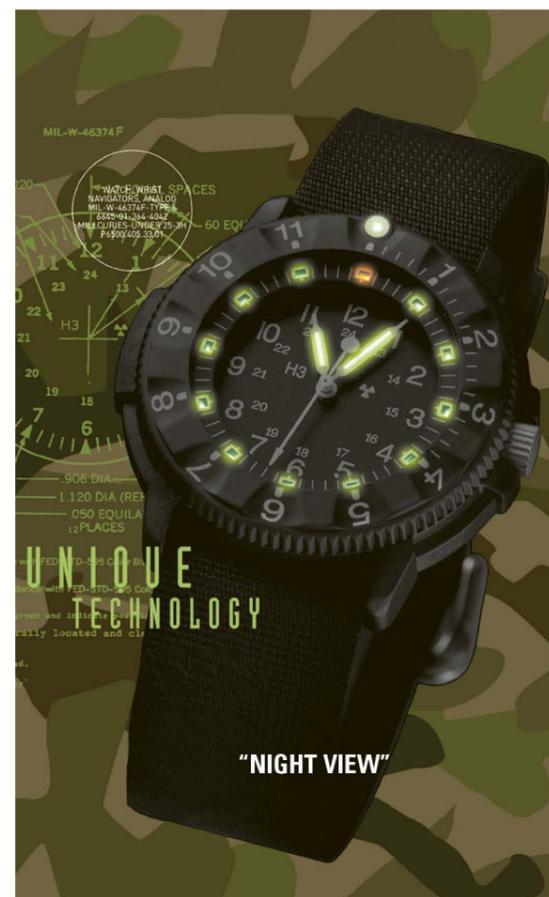
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Tigers, Rotors & Blokes



The male-dominated world of military aviation in general and of helicopters specifically might seem a strange place for a self-proclaimed 'emerging artist' to cut her teeth but, for Queensland-based Deb Gilmartin, the world of 'Tigers, Rotors & Blokes' has proved a happy hunting ground.

Looking for a subject that was different but strong, Deb found what she was after in the hangars and on the tarmac at the home of Army Aviation in Oakey, near Toowoomba.

"I have always admired war artists but I would not be brave enough to work under war conditions," she admits frankly.

"But I have a scientific background and I am fascinated by machines. I love to draw people and I ideally wanted to work in an environment that combined all of this."

An opportune commission from Australian Aerospace, to document the introduction of the Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter into the Army, set Deb on a year-long project that culminated in an exhibition at the Jondaryan Shire Council Cultural Centre, Oakey in May this year.

Deb says that working in a mostly blokes' world has been fantastic.

"At first I was a little shy – but that didn't last long!

"I have to say that the men I have worked with have been really co-operative, interested, kind gentlemen.

"I liked their honesty about my work – if it wasn't right they would let me know.

"I could have had a good laugh with these blokes, but they took what I was doing seriously and with respect."

She says she is unsure whether being a female artist gave her a different point of view but certainly being an outsider did.

"A lot of military aviation painting and drawings depict historical battles or are very technical. I have tended towards being very detailed in my work but I also explore the use of empty spaces and how much they can be used to tell the story.

"I tend not to fill up every space on the page and the pen & ink studies focus mainly on the guys working rather than being dominated by the Tiger in the picture.

"Whether that's a 'female' thing or just my personal style, I don't know."

She says the experience has been an amazing one and it was a real privilege and a huge challenge artistically.

"I have met some great blokes and feel I have been part of a team while I was there.

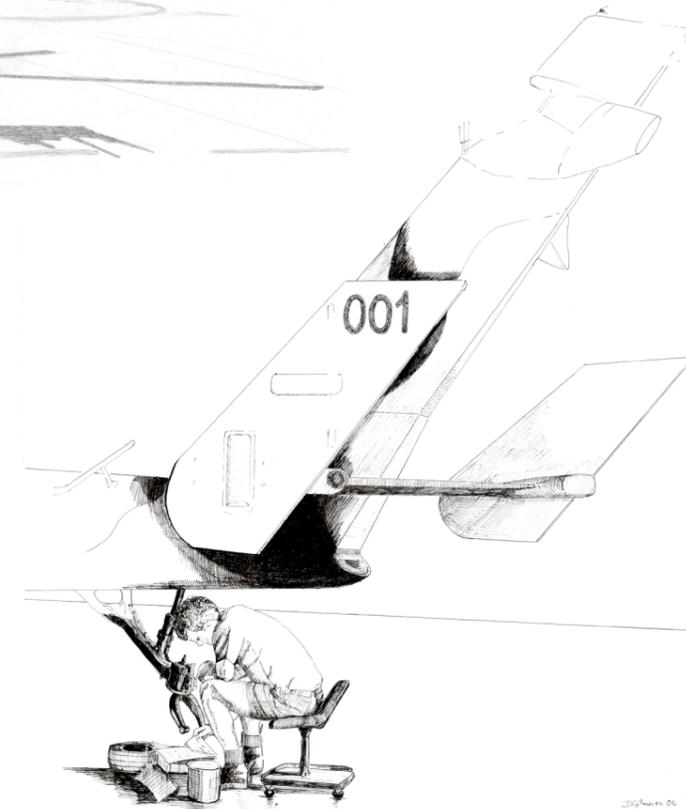
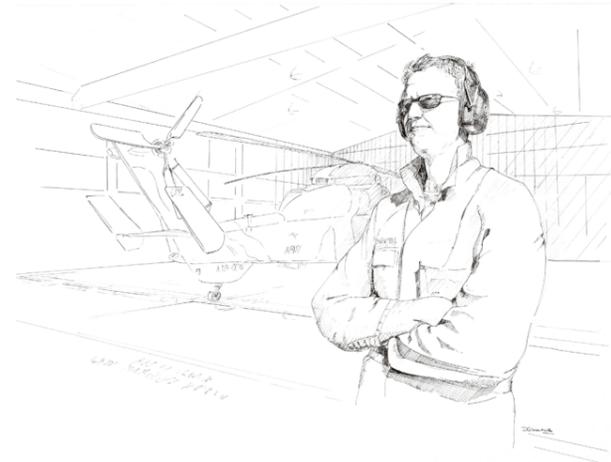
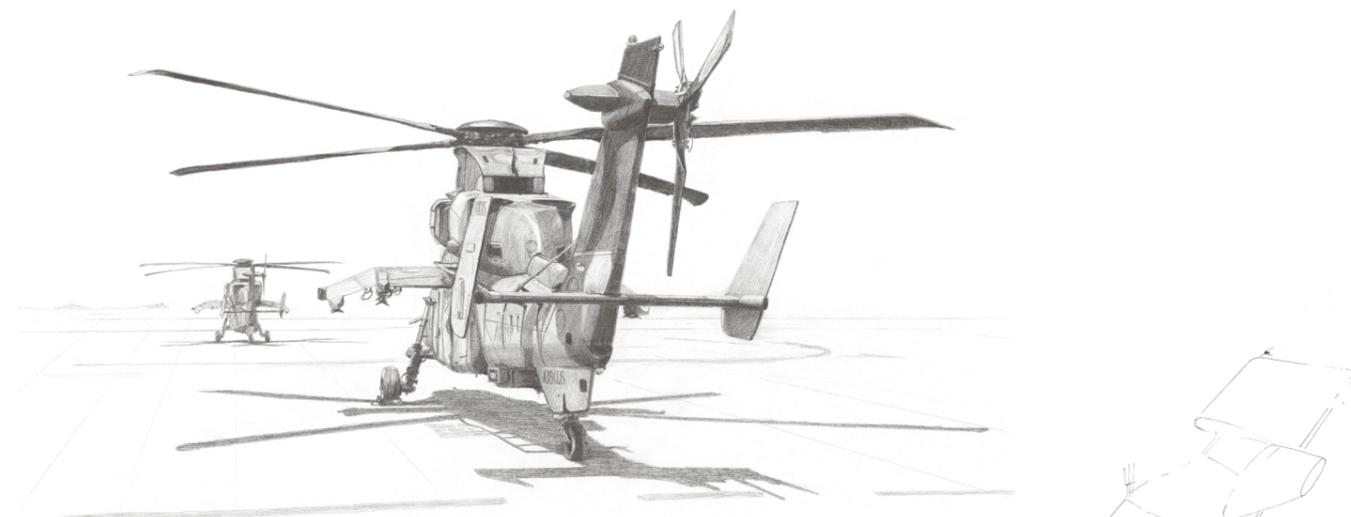
"I have made new friends through this project and my respect for what these men do, particularly in these times, has increased no end."

Deb says her next project will document the 'end of an era' as she tries to capture the magic and personality of the last remaining Huey helicopters before they are finally withdrawn from service.

"Hopefully I will capture some essence of this very iconic helicopter – I can't wait," she says.

On the strength of her 'Tigers, Rotors & Blokes' work, I'm confident the results will be worth the wait.

Deb Gilmartin can be contacted by email at gilmartin@netxp.com.au



KIWIS IN FREEFALL

Arriving at the US Army's home of the Airborne – Fort Bragg, North Carolina – in the middle of winter, I reflect on just how I ended up giving away a Kiwi summer for 0 Celsius.

WORDS KIWI MAC
PICS USSOC

The answer is pretty simple really. Towards the end of my Afghan tour, I received a series of emails saying that not only were long-time CONTACT friends at the RNZAF's para school, PTSU, attending familiarisation training at Fort Bragg, but associates from my old unit's museum, the 6RNZIR history team would also be lurking about.

A few quick calls and a goodbye to Mrs Mac and yours truly was off on their trail.

Fort Bragg is situated on the doorstep of the city of Fayetteville and was named after local North Carolina Civil War hero Confederate General Braxton Bragg.

Around 50,000 people serve at the base, which touts itself as 'the home of the US Army's paratroopers and special operations'.

All that was too much surplus information for the two Kiwi parachute instructors, Flight Lieutenant Brent 'Iggy' Iggo and Master Aircrew Kevin 'Popey' Pope, who were there to further their knowledge on international free-fall parachute techniques.

"Mac, you're such a spotter," said Popey. "You just worry about the history stuff and we'll take care of the business end."

This time, the pair were following up on a trip to California last March to test and evaluate new round parachutes being adopted by the NZDF.

"We're here to assess current US free-fall methods and compare them to those we've been using in New Zealand at PTSU," Iggy says.

"We'll also be assessing current equipment we use compared to these guys for free-fall and what ability there is for us to adopt any new techniques."

To ensure there was no mistaking this trip for anything but study, he continues his practiced pitch to the board of directors...

"We'll also be looking for any commonalities that can be exploited in the future."

First port of call for the PJIs is the Sergeant Major Santos Alfredo Matos Jr Military Free-Fall Simulator or 'Jump Simulation Tower' for short.

The simulator is operated by Support Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) of the US Army's John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Centre and School. If you think that's a mouthful, its abbreviation is not much better – USAJFKSWCS.

They claim that this simulator is the largest and possibly the only one of its kind in the world and was built in 1992 at a cost of more US\$5million. The design is similar to many other installations, but is unusual in that the fan is above the flight area.

The Kiwi PJIs observed US Special Forces students practice various techniques and were suitably impressed by the facility.

"The simulator can support up to six jumpers at a time, with full equipment," Popey says.

"Each student gets about 45 minutes flying time, which may not sound like much, but probably equates to 45 or 50 standard HALO [high altitude, low opening] jumps."

Sporting 10 blades, the fan can create sufficient wind speed to allow a jumper to simulate free falling from zero to 240 feet per second.

"It's truly awesome," says Iggy, "There's just nothing like it for us either in New Zealand or Australia."

"The closest thing back home, believe it or not, is a fairground ride at a tourist centre in Rotorua," Popey says.

At Fort Bragg, the simulator is used by soldiers undergoing Special Forces training during the first phase of free-fall training following selection, while more experienced jumpers often return to the simulator to practice techniques and hone skills – meaning the facility is in constant demand.

While at the simulator, students learn the basic techniques before heading off for the descent phase of the free-fall course, which is carried out at the Yuma Proving Ground in Arizona because of the wide-open spaces out west and because Fort Bragg is subject to extremes in weather and has a busy airspace.

Students may not experience the full thrill of flying in the simulator, but they can, however, practice slowing or increasing rates of descent, turning and various other techniques.

"The instructors told us that if a student can master the techniques required for HALO jumping while in the simulator, nine times out of 10 it will be a smooth transition during the descent phase at Yuma," Iggy says. "And, as you're not jumping Mac, it's unlikely the Kiwi's will do any damage to that percentage," he adds with a grin.

Next port of call after the simulator demonstration is to the rigging facilities at Fort Bragg, followed by a trip to the 82nd Airborne Museum.

Competing with yours truly in terms of spotting rights, Popey points out that, with such a distinguished name as his, the trip wouldn't be a success without a trip to the neighboring Pope Air Force Base, home to a number of C-130s and A-10 aircraft.

Reflecting on the tour thus far, over a beer at the Green Beret Bar, Iggy says it's hard to put a monetary value on what they have learnt.

"Y'know it's really opened doors and is something we'll seek to add to further as time allows.

"It's great to be able to interact one-on-one with our counterparts. We've worked

pretty closely with the Aussies before, but now we're starting to see how other nations work," he says.

Popey agrees, saying there are a lot of little things to the various techniques that he would take away.

For the PJIs, next port of call is the Yuma Proving Ground in Arizona, while the Mac-ster seeks out the intrepid 6 Hauraki museum team.

Reporting back on the success of the descent phase of their free-fall training, the PJI pair announce they have been presented with the coveted US Army's HALO wings.

STUDENTS MAY NOT EXPERIENCE THE FULL THRILL OF FLYING IN THE SIMULATOR, BUT THEY CAN, HOWEVER, PRACTICE SLOWING OR INCREASING RATES OF DESCENT, TURNING AND VARIOUS OTHER TECHNIQUES



"At Yuma we were able to see the transition into the practical application of the free-fall simulation training and get some jumps in," Iggy says.

"In addition to that, we were able to swap stories and ideas with a Dutch Special Forces officer who was the CO of their para school. So again, we're spreading our knowledge and contact base, which is what this trip is all about."

A chance visit to a civilian-run free-fall simulator in Eloy, Arizona, also turns out to be beneficial.

"The good folks at SkyVenture Arizona allowed us to use their virtual wind tunnel for some training, which was bloody great," says Popey.

"They were able to show us some more advanced free-fall techniques, one of which is known as the Mantis, which we may be able to incorporate into our Kiwi Blue display team repertoire."

A few weeks on, settled back at home, the pair reflect on the experience.

"Y'know, we talked about each half-hour to 45-minute flight being the equivalent

to say 45 or 50 jumps. Well, on reflection, in terms of learning experience for us, you could say it was worth about 300," Iggy says.

"That's because, in the simulators, you can rearrange things and start again. The only risks are, at worst, a broken arm or something, whereas in the air you make a mistake and it could result in a fatality.

"The whole trip was a great learning experience."

But it's not CONTACT readers the pair must convince in terms of the trip's validity. That falls to OC Parachute Training Support Unit Squadron Leader Darryn Pritchard.

So, on reflection, how does he see the trip?

"In terms of looking at the way other organisations run, it was a very worthwhile trip that allowed us to look at how our training at PTSU is carried out and ways we can improve," he says.

"It's opened doors for further opportunities working with other coalition partners, which will only improve our knowledge base and therefore improve our training delivery."

File photos - No Kiwis used

CAMP MACKALL

HOME OF A SPECIAL ELITE

WORDS KIWI MAC
PICS US SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Lying in full combat gear, you feel your body shaking – it's minus 2 Centigrade, and the wind isn't helping – but the discomfort helps you stay awake, waiting for an enemy that may not be coming. You wonder just what the hell you're doing here and ask yourself why you're not wrapped up nice and warm instead of freezing in this swamp.



Suddenly you hear something approach your squad's position. Despite the cold, sweat runs down your face, tickling your cam-creamed skin as you hear your heart pounding in your eardrums.

Suddenly you detect the signal, you tense up. An explosion rips the night apart. You fire at the movement to your front. Soon, the working parts of your M4 click on an empty chamber. Quickly, like a million times before, you change mags and spray the area to your front.

Then, as suddenly as it started, the green-painted spectres of death melt back into the bush and wait for dust-off.

But they're not fighting in the middle of Iraq – yet – merely testing new skills acquired on the 13-week Phase II of the Special Forces Pipeline.

Becoming a US Special Forces operator is no easy task, those with the responsibility of selecting and nurturing new recruits into tomorrow's Green Berets are the men of the United States Army John F Kennedy Special Warfare School based at Camp Mackall, North Carolina.

Before undertaking Special Forces selection, those new to the Army (18 X-Rays) or selected National Guard soldiers must undergo a 25-day SF preparation and conditioning course. Those who pass, join others from throughout the Army on the three-week Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) course. The SFAS cadre from Company B, 1st Battalion, USAJFKSWS, look at close to 3000 volunteers every year to determine who is and who isn't suitable for SF training.

A series of 12 attributes linked to success on the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) forms the basis of determining candidate suitability.

Those who make the grade move on to 17 days common leadership training followed by a 19-day Special Forces preparation course – light infantry skills and individual and collective combat skills, plus leadership, physical fitness and stamina enhancement, in preparation for the next phase – for the 18Xs.

Phase II is where the SFQC actually begins, a gruelling 13 week course conducted by Company C, 1st Battalion USAJFKSWS that



teaches squad-level tactics, Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA or 'A Team') combat patrols and supporting-warrior skills.

On a recent visit to Camp Mackall, CONTACT watched an 18-strong squad in the middle of phase II conduct a 24-page patrol-orders brief before setting off on an ambush. All those in the squad had previous service and over half had served in Iraq. Gone was any resemblance to the 'loud Americans' much lambasted in Kiwi and Aussie messes. Here instead were attentive, quiet soldiers much like their ANZAC counterparts, struggling to come to grips with the demands of the new world of asymmetric warfare.

I thought 24 pages for a patrol was a bit much, even for Special Forces, but then the school sergeant major points out that the

primary unit successful graduates will deploy to is a 12-man ODA led by an officer, backed up by a junior officer or Warrant Officer and comprising 10 specialist sergeants.

"They will be expected to liaise at company level with commanders and carry out training of groups up to battalion size. The OC and 2IC will be committed to training the command element and these guys will be it."

Reflecting on the training staff at Camp Mackall, I find that all are experienced NCOs with recent combat time in Afghanistan, Iraq or elsewhere. I was introduced to Mickey, a sniping instructor who, I was informed, had killed more people than cancer. But, while there's no room for nonsense, a sense of humour's a must – and an ability to chew tobacco or 'dip' would certainly help you fit in.

For those who make it through Phase II, Phase III awaits – military occupational specialty (MOS) skills training for 15 weeks, where specialist courses are incorporated with language and cultural training, SF common training, instructor training and interagency operations.

Specialties include:

> **18As Officer Course;** conducted by Company A, 4th Battalion, qualifying officers in the skills required to lead an ODA (Operational Detachment Alpha).

> **18B Weapons' Sergeant Course;** led by Company B, 4th Battalion, trains and qualifies NCOs in basic skills and knowledge required to perform duties as a weapons specialist on an ODA.

> **18C Engineer Sergeant Course;** also under Coy B, 4th Battalion, where NCOs learn basic engineering skills required of an engineer in an ODA. Pre-engineering subjects, field construction, fortification, land-mine warfare, bridging, engineer recon, target analysis and demolitions are all taught.

> **18D Special Forces Medical Sergeants Course;** this 48-week specialty course also incorporates block language courses. The Special Warfare Medical Group is responsible for all medical training at the Joint Special Operations Training Centre at Fort Bragg. The medical phase includes the 26-week Special Operations Combat Medic Course and a 20-week training cycle.

> **18E Communications Sergeant Course;** taught by Company E, 4th Battalion, where NCOs qualify in the skills required to work as an ODA communications sergeant. All aspects of the communication spectrum are taught using some of the most sophisticated equipment available to the US Army.

Once the MOS training is complete, phase IV consists of language training lasting anywhere from eight to 12 weeks depending on the language.

Before students head off on phase V, they complete the Unconventional Warfare Culmination Exercise ('Robin Sage'), a four-week exercise conducted by Company E, 1st Battalion, in and around the forests of North Carolina centred around Camp Mackall.

Robin Sage is a problem-solving field-training exercise conducted eight times a year where students put their hard-earned knowledge to the test.

The exercise puts the students in a variety of unconventional scenarios and pits them against conventional forces, and requires them to interact with inhabitants of the fictitious nation of Pineland. The exercise stresses realism as students try to train a mock guerilla force using real civilians from the surrounding community.

All their recently learned skills including languages are tested in adverse and ambiguous conditions – including those 0300hr ambushes in the freezing North Carolina swamps.

Phase VI – Graduation. Admission into the Special Forces Regiment takes place the day before graduation at JFK Plaza on Ardennes St, Fort Bragg. The Regimental First Formation is where graduates don the much-coveted Green Beret and Special Forces tab for the first time and are officially welcomed into the SF fraternity by the honorary Regimental Commander and representatives of their new unit.

Next day, a formal graduation parade officially recognises these new elite as special warriors in an exclusive martial brotherhood.



BLACK HAWK DOWN

WORDS BRIAN HARTIGAN PICS ADF

Yet another tragic helicopter accident has claimed the lives of two Aussie soldiers on operations when a Black Hawk crashed while attempting a landing on HMAS Kanimbla in international waters in the South Pacific.



while the family of one soldier had a much more frustrating wait. Trooper Joshua Porter, age 28, a soldier with SASR, was not recovered in the initial search and rescue and, after 96 hours of intense operations by Navy and RAAF assets, including an Orion P3C aircraft, was declared missing, presumed dead. Given the sea depth at the accident location, hope of recovering the aircraft, or the soldier presumed to be inside, seemed bleak. However, in what must rate as one of the most amazing maritime search and salvage operations ever undertaken – at least by Australian standards – the Black Hawk and its human occupant were eventually found and returned to the surface.

Trooper Joshua Porter was farewelled with full military honours at a private service, attended by family, friends and many past and present members of the Perth-based Special Air Service Regiment and the 1st Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment – Trooper Porter having served on operations with both units.

A Board of Inquiry has been convened, its task greatly assisted by the recovery of the aircraft and its flight-data recorder, and by video footage of the accident (all shipboard landings are video taped as a matter of routine) captured onboard Kanimbla.

HMAS Kanimbla, in company with HMA Ships Newcastle and Success were deployed near Fiji in preparation to ensure the safety of Australians on that island nation during the country's recent political crisis.

On 29 November, during a training flight, the Black Hawk helicopter from 171 Aviation Squadron, carrying four crew and six soldiers from the Special Air Service Regiment (SASR) crashed on the deck of the ship, fell over the side and sank in 2900 metres (about 9500 feet) of water.

Search and rescue operations commenced immediately.

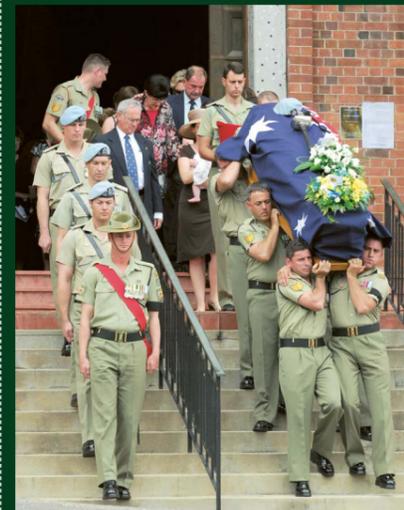
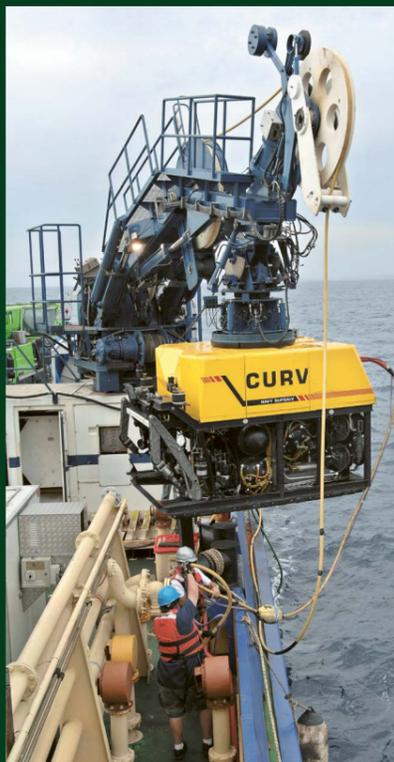
At the time of the crash, Kanimbla was stopped in the water, embarked divers having just completed in-water training. In support of the divers, ship's boats were in the water and Kanimbla's large stern ramp was lowered. As the Black Hawk crashed and sank in the immediate vicinity of the ship, the divers immediately re-entered the water to assist in the recovery of survivors.

The crash position was carefully recorded, using global positioning system (GPS) equipment and a man-overboard smoke/flare marker was deployed as a visual reference. This was replaced soon after by a danbuoy, a floating reference marker that facilitates tracking on radar systems.

HMAS Newcastle, which was some distance away, was ordered to immediately close at best speed and to launch her Sea Hawk helicopter, which is fitted with forward-looking infra red surveillance and sonar equipment.

Nine of the 10 personnel aboard the Black Hawk were quickly recovered from the water, however, Captain Mark Bingley, a pilot, succumbed to his injuries despite the best efforts of the specialist medical staff on board.

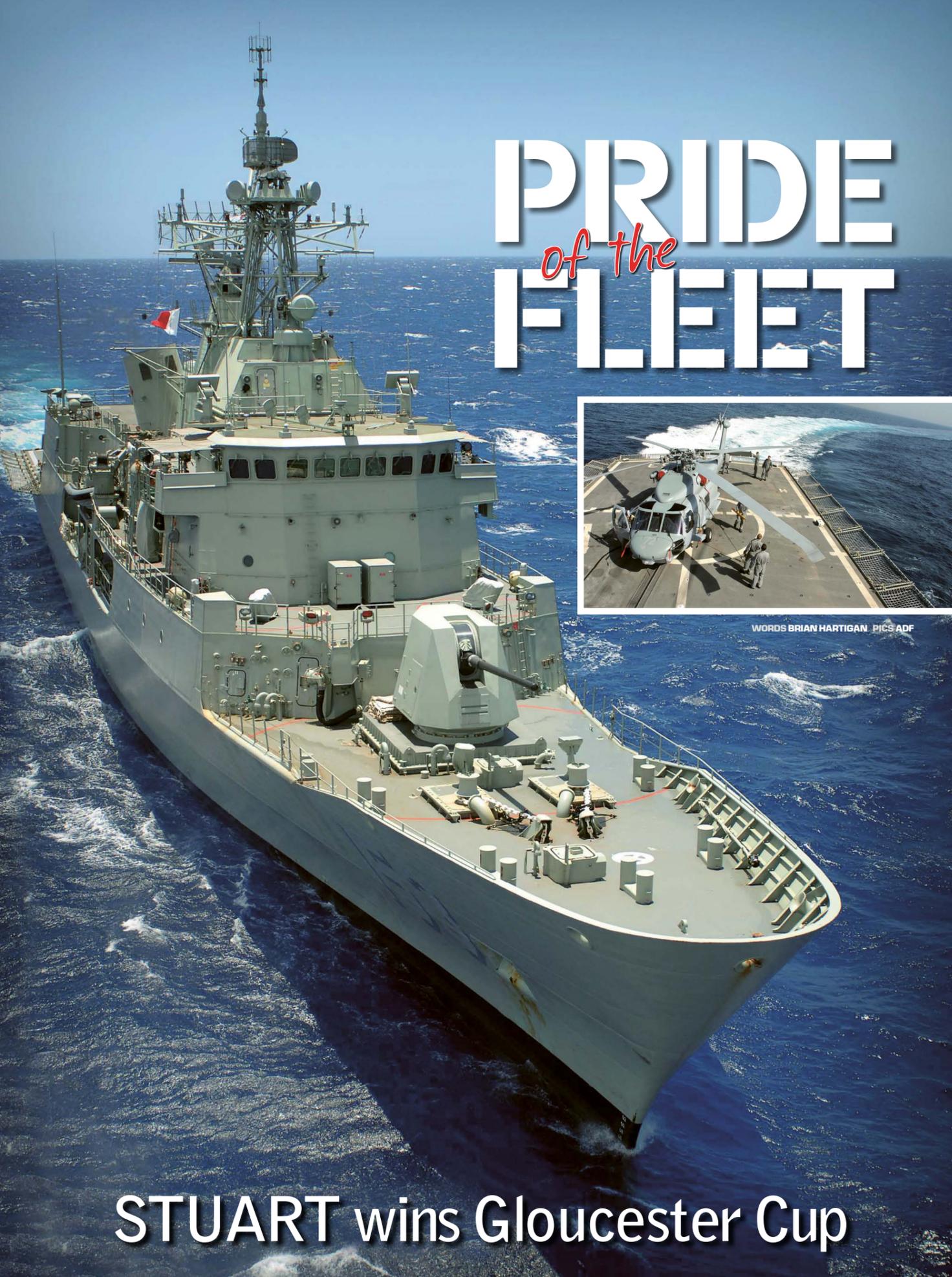
Seven of the crash survivors plus the remains of Captain Bingley were returned to Australia. Captain Bingley was buried with full military honours in Townsville little more than a week after the crash,



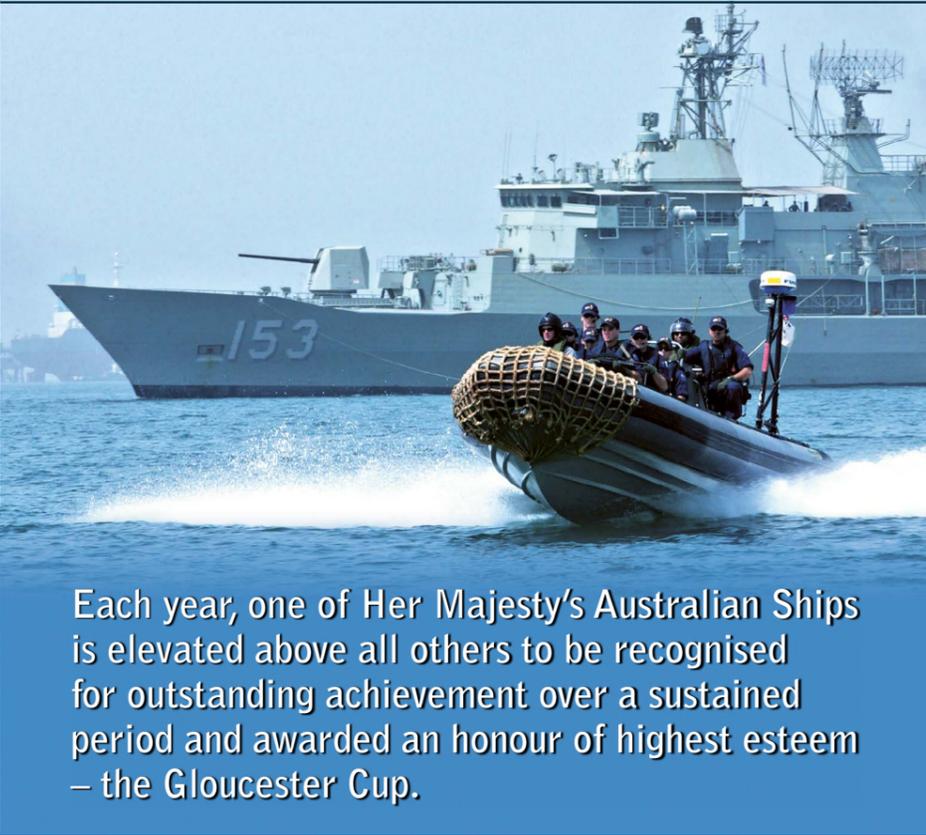
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PRIDE *of the* FLEET



WORDS BRIAN HARTIGAN PICS ADF



Each year, one of Her Majesty's Australian Ships is elevated above all others to be recognised for outstanding achievement over a sustained period and awarded an honour of highest esteem – the Gloucester Cup.

Instituted in 1947 by the Duke of Gloucester when he was Governor-General of Australia, the Cup recognises outstanding and sustained achievement in operational efficiency; husbandry and seamanship; supply and administration; crew training; morale, discipline and resourcefulness; systems and equipment reliability and maintenance.

While presenting the Cup at a ceremony in Sydney in February, Major General Michael Jeffery, Governor-General of Australia, said that the broad scope of the qualifying criteria demanded consistency across the board.

"Every department and each individual plays a critical role in achieving the level of excellence recognised in this award, for which every ship in the Navy undergoes a very thorough evaluation before the most deserving ship is chosen," he said.

"However, as we all know, it is not just the equipment that helps do the job, important as that is, but rather the coordinated, well-led, well-trained team that effectively uses that equipment.

"When a crew demonstrates teamwork, loyalty and dedication – as you have patently done in winning the Gloucester Cup – you do yourselves and the RAN proud."

The Gloucester Cup has been won by many superb ships over the years, including Quadrant, Vampire, Sydney and Hobart.

Major General Jeffery said HMAS Stuart joins these illustrious names for her tremendous achievements in 2006 during 137 days spent at sea.

THE GLOUCESTER CUP HAS BEEN WON BY MANY SUPERB SHIPS OVER THE YEARS, INCLUDING QUADRANT, VAMPIRE, SYDNEY AND HOBART.

"Amid eight participating RIMPAC nations, Stuart successfully conducted trials and firings of two Enhanced Sea Sparrow Missiles and one NULKA rocket after months of planning and training," he said.

"The favourable impression left by Stuart after participating in Exercises AUSTHAI and Bersamu Padu further enhanced Australia's relations with Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.

"Throughout her five-month deployment, Stuart continually upheld the highest standards of safety, training and reliability.

"Without exception, all tasks undertaken by HMAS Stuart and the ship's company in 2006 were completed with outstanding dedication, professionalism and commitment."

A soldier by profession, the Governor General said he was a great admirer of the Navy and – aside from currently living at Admiralty House – had quite a bit to do with the RAN over the years.

"For example, I sailed in HMAS Diamantina in my early SAS days, I returned from Vietnam courtesy of HMAS Sydney, and I spent a fair amount of time training with Oberon Class submarines."

Major General Jeffery said all members of Stuart's company had served their country well and earned the respect and admiration of their fellow Australians.

"I warmly congratulate everyone associated with HMAS Stuart – including, very importantly, the families who support you – and I wish you all the very best for the future."

HMAS Stuart, which is currently undergoing a systems upgrade in Melbourne, is one of eight ANZAC Class Frigates that serve alongside 16 other major fleet units and submarines protecting Australia's borders.



STUART wins Gloucester Cup



It's our turn.
JOIN TODAY
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Designed by Private David Eason, the winning poster in this year's Chief of Army's, Army Poster Competition, features an image of World War I veteran Marcel Caux resting before the ANZAC Day march in 2004, superimposed over a photo of a contemporary soldier on duty in the Middle East.

Private Eason is an Army Reserve supply operator at 8 Combat Services Support Battalion, Sydney. David also works as a lifeguard at the Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre at Homebush.

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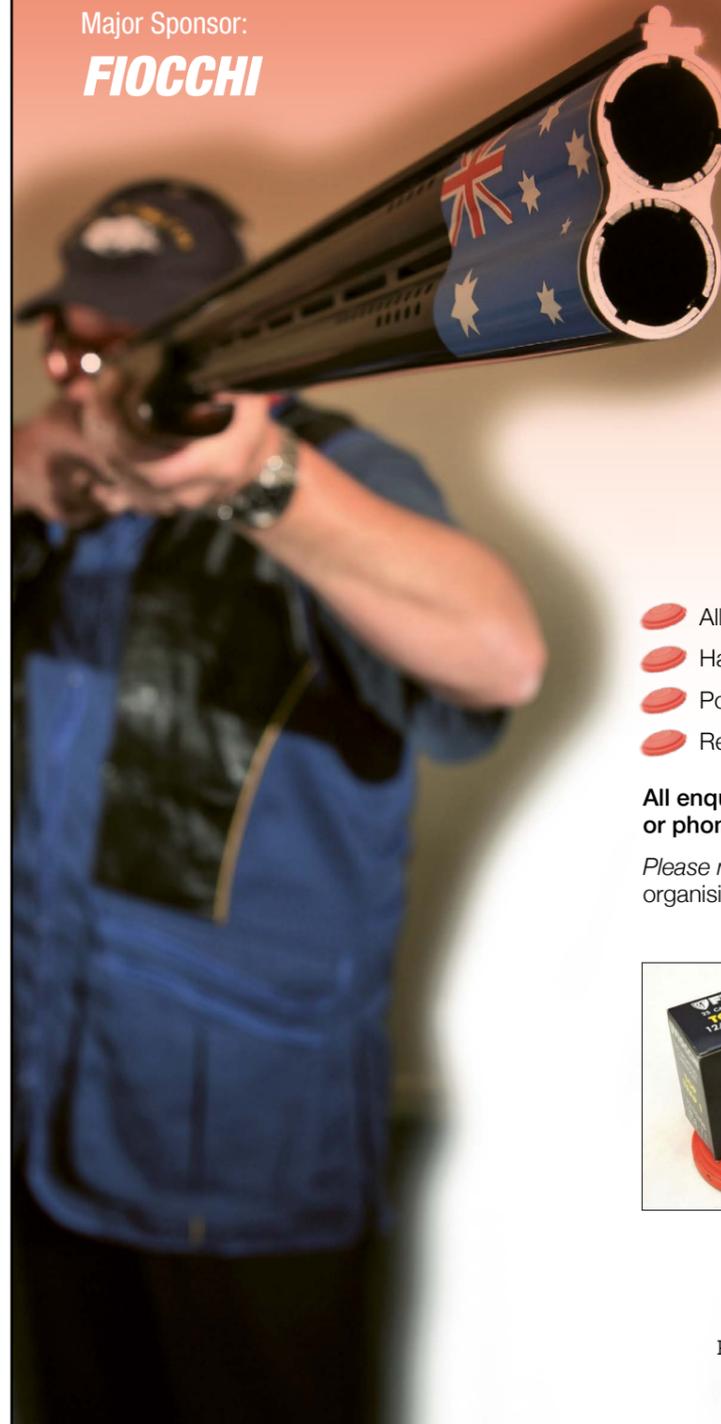
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Event 5	50 Target Handicap	Noms \$26.50
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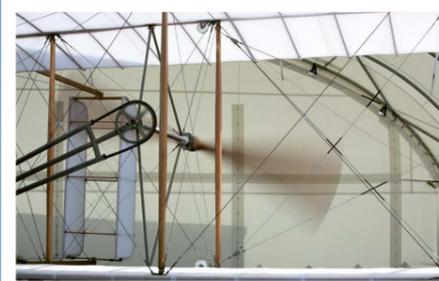
All enquiries to Matt Dwyer matthew.dwyer@afp.gov.au or phone 0402 310 943

Please note: This is a proposed program and the host organising committee reserves the right to alter it



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BREAKING THE BARRIERS



FROM WRIGHT FLIER TO THE RIGHT STUFF

WORDS AND PICS BRIAN HARTIGAN

The weather wasn't kind to the airshow this year, yet despite the multi-seasoned week, with huge winds, dust storms, high 30s to low 20s temperature variations and a few sprinklings of rain, this year's show saw record crowds pour through the gates. Sunday was particularly busy as the weather finally turned on perfect flying and viewing conditions.

And the crowds came.

Mostly they came for the flying – the romance, the spectacle, the noise, the smell and, above all, the wow-factor of one of the biggest shows on Earth.

The Australian International Airshow at Avalon is just that – international. Not only does it attract aviators and their machines from all over the world but, just as important, it attracts people from all over the world – people who for a million different reasons come to Avalon every second year to meet, greet and do business.

The show's reputation as a truly international event continues to grow also, with the two previous shows in 2003 and 2005 being voted 'best overall airshow for the year' by the world's largest aviation web site, the German-based checksix-online.com

This year, more than 30 official delegations from 22 countries were among the 40,000 trade-day visitors, while more than 650 registered media representatives covered the sights, sounds and news to come out of Avalon. Public-entry numbers from Friday afternoon through to Sunday are believed to have smashed previous records despite stiff competition from the Formula 1 and World Swimming Championships.

As a showcase, Avalon offers aviation and related industries an unparalleled opportunity to see and be seen, to keep abreast of industry trends and meet like-minded people, many of whom have big agendas and big budgets – none bigger than the Defence Materiel Organisation.

DMO has a projected budget of \$100 billion over the next 10 years with more than

half of that to be spent in the aerospace, electronics and related sectors. DMO, and the Australian Defence Force in general, had a considerable footprint on the larger-than-ever exhibition floor space at Avalon this year. It was no surprise then that many of the world's defence-focused companies, large and small, were on hand to talk up their own systems, platforms and ideas – 527 exhibiting companies to be precise.

For the second time, land systems were also showcased at Avalon at the incorporated and collocated LanDef2007 exposition, with Australia's new M1-A1 Abrams tank and a leading contender for the Army's self-propelled howitzer project, the PzH 2000, guarding the front gate. The sheer size and imposing stance of the Panzer in particular commanded so much attention that the smaller(!) Abrams directly opposite was often overlooked, even by some who specifically wished to check out our recently acquired main battle tank.

Other land-based vehicles, such as Bushmasters, Unimogs, Macks and Merlos were put through their paces on a rough-and-ready cross-country 'land-systems mobility area' demo track.

Back indoors, a 'Careers and Skills Showcase' was an important aspect of the weekend, designed to inform educators, career professionals, parents and students about the exciting career opportunities that exist in the aviation, aerospace and defence sectors and to provide useful information concerning the training and education pathways necessary for a career in these exciting sectors.

But, when all the talking is finished and all the showbags gathered, the main reason that thousands of moms, pops, kids and grandkids flock to Avalon Airport, south of Melbourne, is to see the planes. And see them they did. With 438 participating aircraft on the ground and in the air, there was plenty for everyone. On with the show...



C-27J SPARTAN – NO TRANSPORT IS SUPPOSED TO DO THIS!



A 40-SOMETHING YEAR OLD CARIBOU MAKES A QUICK PIT STOP

SUPER HORNET Australia's newest acquisition

In the hands of an expert, any weapon will perform to its full potential. In the hands of a master, however, the same implement seems to take on properties of performance that even its maker must be surprised by.

Boeing test pilot Ricardo Traven is such a master and, in his hands, the F/A-18F Super Hornet can soar to heights of performance that defy belief.

Emitting all the noise you would expect (and want) from a military jet, the Super Hornet cuts unbelievable lines through the sky.

Seeing is believing, but if you weren't there, believe me when I say Australia's new front-line strike fighter performed jaw-dropping manoeuvres normally reserved for aircraft with vectored exhausts. What I'm talking about is an ability to change direction in an unnaturally abrupt fashion – a bit like a racecar driver spinning the arse end of his car through 180 degrees using the power of his engine to break traction. This kind of excess power enabled Traven to perform a routine that left anyone with the slightest understanding of aerodynamics standing, gob-smacked, on terra firma.

For me, the highlight of his awesome routine was something I'd never seen before (or even heard of) – a square loop.

An aerial loop is when a pilot pulls the nose of his aircraft up, through the vertical, and around through a graceful backwards somersault until he ends up where he started. The square loop, however, is performed from straight and

level flight by pulling the nose abruptly upwards into a straight, vertical climb. At the top, he again pulls the nose abruptly over and commences an inverted straight and level run across the top, followed by a sudden vertical dive, before finally pulling the nose into the horizontal to close the 'square'.

In the above description, when I say 'pulls the nose' – I really mean 'kicks the arse' through the manoeuvre, using the huge flying tail surfaces and the inordinate power of the engines.

With the classic looks and form of its predecessor, the Super Hornet is truly 'super', no matter who flies it. Weighing in at nearly 3 tonnes heavier than its older brother, it can fly twice as far, carry a tonne more weapons and packs even more engine power than the F111 it will replace in RAAF service. On the down side, though, it comes nowhere near the fuel-carrying capacity and consequent range of the retiring 'Pig' – not without air-to-air refuelling anyway – something which will be on tap in the near future, though.

Projected program delays with the Joint Strike Fighter have cast doubt over whether the aircraft can be delivered before the F111 is forced to retire, so the Australian government has taken a sudden, recent, but not quite unexpected (see page 48 last issue) decision to bridge that gap by acquiring 24 F/A-18F Block II Super Hornets.

This program will cost approximately \$6 billion over the next 10 years and,

while the government says we can afford the expense, they also say we cannot afford not to buy it. The acquisition is seen as essential to ensuring our long-range air-defence capabilities are maintained between the retirement of the F111 and the eventual introduction of the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter.

The F/A-18F Super Hornet is a highly capable, battle-proven, multi-role aircraft currently in service with the US Navy and projected to remain in service until 2030. The next generation Block II Super Hornets to be acquired by Australia will provide a more flexible operational capability than currently exists with the F-111.

Selecting the Super Hornet as the interim aircraft also builds on the RAAF's understanding of our current fighter and should provide the flexibility to assign crews and technical personnel across a relatively common fleet.

The F-111 has been a stalwart aircraft at the centre of Australia's strike capability for more than 30 years, but the time is fast approaching when it will no longer be economical or safe to continue operations.

Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Geoff Shepherd, a pilot with around 2500 hours in the type, says it is important for Australia to retire the F-111 at a time of our choosing, to ensure that the men and women who operate them are not endangered through the risks of an ageing platform.

F-111 is expected to retire in 2010 with the first Super Hornets to be operational in the same year.

SURPRISE PACKAGE C-27J SPARTAN

There is one aircraft capability project that has stumped the ADF for years – that to replace the ageing DHC-4A Caribou, in RAAF service since 1964.

As far back as 1997, then minister for Defence Ian McLachlan took great pleasure in announcing a shortlist of companies that had a possible solution. Shortly thereafter, two companies responded to a formal request for tender under a project that would see the Caribou bow out gracefully in 2002.

Yet, here we are in 2007, with any serious replacement project off the radar and Project Air 5190 doing its best to keep the old war horse flying to at least 2010.

As if age wasn't bad enough, the poor old Caribou is also battling a shortage of spare parts, stocks of which were allowed to dwindle in anticipation of retirement.

And yet, she flies on, still capable of delivering cargo to remote, poorly-prepared or maintained runways like no other aircraft can – or wowing crowds at Avalon with her impressive short takeoff and landing capabilities.

One of the original contenders for the Caribou replacement, the C-27J Spartan from Italian company AleniaAeronautica, was also on show at Avalon – and boy what a show that put on!

Weighing about 12 tonnes in the skinny, and roughly the same dimensions as the venerable Caribou, the Spartan can pull off stunts no cargo transport was ever meant to do. With loops, barrel rolls and negative-g pushovers on her show itinerary, Spartan seriously impressed.

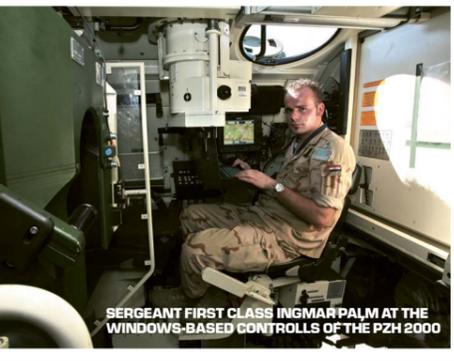
CARIBOU

Length: 22.12m
Wingspan: 29.13m
Height: 9.65m
Wing area: 84.7m²
Empty weight: 8283kg
Loaded weight: 14,198kg
Engines: 2 Pratt and Whitney R-2000-7M2
 Twin Wasp 14-cylinder radials
Power: 1450hp or 1081kW each
Maximum speed: 348km/h
Range: 2103km

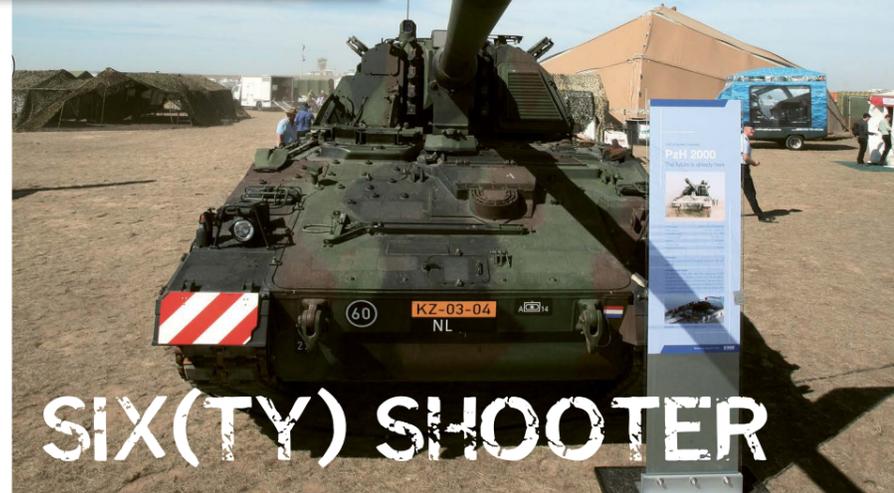
SPARTAN

Length: 22.7m
Wingspan: 28.7m
Height: 9.8m
Wing area: 82m²
Empty weight: 11,940kg
Max takeoff weight: 31,800kg
Engines: 2 General Electric T64-GE-P4D
 turboprops
Power: 3400shp or 2535kW each
Maximum speed: 540km/h
Range: 4685km





SERGEANT FIRST CLASS INGMAR PALM AT THE WINDOWS-BASED CONTROLS OF THE PZH 2000



SIX(TY) SHOOTER

In an impeccable piece of timing, the PzH 2000 from Krauss-Maffei Wegmann (in Dutch Army guise) was on hand as a central, and immensely popular, showpiece at LanDef2007 – the land-based military exposition run in conjunction with the airshow for only the second time.

PzH is on offer to the Australian Army to satisfy a central component of Project Land 17 (as discussed in detail in CONTACT issues #13 and #5). It is a tracked, self-propelled howitzer that offers armoured protection to its crew during all phases of operation – a key component of Land 17 selection criteria.

It is an imposing piece of equipment just sitting on display at an airshow. Most of us can only imagine what it looks and feels like in operation – but several Australian Army personnel did get a subsequent look at the beast in action when it deployed to Puckapunyal and Woomera for live-fire trials.

At LanDef2007, the Dutch crew from the 14th Artillery Battalion, were very accommodating in showing the rest of us through the vehicle. Sergeant First Class Ingmar Palm was a man passionate about his vehicle, showing it off with obvious pride.

The inner workings of the weapon-loading system were fascinating. The circular magazine in the guts of the vehicle looked very much like an overgrown chamber from a six-shooter revolver – except in this

case, the chamber holds 60 rounds, standing vertically.

On demand from the Windows-based computer at his commander's station, Sergeant Palm demonstrated the mechanical ballet that takes place in the 'chamber', under the floor and eventually swinging up to the open breach of the gun, with the shell ultimately pushed into the breach by pneumatic pressure – completely automated. The only physical effort required being from the loader who places the firing charge into the breach behind the shell.

"We don't do shit anymore", Sergeant Palm said with glee. "It's great."

PzH 2000 is capable of firing three rounds in 10 seconds and sustained fire at 10 rounds (up to 13 dependent on barrel heating) per minute. It has successfully test fired a projectile out to 56km using base-bleed ammunition (a kind of rocket assistance), however, this shot was limited by the size of the South African firing range. With plans to fire V-LAP ammo at Woomera, news of a new record is anticipated.

The vehicle is powered by an 181 V8 diesel engine producing nearly 1000 horsepower. It can travel at 61km/hr and has a range of 420km. It weighs 55 tonnes fully loaded or 49 tonnes for transport and can be deployed by C-17 Globemaster.

With the system deployed in support of Dutch and collocated Aussies in Tarin Kowt, southern Afghanistan, Australian soldiers have already witnessed the PzH 2000 in action on operations.

BREAKING THE BARRIERS

"Who's Chuck Yeager?" I was asked! And, in the interests of protecting the guilty (and my marriage) I won't say who asked me.

General Charles Elwood 'Chuck' Yeager was guest of honour at the 7th Australian International Airshow at Avalon – and was the first man to fly faster than the speed of sound, a barrier many believed couldn't be broken. But then, less than 45 years earlier, many thought heavier-than-air flight was a pipe dream.

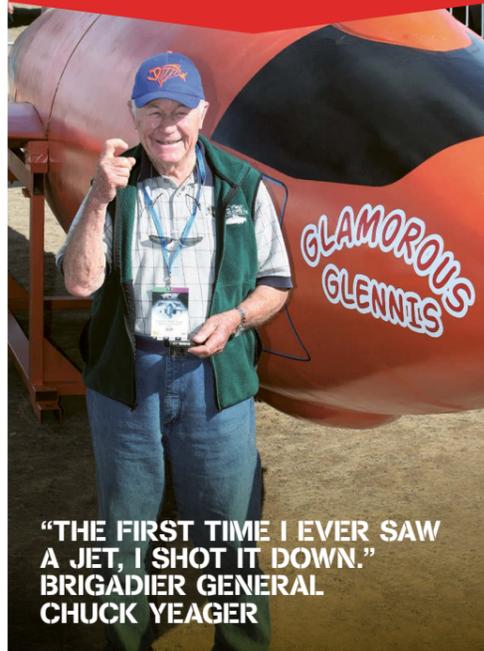
On 14 October 1947, Chuck Yeager flew the rocket-powered Bell X-1 'Glamorous Glennis' into the record books.

Dropping away from a B-29 Superfortress, he accelerated away and upward. Tentatively moving controls that had never been tested at such speed before, he accelerated to an indicated Mach 0.92 before levelling out at 42,000 feet. Lighting up the third chamber of the X-1's rocket engine, he accelerated rapidly to 0.98 Mach and then, at 43,000 feet, the needle on the Machmeter jumped off the scale.

Recounting the historic event, he told enthralled crowds at Avalon how he was surprised that the meter only registered up to Mach 1.0, given that his mission was to go that fast and more.

"I guess someone wasn't real optimistic," he quipped.

General Yeager officially retired from the US Air Force in 2002 – at age 80! His last flight was in an F-15 Eagle (though he still flies a P-51 Mustang privately). When he climbed out of the cockpit that day, he had accumulated a total of 10,131.6 hours in 180 different types and models of military aircraft.



"THE FIRST TIME I EVER SAW A JET, I SHOT IT DOWN." BRIGADIER GENERAL CHUCK YEAGER



NOW THAT'S JUST MAD!

In March 2006 the Australian Government announced it would acquire four C-17 Globemaster III aircraft. Just nine months later, the first of these aircraft touched down in Canberra to much fanfare, before heading north to its new home with No 36 Squadron at RAAF Base Amberley near Brisbane.

At Avalon, our first C-17 was on hand and open to public inspection, with capacity to shelter hundreds at a time from the fierce winds on Friday afternoon or the occasional shower on Saturday. Airborne demonstrations of the aircraft's impressive handling capabilities were left to the Americans, however.

At one stage during the week, a Qantas Boeing 747 was parked in close proximity to the hulking Globemaster, providing an interesting size comparison – the difference negligible, to my eye.

Globemaster will give the ADF a capacity it has never had before. Capable of carrying almost four times the load of a C130 Hercules the C-17 can carry it twice as far.

Each C-17 is capable of carrying five Bushmaster infantry mobility vehicles, or three Tiger helicopters, or up to 75 tonnes of equipment and supplies for emergency relief or operational sustainment.

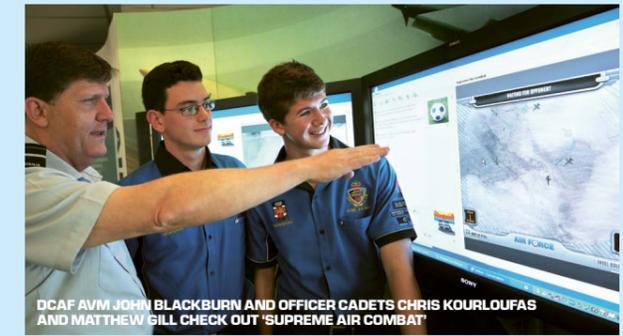
It can also deliver an Abrams M1A1 main battle tank almost to the front line, capable as it is of landing on relatively short, unsealed runways. The gravel strip at Tarin Kowt, in southern Afghanistan, for example, would not pose a problem for Globemaster.

As well as enhancing the responsiveness of the Australian Defence Force, the C-17 will increase Australia's independence, freeing us from the need to rely on leased aircraft or to wait in queues for American heavy-lift support.

Our first Globemaster – tail number A41-206 – has already completed a number of long-haul overseas assignments, returning twice to the USA this year in support of RAAF F-111s on deployment in Nevada for Exercise Red Flag.



C-17 GLOBEMASTER III DELIVERING BIG



DCAF AVM JOHN BLACKBURN AND OFFICER CADETS CHRIS KOURLOUFAS AND MATTHEW GILL CHECK OUT 'SUPREME AIR COMBAT'

RAAF TAKES COMBAT ON-LINE

Deputy Chief of Air Force Air Vice Marshal John Blackburn was on hand at the Defence Recruiting stand at Avalon to officially launch an innovative new on-line video game for the RAAF.

Called Supreme Air Combat, the game is played through MSN Messenger, a place where the youth of today 'hang out'. Air Vice Marshal Blackburn says it makes a lot of sense to take the game and the Air Force message to where young people are, rather than expecting them to always hear the message delivered through more main-stream means.

A turn-based game, Supreme Air Combat is a multi-player, fast-paced, decision-making game played over the Internet.

Officer Cadet Matthew Gill, a future RAAF logistics officer, says the game is kind of like the old 'Battleship' where players have to maneuver to take out an opponent. But with four F/A-18s to command, turns limited to about 20 seconds and not being able to see what move an opponent is about to make, he says it also has a feel of chess about it.



BEST OF BRITISH

"One of the best-kept secrets in the British Army". That's how the officer in charge of the Export Support Team contingent at Avalon describes the unit he works for.

They're a team of 10 regular-army soldiers (from a unit of 31), all trained instructors and all with operational experience, whose job it is to attend military trade shows around the world to promote British-made products.

Maintaining market share as the second largest defence industry in the world is obviously very important to the British government so, in what we Australians might call a whole-of-government solution, the army gets involved as subject-matter experts, talking up the value of buying British.

"We act more or less as a shop window, if you like," Captain Dick Taylor says, "and, when a potential customer shows an interest in what we show him, then we hand over to a company representative to make the sale."

The unique initiative is not always about guns and tanks and sharp-end stuff (though the soldiers can expertly talk on those subjects equally). At Avalon, it was all about the little things we see every day, but pay little attention to – ergonomic shovels and brooms, for those 'rock-painting' days around barracks; HESCO Bastion Concertainer – when you want to build a new barracks on the front line; i-storm – powerful floodlighting in a suitcase; Manpack – military man-portable satellite communications terminal; Blighter – man-portable ground defence radar; and, a host of other 'everyday' items used by men and women in uniform.

For the soldiers involved, it's hard work – not! World travel (business class, of course) and five-star hotels. But, do they like it? Is it a sought-after posting? Well, given that some of the soldiers at Avalon were in their third or fourth years in a two-year posting, I'm guessing they do!



HAVE YOU EVER DREAMT OF OWNING YOUR OWN JET? WELL NOW YOU CAN.



Javelin from ATG, at less than US\$3million, may not be as out-of-reach as most serious pilots might have thought.

Capable of high-speed cruise at 500 knots, with 1000 nautical mile range and rated to +6/-3g, it is quite a capable machine.

With two seats and capacity for 90kg of luggage/cargo it is not an impractical machine either.

Think of the fun you could have – not to mention the bragging rights!

While most of us don't have a spare \$3million to splash out, here's your chance to win your very own Javelin – or at least an executive model of one to stand on your boardroom table! Tell us in 50 words or less how jet ownership might change your life and you could win a cool, scaled model, courtesy of Danair Aviation, your authorised Javelin dealer in Australia (visit www.danair.com.au for sales enquiries). Send entries to editor@militarycontact.com – remembering, Ed likes wit. Entries close 15 Oct '07.

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FOREIGN COMPARATIVE TESTING PROGRAM

BY JOHN C ANDREADAKIS II
CONTRACTOR SUPPORT, CENTURUM
TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS, THE PENTAGON

Picture this – a United States Army soldier is deployed overseas on Operation Enduring Freedom, on a joint mission with coalition forces. As he engages the enemy, he notices a coalition partner with a piece of equipment that really makes a difference. He wishes his Army had that piece of gear and wonders, “What would it take to get that into service?”

Well, the Pentagon has an office that can help US warfighters to rapidly get their hands on superior foreign equipment and technology they see while serving with friendly foreign forces around the world.

The answer is the Comparative Testing Office (CTO) at the Pentagon, which manages the Foreign Comparative Testing (FCT) program.

From bullets to bombs, aircraft loading equipment to nanotechnology, the FCT program provides funding to buy articles for testing and covers the cost of the test and evaluation of the foreign equipment.

FCT gives the US warfighter a way to acquire needed assets within a relatively short timeframe. Candidate projects are submitted annually by June with funding normally released by mid-October. Most projects take between just six months to three years (depending on the item and restrictions) including the time to test, procure and field the equipment.

With a two-year test-to-procure goal, the FCT program saves time, money and effort compared to lengthy traditional acquisition cycles.

Since its inception in 1980, the Foreign Comparative Testing program has funded more than 528 projects with \$932 million, resulting in procurements in excess of \$6.7 billion. \$55 million dollars has been awarded to the USAF over the past 20 years, resulting in procurements in excess of \$1 billion.

Through the FCT program, all US defense services are afforded an opportunity to leverage allies’ technology, and

Examples of successful Foreign Comparative Testing programs

NEXT GENERATION SMALL LOADER:

The USAF had a requirement for a 25K aircraft cargo loader. Two foreign sources were identified with the potential equipment to fulfill the requirement. Following FCT evaluation, the US Air Force eventually purchased 261 Halverson Cargo Loaders from Static Engineering of Australia and its US partner, in a program valued at US\$187 million.

HIGH-MOBILITY ENGINEERING VEHICLE:

This project evaluated candidate high mobility excavators developed by ADI Australia and Daimler-Chrysler of Germany. The US Army’s Tank Automotive and Armaments Command conducted a test program at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, in 2001. The Australian candidate, teamed with Oshkosh Trucks, was selected for procurement. An initial production contract for 40 excavators (with an option for 22 more) worth US\$11.2 million was awarded. This FCT project resulted in an estimated development cost avoidance for the Army of \$5 million, and accelerated fielding time of five years.

20MM REPLACEMENT ROUNDS:

The USAF 20mm rounds had been condemned to ‘emergency use only’, because of misfiring in the chambers, putting USAF pilots and aircraft at risk. Two foreign sources were identified to fulfill this shortfall, and were tested in accordance with DoD standards and requirements to identify the best replacement rounds to fill the USAF stockpile. German company Diehl was successful and now supplies 20mm ammo for all cannon applications, such as in F-16s, pictured right and opposite.



SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1980, THE FOREIGN COMPARATIVE TESTING PROGRAM HAS FUNDED MORE THAN 528 PROJECTS WITH \$932 MILLION, RESULTING IN PROCUREMENTS IN EXCESS OF \$6.7 BILLION

provide the warfighter with much-needed equipment, quickly. Each service has a program office dedicated to supporting FCT. The efforts of each office allow the program to grow stronger and gain support and interest from warfighters and foreign vendors alike. Representatives from each of the services attend major international air shows – including Avalon – as well as conduct industry tours of various nations, looking for equipment that could satisfy the needs of airmen, soldiers, sailors and marines.

Successful FCT projects result from world-class foreign defense items produced by allied and other friendly countries, strong US-user advocacy and support, a valid operational requirement, and solid procurement potential. Many FCT projects have reduced the total ownership cost of military systems, cutting overall acquisition and support expenditures while enhancing standardisation and interoperability, improving allied cross-service support, and promoting international cooperation and interoperability.

The USAF has always played a major role in the FCT program by identifying allied and friendly nations’ resources as a solution to US capability shortfalls.

There is also a complementary domestic program to FCT called the Defense Acquisition Challenge Program (DACP), the purpose of which is very similar, but focused solely on getting domestic US solutions rapidly to the warfighter.

More information on the Foreign Comparative Testing (FCT) program is available at www.safia.hq.af.mil/fct

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CHOCS ON OPS

RESERVISTS GO IT ALONE

Tuesday mornings are usually fairly routine for Andrew McDougall. After checking emails, the apprenticeship consultant picks up the phone and begins to make appointments with different employers for his clients. But today is different. Today Private McDougall has an F89 machinegun to clean and oil before his section sets off for another morning of patrolling south along the western coast of Malaita in the Solomon Islands.

WORDS SAM EASTWOOD PHOTOS SUPPLIED BY SAM EASTWOOD

Pivate McDougall shakes hands with the smiling locals who have gathered to farewell the soldiers and thank them for staying overnight in their community. Andrew McDougall is no Clark Kent nor Tyler Durden, but he is one of 103 Army Reserve soldiers serving in the Solomon Islands on the largest Reserve-led deployment since World War II.

The Army Reserve is no stranger to operational deployments, with the feats of the 39th Battalion along the Kokoda Track standing at the fore of Army Reserve service to Australia.

Today, Reserve soldiers and officers are deployed in almost every operational theatre in which the Australian Defence Force has a presence. However, these have largely been in roles to bolster the already present ARA.

Combat Team Southern Cross (CTSC) deployed to the Solomon Islands on 2 January 2007 to begin rotation 11 of Operation Anode. Serving as the Coalition Task Force military element as part of RAMSI, CTSC is a Reserve formation working alongside platoons from New Zealand and Tonga providing security to RAMSI's participating police force.

The company is made up of 103 Reserve soldiers from 25/49RQR and 9RQR from south-east Queensland. These diggers have placed their civilian lives on hold to serve a six-month continuous-full-time-service (CFTS) contract that includes two months of pre-deployment training, 97 days in country and further time in post deployment activities back home.

The role played by the Army in the Solomon Islands is just one cog in the very complicated and extensive machine that makes up RAMSI. CTSC spends most of its time conducting joint patrols with Australian Federal Police officers and other members of the participating police force from around the Pacific. Each platoon from CTSC also spends up to three weeks outside the capital, Honiara, conducting provincial patrols to remote parts of the country. While the situation on the ground is much more secure than in the Middle East, the 2006 April riots and renewed violence in East Timor serve as constant reminders of the dangers of complacency in this part of the world.

After two days of stomping in the mountains, 3 Section is starting to feel the effects of blisters and niggling muscle injuries. Young men nervously place one foot

in front of the other as they half step, half slide their way along the steep bush track.

Clutching his Minimi light support weapon at the rear of the file is Private Javier Aguirre. The Bolivian-born digger is surrounded by six kids from the previous village, eager to help their hero down the treacherous mountain.

Nicknamed 'Speedy' by his army mates – a reference to his Spanish accent, like the cartoon character Speedy Gonzalez – Private Aguirre sweats like crazy as he brushes past jungle vines. He is thinking how wonderful it will be to find the graded road at the bottom of this ridiculously slippery and steep track, when his right boot suddenly fails to grip the muddy decline and he goes crashing down the hill into the scrub. Bare-footed children giggle hysterically as they tend to their exhausted friend. They each grab a part of his pack and, at the count of three, hoist Speedy back to his feet, much to the amusement of his section mates.

Thanks to the focus on the new 'Hardened and Networked Army' the Army Reserve is undergoing a process of rapid evolution. Gone are the days of Reserve soldiers preparing for

World War III one weekend a month, two weeks a year. Weekend training is placing a new emphasis on the realistic low-level scenarios soldiers may encounter in an operational environment. The current overseas duties of the defence force mean the possibility of Reserve soldiers being sent on real operations is no longer a far-fetched dream.

The Army has always cast a wide net in recruiting Reservists, calling on people from all walks of life to join the Defence Force for the 'part time of their lives'. Working together as infantry on this deployment is a who's who of Australian society

ranging from tradesmen to white-collared professionals.

A well-tapped source of recruitment over the years has been university campuses, with students seeking a little tax-free cash and something exciting to do over the summer holidays.

Private Reece Simmons from Charlie Coy, 25/49RQR, is one such student. The 27-year-old has taken a break from an International Business and Commerce degree to go on his second deployment to the Solomon Islands in as many years.

"It's far more interesting in the Army than it is at uni," he says.

"You meet such a wide span of people. It's funny how you have uni students and bums without real jobs working alongside professionals who make heaps of money – but they all do the army for something different."

Private Simmons says the chance to serve on overseas operations like Op Anode makes the Army Reserve an attractive way for students to earn while studying.

"I don't mind doing the training, but like anyone, I want to put it into practice. You'd never meet a doctor who studies for eight years but never gets to put his skills to work on a patient."



THE ARMY HAS ALWAYS CAST A WIDE NET IN RECRUITING RESERVISTS, CALLING ON PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE TO JOIN THE DEFENCE FORCE FOR THE 'PART TIME OF THEIR LIVES'

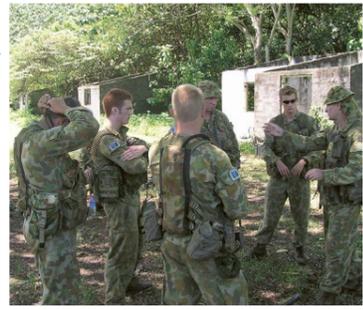


In direct contrast to the students and employed tradesmen and professionals is the emergence of a new demographic of Reserve soldier. Dubbed by their peers as 'full-time chocs,' this new breed of digger is between jobs in civilian life. They compensate for this by performing additional Army Reserve work, relying on general duties and short-term CFTS contracts for financial security.

One such digger who wears the 'full-time choc' tag with pride is 23-year-old Private Michael Robinson from Charlie Coy, 9RQR.

"I used to do Reserves with my full-time job, but then I went on an eight-week general-duties contract before my trip to Rifle Company Butterworth.

"I stopped working at that time because the money from Reserves was just enough



shade and laugh as Private Murray tries in vain to control the rampaging kids.

"It's a combination of touch, rugby league and gridiron with a hint of cricket I believe," he reports to his laughing mates.

Private Tyson Murray, a 23-year-old shearer from Bombala, New South Wales, says moments like these are the most rewarding aspect of the operation.

dramatic difference between Reserves and their ARA counterparts.

"In Reserves, the most you usually bond with other soldiers is during a two-week course or exercise," he says.

The flexible nature of the Army Reserve means soldiers are constantly working with new people. These unions usually last until the conclusion of the exercise, and the cycle starts again.

Spending three months in country, on top of pre-deployment training in the same section with the same soldiers is a radically new experience for part-time diggers like Private Tolhurst.

"We are working in a far more intimate environment for seven times longer than anything we have ever done in the past," he says.

IN HIS THREE YEARS AS AN ARMY RESERVE RIFLEMAN, PRIVATE ROBINSON HAS PARADED MORE THAN 100 DAYS EACH FINANCIAL YEAR – THE MAXIMUM ALLOWED

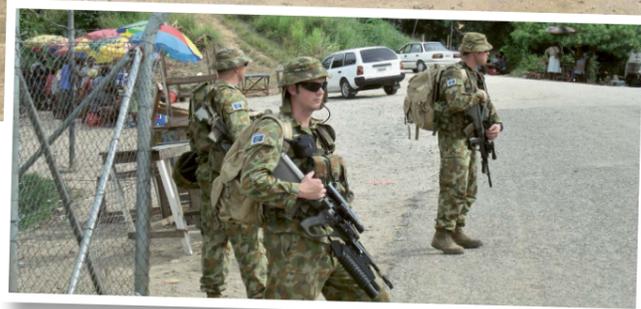


to pay my rent and the army offered so much more satisfaction," he says.

In his three years as an Army Reserve rifleman, Private Robinson has paraded more than 100 days each financial year – the maximum allowed. It was therefore no surprise he was one of the first to put his hand up when the call came for volunteers for Op Anode rotation 11.

A group of curious children approach the newly arrived soldiers as they dump heavy packs onto the soft green grass. Aware of the attention, Private Murray reaches into his pack and pulls out a small touch football. He gathers the children around him and, using a mix of English and his best Pidgin, begins to educate the excited bunch on the rules and regulations of touch football.

Five minutes later, the game is on! It's boys versus girls and the regulations, painstakingly dictated by Private Murray, are thrown out the window. The ball flies around uncontrollably as the mob of new touch footballers run every which way, squealing in delight. Two soldiers sit in the



"Going into remote villages and spending time with the people is great. At the end of it all you go to bed each night knowing that you have made a positive difference to their lives."

Deploying more than 100 Reserve soldiers is no easy task. 25/49RQR faced a mountain of dental, medical, pay and other administration issues most ARA deployments wouldn't normally encounter.

On top of the administrative hurdles, Reserve soldiers face a number of personal difficulties while on operations.

The sudden change from civilian employment to operational service creates new obstacles as soldiers attempt to adapt to the closeness of battalion life.

Private Ben Tolhurst from Bravo Coy, 9RQR, recognises this as the most

"Getting along with everyone is the biggest challenge. But, we're all here for the long haul trying to make it as pleasant as possible."

As Private McDougall starts moving towards the road, an elderly man stops him and shakes his hand.

"Thank you so much for helping us. Please tell your people back home that we need people like you here to help us make a strong country without trouble," the old man says, in heavily accented English.

As the section waves its final goodbyes to the villagers, Private McDougall grins as he thinks of the Reserve soldiers back home who he knows will be more than willing to help this troubled country heal in the next few years.



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ANZAC DROP STRENGTHENS BOND

WORDS: KIWIMAC
PICTURES: KIWIMAC AND WO2 RALF JAEGER

The opportunity to participate in ANZAC Day celebrations alongside trans-Tasman comrades was a major highlight for five staff from the ADF's Parachute Training School attending Exercise Tasman Canopy.

The Nowra-based staff were in New Zealand attending the nine-day parachuting symposium, discussing new trends in parachuting and putting them into practice.

Held from 21 to 29 April the overlap with ANZAC Day was no accident according to the RNZAF's Flight Lieutenant Brent Iggo.

"We were sent three dates the Aussies would be available and once we noticed one of the periods included ANZAC Day, there was no other option but that one," he said.

Because the RNZAF's Parachute Training and Support Unit's jump into Whangamata had been so well received in 1999 the unit decided it would be fitting to jump into the town again for this year's commemorations.

Major Leigh Shepherd, OC Development Wing at PTS, was delighted to be able to incorporate ANZAC Day into the exercise proceedings.

"I've done nearly 28 years in the Army, 11 of them at PTS, and to be able to jump and then parade alongside the Kiwis in New Zealand is a real highlight.

"We had No 2 Squadron RNZAF based with us at Nowra for a while a few years back and so we got to parade with the Kiwis at home, but this is something special," he said.

Operational requirements meant numbers attending this year's event were down on previous exercises, with just five PTS staff attending compared to the 25 two years ago.

The deployment of RNZAF C130s to Timor either side of ANZAC Day also meant not all the combined staff were able to jump,

as a smaller aircraft had to be hired for the event.

Weather also conspired against the event with fog delaying takeoff from Auckland's Whenuapai airbase by two hours, consequently delaying Whangamata's parade by the same margin. But, such was the novelty of the event previously that RSA president Bill Watson said the committee was more than willing to adjust their schedule.

"We held the march and our service, then everyone went down to the school and watched the paratroopers come in, before everyone came back to the RSA to hold the wreath-laying ceremony," he said.

WO2 Ralf Jaeger from PTS said that once they flew over the Coromandel Hills, the clouds broke up and they had a perfect view of the Whangamata coast.

"It was great to be able to jump into the town and the crowd's response was terrific," he said.

A wreath was laid at the RSA cenotaph on behalf of the RNZAF and the Australian Army by Officer Commanding PTSU Squadron Leader Darryn Pritchard and Sergeant Peter Hallam from PTS.



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SOME DAYS!

Despite having spent the past four months in what at times seemed like the twilight zone, there were still other days that left you in a flat spin. One particular day late in our tour ended up being very strange indeed, though it started out quiet enough.

WORDS WAYNE COOPER PICS ADF AND COOPER COLLECTION

My driver had developed a reputation within 23 Section as a bit of Sally-homemaker and a clean freak. He took great pride in keeping our vehicle as clean and ordered as possible and, under the circumstance, this was no easy task. And while I pissed and moaned a little when I was unceremoniously ejected from my own vehicle, I was really quite grateful I had such a fastidious driver.

This is not to say Pete was any sort of mother hen. On the contrary, in every other regard he was about as blokey a bloke as you'll ever meet. He just had to have things clean and tidy and would tell the philistines in his section just what he thought of their lack of vehicular hygiene if the subject came up.

"Fuck off back to your own cesspits you heathens," he would growl when his fellow crewmen made a disparaging remark about his penchant for cleanliness.

"Don't listen to them Reevesy," Micky P replied on one occasion.

"You'll make someone a great wife one day – oh wait, you already have," he said nodding at me.

Pete took all this with usual gruff good humour. Neither the ribbing from his mates, nor the futility of trying to keep the interior of an APC clean in the middle of the Somali desert ever really got him down. But what he found in the sponson of our vehicle this particular day put a considerable dent in his humour.

I was sitting outside on a ration tin reading my mail when I heard Pete start to swear. While this was not unusual behavior for my eloquent driver, it was immediately obvious that he was more than just a little unhappy about the dirt befouling his pride and joy. And, as he emerged from the back of the carrier holding a small, dark, metallic object I also had a serious sense-of-humour failure.

For a moment, I sat there slightly stunned. I couldn't quite comprehend what I was seeing. Pete held in his hand a decrepit old Egyptian hand grenade.

What's the big deal you may ask? Soldiers handle grenades all the time don't they?

Well yes, but anyone who has had anything to do with grenades knows that even the most carefully designed models can be temperamental little devils at the best of times. While fuse-type grenades were by no means foolproof, they weren't particularly unstable in the safe condition. But even the most stable forms of explosive munitions should never be allowed to roll around making metal-to-metal contact in the same storage compartment that housed a vehicle's batteries.

IN SOMALIA, SOME DAYS YOU
WOKE UP AND WONDERED
WHAT PLANET YOU WERE ON

M

y APC troop was carrying out operations with an infantry company out in the extremities of the Australian AO. After a morning spent unsuccessfully searching some of the smaller outlying villages in the area, for bandits and contraband, we met up with a re-supply convoy to get loaded up with fuel, rations and water. We had come to cherish the resups for the chance of some fresh (-ish) food, maybe a warm goffa, and the best prize of all – some mail from home.

After passing through the line of tankers and stores trucks, my section peeled off and took its place within the troop lager. We had been informed that we had an hour or so to stow our stores and have a feed before moving on. With the grunts dismounted and seeing to their supplies in their own hide, Pete and I decided to give our vehicle a bit of a clean out.

Now, when I say we decided to clean our car, I really mean Pete decided to clean and I got out of the way.

And what made this discovery particularly alarming was that this type of grenade was a percussion-fired weapon. This meant that it detonated when the grenade impacted with sufficient force to fire the mechanism. Even with the safety pin attached it was definitely not the type of thing you want bashing around inside an armoured vehicle while it bounced around at speed.

So, some idiot grunt had left this thing rolling around in our vehicle for who knows how long. As I held the battered and rust-pocked device in my hands I pondered the consequences of a grenade exploding in the crew compartment of an armoured vehicle. It wasn't a nice thought.

I suddenly felt very weary. 'Some days you should just stay in bed', I thought to myself. Of course, if there is an old Egyptian hand grenade rolling around in it you

on board. As we approached a remote road across the expanse of a dusty plain, a bus made its way up from the south. We were due for a break, so the section went through its well-practiced routine and arranged itself in a defensive hide and de-bussed the infantry before switching off. As the grunts dragged their packs from the backs of the APCs, the bus, still some 300 metres away, began to slow down as it approached us.

Initially there was nothing particularly suspicious about whomever it was on the bus being curious about seeing four strange armoured vehicles out in the middle of nowhere. We were still quite a novelty for those Somalis that had not encountered foreign troops. On this occasion, though, things got a little weird from the get go.

As I watched from my turret, the bus

up to. As we approached, the people in the bushes ran back to their vehicle.

Pete steered our vehicle toward the road and, as we mounted the bitumen, I traversed my turret around to the left so that my .50cal and .30cal machineguns pointed straight at the bus. We placed our M113 in the middle of the road making it virtually impossible for anything to get past without going cross country to do so.

As we brought our vehicle to a halt, I noticed a smoke plume from the back of the bus. The driver had started the engine, which was a strange thing to do in the circumstances, as I thought we had made our intentions pretty clear.

Pete began to lower the ramp as the bus started to move. It took me a moment to grasp what was happening. As the grunts began to step down the ramp, the bus accelerated toward us.

I took a sight picture on the driver – over the 20-or-so metres between us, I couldn't miss

My initial thought was to get in behind my machineguns and prepare to give him a burst of .50cal across the bow. The flash and crack of the big gun thumping over the top of the bus should convince him to reconsider. But if he didn't stop, I wouldn't have time to use any other weapon and I would have no other option but to use the machinegun on the bus itself. This would almost certainly cause casualties other than the driver. Even a burst of the smaller .30cal would make a mess of a soft-skinned vehicle and possibly pass through to hit my comrades on the other side of roadblock.

he intended to build up speed and swerve around our APC and leg it up the road?

One way or the other I was going to have to stop him. We had been told to search the bus and this idiot was not only risking his own life, and the lives of his passengers, he was a serious threat to the infantry on the ground. Suddenly the true meaning of catch 22 became quite clear to me.

If I did nothing, at best, the bus and its now very suspicious occupants could get through the road block and we have a foot race with a wheeled vehicle our old M113s

to shoot this man I felt a calmness come over me. It was not the Zen mastery of some pulp fiction action hero, but an impassive resolve that I had really not expected.

As soldiers, we all ask ourselves – at the decisive moment, will I be able to kill another human being? While all this nonsense was going on in front of me, in some detached part of my brain, I was still asking myself this question. But when I got my answer, the realisation was startling.

The world seemed to close in on me as my vision was filled with the small circle and cross hairs on the driver's blue shirt. Time slowed down and I could only hear my own heartbeat as I pushed the safety catch across with my thumb. I breathed out, and the small circle settled in the middle of the target's chest.

I started to apply pressure to the trigger with my index finger. In my peripheral



should probably find somewhere else to sleep.

We reported the discovery to my troop sergeant who was only slightly less impressed than we were. He promised to take it up with the infantry company sergeant major, but we had carried two different companies over the course of the operation, each with several platoons moving through our vehicles at various times – so we didn't expect much of a result. As much as Pete and I would have liked to have had a quiet word, the culprit was unlikely to ever be discovered.

This staggering act of stupidity had put me in a black mood. It was one thing to take your chances with the enemy, land mines and disease, but to have your life put at risk by the thoughtlessness of one of your own was quite bewildering. But, as the afternoon wore on, this would not be the most perplexing event of the day.

That evening, 23 Section was trekking cross country with an infantry platoon

pulled up next to a copse of trees and several men hurriedly disembarked the vehicle and ran into the nearby scrub. I watched the men disappear into the bushes and wondered at first if they were just taking a toilet break. But the fact that there only seemed to be men getting off the bus was a little strange, and their actions appeared to be quite urgent.

I wasn't the only one that had noticed this odd behavior, as the word soon went round from the infantry platoon commander to mount up and make our way over to the bus and check it out. The grunts climbed aboard again and we quickly ramped up and set off toward the road. As we closed in on the bus, Moose gave some quick orders to the section over the radio.

23A was to move in behind the vehicle and I was to block the road in front of it while 23 and 23B covered the flanks. The infantry would get out and search the bus and try to establish what its occupants were

At first I thought the driver was just moving his vehicle closer to where we had pulled up, but it soon became apparent that this was not the case. It dawned on me that the driver was attempting to either go around us or make us get out of the way. But we weren't moving, so this situation was not going to end well for him whatever happened.

Several thoughts ran through my head in quick succession. First and foremost was, 'What the fuck is this guy thinking?' He couldn't seriously be trying to get away from us could he? Next was a quick summation of my options, none of which were particularly attractive.

My first responsibility was to protect my crew and passengers. If this madman was actually playing chicken with us he was going to lose one way or the other, but by trying to go through or around us he was putting everyone on the ground and still in the vehicle at risk. I was going to have to do something.

The only real option was to stand up in my turret and take aim with my Steyr. I stood up with my rifle in my right hand and waved furiously with my left. But the bus continued to pick up speed and draw closer to my vehicle.

I raised my rifle and gripped it with both hands. I still couldn't believe this fool was not stopping. I took a sight picture on the driver – over the 20-or-so metres between us, I couldn't miss. The driver looked as if he was averting his eyes from the road, and was deliberately looking away from the bemused young crew commander who was about to put a bullet in his chest.

"What the fuck is this clown doing?" Pete asked in dismay over the IC.

'My thoughts exactly' I mused as my heart began to race and I went over my options again. I didn't really think he would drive into us, it was not a course of action that would result in anything other than the bus coming to an abrupt halt and the driver receiving a face full of M113. Perhaps

couldn't win. At worst, the bus cleans up some of the infantry who were dismounting the vehicle. But the real dilemma was that if I shot the driver it became a self-fulfilling prophecy as the bus was likely to go out of control and hit us or the grunts anyway.

The situation was coming to a head too quickly for me to ponder my options any longer. The driver refused to look up, as if by avoiding eye contact he could somehow claim ignorance of our intentions. Right or wrong, in that instant I made up my mind – he was a dead man.

My rationale was that if I shot him before he got much closer, or picked up too much more speed, there was a fair chance the bus would rapidly decelerate, giving us and the infantry a chance to get out of the way. This was definitely the lesser of two very bad options. But above all else we were trained to make decisions, and for better or worse, I had made mine.

What happened next surprised me, and still does. The instant I decided I was going

vision I could see the driver's head move. He looked up and so did I. The bus started to skid. I released the trigger and gasped.

All this had happened in the space of a few brief seconds, and the infantry were still dismounting my vehicle when skidding alerted them that something was up. As the bus came to an abrupt halt, the grunts burst into action. With weapons at the shoulder they surrounded the bus and, in seconds, the driver was face down on the bitumen with a rifle barrel in his ear.

I started to feel nauseous. What was he thinking? Had he intended to stop all along? Did that mean I was about to kill him for no reason?

As the search of the vehicle and nearby bush revealed no weapons, the driver's actions became even more baffling.

I sat in my vehicle later that afternoon trying in vain to make sense of it, hoping Pete wouldn't see my cigarette shaking between my fingers. But, some days you just wondered what planet you were on.

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BY DON STEVENSON

FIGHTING FIT

Avoiding common injuries

Let's face it, the military is a high-risk job, even when you aren't deployed. Long hours and hard physical work can take their toll and often lead to muscle, bone and joint injuries.

While some injuries, such as broken bones from falls, can't be prevented through prior physical conditioning, the risk of developing several common overuse injuries can be reduced with proper physical training before engaging in military training and operations.

This issue, we'll look at three injuries common to military personnel and look at the training you should do to avoid these annoying or even career-ending injuries. In a future issue, we'll look at specific strategies for maintaining your fitness if you are unlucky enough to get hurt and have to work around an injury.

Number 1 – Shin Splints

One of the most common requests I have is for a program to develop fitness while suffering from shin splints or other leg pain. Of course the best way to work around shin splints is to avoid them in the first place!

Shin splints normally occur when someone who hasn't run much for a few months or years begins to pound the

pavement in preparation for a fitness test or because they are about to join the defence force. 'Shin splints' is a blanket term for a number of painful conditions and you should always get your condition properly diagnosed by a doctor or physio. However, from a fitness/training perspective the recommendations are all pretty much the same.

Avoiding shin splints

Build up slowly. If you haven't run for a while, don't start doing 5km or 10km every day. Run 3 to 5km two or three times a week and increase your volume steadily over four to six weeks. **Get new shoes.** Even if your runners look fine, if they are more than 12 months old, or you wear them all the time, the cushioning will have compressed and they won't be absorbing the shock of landing on hard surfaces as well as they used to. Go to a reputable sports-shoe store and ask to try on a few pairs of shoes.

If possible, take a few pairs out for a run. If you have flat feet or orthotics, make sure your shoes are suitable for your foot type.

Run mostly on soft surfaces.

The human body really wasn't designed to run long distances on concrete. Try to do most of your running over grassy areas without too many trip hazards. **Limit your total running distance.** You don't have to run to develop good fitness and, if you have feet issues, old injuries or you are heavier than average, you should aim to limit your weekly running and develop your fitness through crossfit training, kettlebell workouts or alternatives such as rowing.

Number 2 – Lower Back Pain

It amazes me that despite the amount of heavy lifting and pack marching that is part and parcel of military life that so little time is devoted to lower-back strengthening in PT sessions. A strong and fatigue-resistant back is your best defence against both acute lower back injuries and chronic pain.

To strengthen your back, I suggest that heavy deadlifting should be incorporated into every fitness program. The deadlift is the number one exercise for developing posterior chain and core strength and its benefits extend well beyond the lower back, to the legs, arms and grip. Add three sets of five reps of deadlifts to your weights workouts and your lower back will thank you!

For developing endurance in the lower back, kettlebell swings are my first choice. Like

the deadlift, the kettlebell swing gives you a great return on your time as they develop lower-back endurance, leg power and cardio fitness all in one hit. Throw them into your circuits or perform multiple sets of 20-50 reps with short breaks between sets.

Balance your lower back training with some odd-object lifting for all-round core strength, and some ab work, and chances are you'll avoid chronic lower-back pain long after everyone else is hobbling around to the doctor.

Number 3 – Shoulder Injuries

Shoulder injuries in military personnel are often a result of an overemphasis on chest training (whether push-ups or excessive bench pressing), a lack of back work to balance the chest work and poor shoulder flexibility.

To develop strong, stable and healthy shoulders, try the following:

- Turkish get up with a dumbbell or kettlebell – this is an ideal prehabilitation exercise that strengthens all of the small muscles that stabilise the shoulder during primary pushing and pulling exercises.
- Balance pushing with pulling – if you are working on your bench-press or push-up numbers that's fine, just don't forget to add an equal or greater amount of pulling work such as chin-ups and seated rows so that your chest doesn't overpower your back and you end up with a tight shoulder girdle.
- Stretch! – stretch your shoulders and chest after each upper-body workout and aim to develop your flexibility to the point where you can perform proper overhead squats with a light bar or broomstick.

For more information on any of these exercises or advice on program design and training, contact fitness@octogen.com.au

Physical Training and Military Self Defence

Military Self Defence (MSD) presents unique requirements for Physical Training. PT for MSD must adhere to the basic conditioning principles of specificity, progression, overload, adaptation and recovery. The result should be individual or group programs that adequately consider the starting fitness level of participants and the energy system requirements of MSD in the context of the soldier's progression along the physical training continuum.

BY MAJOR TRAVIS FAURE

STARTING FITNESS LEVEL

Soldiers should develop an appropriate base level of physical fitness before specific MSD training. This will ensure that avoidable injuries do not occur as a result of excessive fatigue or core instability. The Army Basic Fitness Assessment (BFA) is a good guide to the achievement of this base level. The push-up test demonstrates some basic muscular endurance and core stability and the 2.4km run demonstrates a basic level of aerobic conditioning. Soldiers should continue to develop their aerobic fitness, muscular endurance and core stability as part of any program incorporating MSD-specific PT.

ENERGY SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

The energy system requirements of fighting and training as part of MSD must be considered in developing appropriate PT. Fighting is generally extremely high in intensity and typically short in duration. To be effective in fighting within a military context, a soldier must have the aerobic conditioning to work at a low intensity for long periods and the anaerobic conditioning to handle interspersed periods of high intensity when the fight is needed. Often a fight may require the soldier to function beyond the initial burst of energy provided by the creatine phosphate system and draw upon the lactic acid system.

SPECIFICITY

PT for MSD must be sure to employ both specific exercise and more general exercise to provide the soldier with rounded physical development. Specific PT for MSD develops the appropriate physical dimensions of the soldier for the fight. This means the use of exercises, drills and activities within PT which are either similar to movements used in fighting or develop the appropriate physical traits required in the fight.

The physical traits required in the fight are primarily good power, good

muscular endurance, and a high lactate threshold. Army PT provides a good platform for the development of these traits. Specific movements used in fighting are generally fast movements of the limbs, trunk or hips incorporating explosive rotation with strong core stability. Many activities we already do in PT, train these movements. PT for MSD should simply increase the specificity and intensity as appropriate for the fight.

PROGRESSION AND OVERLOAD

The body needs to be challenged to adapt and respond. This challenge can be achieved in PT by increasing resistance, volume of work, or intensity. When considering overload in regards to PT for MSD, the same basic rules apply. The sessions should have a realistic start point given the soldiers' ability and progress through manipulation of one variable at a time to safely and effectively achieve improvement. For example if a circuit incorporating MSD-specific drills and exercises is included in a PT program, then the time for each exercise station may be increased with sensible progression, or the difficulty of the exercises may be increased, but generally not both at once.

RECOVERY AND ADAPTATION

Recovery is required in order for the body to rebound from training and to allow adaptation to take place. Inadequate recovery can lead to injury and slow the soldiers' physical development. Recovery can be achieved in PT for MSD quite easily by alternating the high intensity MSD-specific sessions with other general PT of lower intensity or focused on development of different physical dimensions. For example, if you conduct a physically demanding PT session for MSD, concentrating on developing muscular endurance, power, and/or lactate threshold on one day, the following day you may schedule a light pool session or a long, slow distance



run for recovery. High-intensity sessions should generally not be conducted on sequential days.

CONCLUSION

PT for MSD should adhere to the basic conditioning principles of specificity, progression, overload, adaptation and recovery. Individual or group PT programs for MSD that adequately consider the starting fitness level of participants and the energy system requirements of MSD will contribute to the soldiers' MSD capability. PT for MSD should focus on the development of soldiers' power, muscular endurance, and lactate threshold with strong base-level core stability. PT for MSD must also consider the soldiers' overall progression along the physical training continuum.



IL2 STURMOVIK: 1946

Ubisoft

www.pacific-fighters.com

PC

IL2:1946 is not a new game. Instead, it is a compilation of the complete *IL2* catalogue with an additional 32 new flyable aircraft, a selection of paint schemes, new ground objects and about 200 new campaign missions – including new alternate history campaigns.

While the description might sound old hat, don't let it detract from the sheer brilliance Oleg Maddox and his team have built into the program. Since its release in November 2001, *IL2* has reigned supreme in the world of WWII air-combat simulation, and despite several attempts, no one has been able to get on Maddox Games' six.

The greatest thing about *IL2's* long history is that although it has been heavily tweaked over several releases and upgrades, it retains essentially the same coding. This makes *IL2:1946* immensely playable across a range of systems, unlike many of the latest simulations that require the modern equivalent

of a Cray supercomputer to get a plane in the air.

Maddox and Ubisoft have also embraced the modding community, resulting in thousands of skins, missions and third-party aircraft to expand the game. With the *IL2:1946* release, however, it will be a long time before any virtual pilot actually goes hunting for a mod.

The new *IL2:1946* also lets virtual pilots explore an alternative history through the introduction of several aircraft that never saw combat during the war. Some of Luftwaffe X-Planes and weapons systems such as first-generation guided missiles make an amazing impact on a fleet of bombers through their stand-off range and accuracy. It really does pose questions about the outcome of the war if Germany was able to sustain a level of industrial strength (and was not receiving orders from a loon).

The included campaigns and single missions are amazingly detailed, but with the selection on offer, the quick-mission builder offers the best intro to the game. Simply select something to strap into, hit the start button and launch into the wild blue (or drizzly grey if it's over Europe) yonder.

IL2:1946 is without doubt the most comprehensive WWII (and a bit after) air combat simulation available. Maddox's team is currently working on the next generation, but they will be hard pressed to beat the venerable *IL2*.

Score: 5/5

GAME REVIEW

SILENT HUNTER: WOLVES OF THE PACIFIC

Ubisoft

<http://silenthunter4.us.ubi.com/index.php>

PC

It takes a special breed to be a submariner – no fear of claustrophobia, an innate trust in the vessel and the rest of the crew, a fetish for black overalls and, of course, a belief that happiness is a weekly shower. Thankfully the latest iteration of Ubisoft's sub-surface stalk-and-kill simulation can be paused to allow for fresh air, a hot shower and regular screenings of *Das Boot* for inspiration.

Sapper Gameboy played his first submarine simulation, *Silent Service*, way back in the days of the Commodore 64. Massive increases in computing power since then have allowed whole oceans to be mapped, hundreds of vessels to churn up the surface, graphics that belong on a Hollywood blockbuster and an enemy AI that does more than just want the player and their sub dead – it wants them crushed like an aluminium can at the bottom of the ocean.

Yet for all of these increases, the basics of *Silent Hunter: Wolves of the Pacific* have not changed all that much (although apparently it was possible to model a whole warship with just eight



pixels in 1985). Engine and weapon-system management, navigation, target selection and stalking tactics are still the basis of the game.

Silent Hunter: Wolves of the Pacific, as the name suggests, focuses on the Pacific campaign at the height of Japanese aggression. The simulation puts the player in command of a variety of US Navy submarine classes, from the small, nimble and underarmed S-Class through to the deep-diving Balao Class. The majority of the action, however, occurs within the mainstay of the US Navy's silent service – the Gato Class attack sub with its 10 torpedo tubes and a 76mm deck gun.

A key feature of *Silent Hunter: Wolves of the Pacific* is the multi-play capability. Although dedicated Australian servers are non-existent, they can be ordered for specific periods from major service providers) sliding beneath the waves against three other budding naval captains is a great experience. On a LAN, up to eight players can throw tinfish at one another. There is a level of taunting in a multi-play session that is just incomparable to fighting against the AI (as good as it is).

On initial release, serious simmers heavily criticised the game but, true to recent form, Ubisoft have responded well and released two comprehensive patches – a must-install before embarking. Unfortunately, copyright issues mean some historical inaccuracies can't be rectified (don't panic – you're not forced to let the US Navy take credit for capturing the enigma machine).

As in real life, becoming an accomplished virtual boat skipper is not for everyone. The game accurately reflects the long qualifying period (which can be sped up) and the intense and nerve-racking combat, but it takes a lot of time, patience and skill to rule below the waves.

3.5/5

COOL COMBAT BOOTS

Thanks to Cool Kit Australia, CONTACT has a pair of these very cool, US military combat boots to give away.

To enter, tell us in 50 words or less why you desperately need these boots (humour works best). Send entries to editor@militarycontact.com before 15 July.

The winner will be contacted by Cool Kit to discuss your exact size needs.

The M390 is the latest in US-designed lightweight combat boots. This boot follows on from the Type II Tropical Desert Boot, first produced for the 1991 Gulf War and is now the issued hot-weather boot for the US Army. With the latest Vanguard sole, this is a light-weight boot that provides excellent shock cushioning and energy return with a vastly increased sole life.

Features:

- > Vanguard sole with 'Running Sole' technology.
- > Re-soleable Vibram outsole.
- > Removeable polyurethane innersole.
- > Cambrelle lined heel cup.
- > Padded comfort collar.
- > Plastic coated brass speed lacing.

This great prize is valued at \$270 including GST and postage within Australia.

If you don't win this fantastic competition, why not visit www.coolkit.com.au and order your own pair – or select from their huge range of other great styles and sizes.

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON ADVANCED WARFIGHTER II

Ubisoft

<http://ghostrecon.uk.ubi.com/graw2/>

X360

It is always hard to switch between console and PC gaming. I reviewed the original *Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter* for PC in issue #11 and gave it very high marks. For the successor, *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter II (GRAW2)* the X360 was my only option as the PC version is yet to be released.

As expected, the Ubisoft team have taken a great game and enhanced several of the individual concepts within. The tactical UAV now takes on even more importance and is key to identifying threats over the next rise. The use of this micro-UAV allows for far



more tactical game-play as opposition patrol paths are noted and key installations reconnoitred before breaking cover, guns blazing.

GRAW2 also introduces a ground-based unmanned vehicle with smart navigation as a mobile Q-store. The MULE can be called forward to resupply ammunition, provide specialist weapon systems or, if it all goes to clag, provide much-needed cover.

GRAW2 also rectifies one of the key deficiencies from the first title in the series. Discarded or fallen-enemy weapons can now be retrieved and used, greatly expanding options and player survivability.

Like all Tom Clancy-endorsed games, *GRAW2* introduces a range of new weapons systems. Unlike previous titles, *GRAW2* has

range and individual levels of survivability no longer count.

With several dedicated Australian servers, *BF2142* offers a level of gaming addiction not experienced since the original *Command & Conquer*. This addiction would not be possible without great maps, weapons and vehicles, but mostly it is about raising stats and gaining unlocks. Each on-line game (as long as a player achieves something) adds points to a character. Gain enough points and a new unlock is available.

Points are gained through simple tasks such as killing the enemy, but also by using specific skills such as heading team-mates, providing supplies or commanding squads. Much to the dismay of Mrs Gameboy, sessions eclipse day and night and destroy weekends at our place.

BF2142 offers the now-standard conquest-style game-play with opposing sides slugging it out for strategic points. It also introduces a fantastic new style of play that takes the tactical battle into three dimensions. *Titan Conquest* requires not only the capture of ground-based

focused on a boutique range of systems rather than the generic concepts of what's on the horizon. According to the *GRAW2* team at least, 4.6mm and 6.8mm are the rounds of the future.

The storyline continues the Tom Clancy crew's obsession with a separatist movement in Mexico encroaching into the US, but adds the threat of lost nukes to the mix. Game-play is so similar to the previous it could be considered an expansion pack if it wasn't for the amazing detail in the graphics. *GRAW2* pushes the X360 graphical options to their limits and the results are breathtaking. If an excuse to purchase a high-def digital TV was needed, *GRAW2* is it.

GRAW2 offers enough tweaks, enhancements and game-play challenges to warrant purchase – the visual appeal seals the deal. A great enhancement on an already near-perfect product.

Score: 4.5/5



BATTLEFIELD 2142 AND NORTHERN STRIKE EXPANSION

Electronic Arts

www.battlefield.ea.com

PC

I never really got into the *Battlefield* series despite the breadth offered. The game's interpretation of historical or modern combat never really gripped as there was no sense of realism in the game-play. The latest version however propels the franchise 150-odd years into the future where realism as we know it no longer applies and all of those things that niggled – such as weapon effectiveness,

strategic points, but also the domination of a large airborne assault platform – the Titan. This concept in particular allows those with a more defensive playing style to sit back and swat the opposition from the sky, while those who love to run and gun will feel at home as they launch onto the Titan's deck and assault into the bowels of the ship.

The *BF2142 Northern Strike* expansion, available as a download from EA for about \$15, adds some new equipment and several new maps to the mix. The EA team have even modernised the famous "Bridge Too Far" map from the early *Battlefield* games for *Northern Strike*. Although relatively new, there are already dedicated Australian servers for the expansion and, with the option for more unlocks, awards and promotions, original *BF2142* players have embraced the new package.

If lost hours are the mark of a good game *BF2142* is truly great – Mrs Gameboy will attest to that.

Score: 4.5/5

High beam

Just released from Silva Sweden is the super-powerful LX model head light, with an impressive 75m beam length from its 5-watt Luxeon™ LED.

It comes with a rechargeable NiMH battery that can be worn on a belt, in a pocket or in a backpack leaving the headlamp, including headband, at a feather-weight 73g.

Four light modes can vary the intensity to suit any application. The battery is designed to last up to 50 hours in power-save mode.

The lamp (distributed by Macson Trading on (03) 9489 9766) is waterproof, comes with a two-year warranty and is available from leading outdoor adventure shops.

GIVEAWAYS

With thanks to the Ubisoft team, Sapper Gameboy has a *GRAW2 X360* faceplate and t-shirt to giveaway. Usual deal – 25 words or less to editor@militarycontact.com by 15 August. Last issue's winners will be announced on our web site.

KOMPRESSORZ HALF-QUADS



Thanks to BSc Body Science Australia, CONTACT has three Half-Quads compression shorts (as favourably reviewed by Don Stevenson in issue #13) for serious athletes to give away.

To enter, tell us in 50 words or less how you believe BSc Body Science compression shorts would assist your training regime.

Send entries to editor@militarycontact.com and include your preferred size (check sizes at www.bscompression.com). Entries close 15 July. The Editor's decision is final, in all giveaways.

THE ANZACS – GALLIPOLI TO THE WESTERN FRONT

Peter Pedersen

The Penguin Group

Reviewed by Christopher Jobson

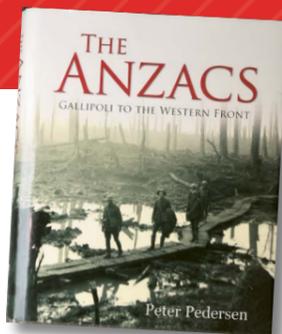
In 1916, at Fromelles, Private Charles Johnson of the 56th Battalion AIF was killed and later that same year, on the Somme, his parents were to lose a second son, Frank. Neither bodies were ever identified and they are now a part of the roll of the Unknown. Some 90 years later, the great-nephew of the two brothers, Peter Pederson, has written a book on the war that devastated the family of his great-grand-parents; a book of which the Johnson brothers, and indeed their parents, would have been proud.

The ANZACS joins a long list of books dealing with The Great War, however, this publication is, in many ways, unique. Where a large majority of publications before have focused on the actions, thoughts and reflections of senior officers, *The ANZACS* looks at the war through the eyes of soldiers from all ranks. This cross-section of perspectives provides both a strategic understanding of the campaigns, while capturing the visceral, emotive essence of the horrors suffered by individual combatants. In doing so, *The ANZACS* attempts, generally successfully, to describe the

distinctive culture of the ANZAC forces which stood them apart from other allied forces.

Against this balanced context, the book also avoids a pitfall endemic in books of this kind – it is not an unadulterated tribute to the ANZAC legend. The book examines some key strengths and weaknesses of the ANZACs while dispelling a number of myths that persist to this day. One, for example, was the fabled reputation for ill-discipline and contempt for British officers. This common misperception is placed in context by Pederson's observation that the ANZAC diggers' distribution of contempt was rather more equitable than legend would have it – they directed their disrespect to any officer, British or Australian, who they felt deserved it.

Morale, an important aspect of a soldier's culture, is regarded by Pederson, not as an independent and permanent feature of the 'Australian character', but as a more attributable result of the ANZACs' preparedness, or not, for the conditions in which they fought. ANZAC morale fluctuated; dictated by a number of aspects including the cold European weather, which few had ever experienced before, and the need to adjust the fighting styles developed at Gallipoli, to the vastly different demands of the Western Front. Importantly, Pederson acknowledges the training and rehearsals undertaken by the ANZACs prior to their engagement in



the Gallipoli and European campaigns. In so doing, he offers an insight more scientific than legendary, into the morale of the ANZACs.

The range of the book is reflected in its coverage of small but important matters such as the origin of the acronym 'ANZAC'. The national commanders thought the title *Australian Army Corps* was unfair to the New Zealanders and General Birdwood, the British general commanding the force, thought the adjusted title, *Australian and New Zealand Army Corps*, was too long for telegraphic purposes. The term 'ANZAC' satisfied both the need for diplomacy and for brevity.

The ANZACS maintains a realistic narrative through the inclusion of extracts from diaries and personal letters. This feature, together with a good number of clear and informative maps, and a magnificent selection of well-captioned photographs and prints, would have made a compelling publication even without the well considered prose Pederson offers in support.

If there are faults with the work they relate to imbalances in the treatment of a number

of the featured soldiers, and a bias towards Victoria Cross recipients. In some cases the background of a particular soldier is well documented (Lieutenant General Monash's past career is, for example, covered over three continuous pages) while with others it is assumed that the reader is fully conversant with the soldier in question (characters such as Private Simpson and Brigadier General Ryrie are introduced through short, introductory phrases). Despite otherwise balanced treatment, Pederson also appears to succumb to the allure of valour, with a focus on Victoria Cross recipients at the possible expense of 'ordinary' soldiers with more interesting if less courageous stories which may resonate better with the reader. Nevertheless, these small flaws detract little from the overall quality of the book.

Peter Pederson's *The ANZACS – Gallipoli to the Western Front* is a balanced, accessible and well-researched account of Australian and New Zealand soldiers throughout the major campaigns of The Great War. In time, this book may well become foundational to those seeking to understand the ANZAC culture, as well as the facts surrounding their involvement in The Great War.

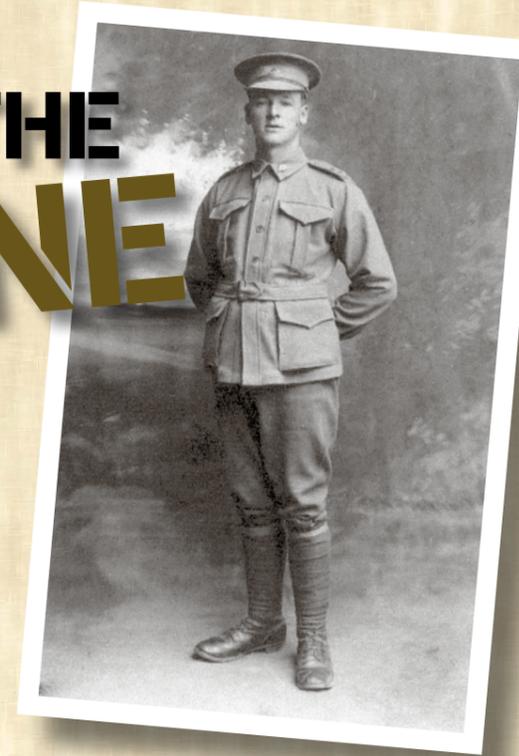
Christopher Jobson is a former warrant officer of the Australian Regular Army whose postings included RSM 3rd Brigade and RSM Ceremonial & Protocol.

Terms and conditions

We envisage that stories can be of various lengths between 300 to 3000 words. They should be personal accounts of single incidents or whole campaigns. They can be serious or humorous. Our current, long-running Somalia series is a very good guide to the desired style and tone. Not all stories will be published. Submissions will be considered on merit. The best stories will be published in the magazine, while other good stories may be published on our web site. All submissions must be in electronic format – call the editor to discuss technical requirements. Ten per cent of all profit from this publication will be donated to Legacy. No fee will be paid for submissions whether published or not (other non-monetary rewards will be announced later).

HENRY WRIGHT

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT LINE



In his letter from the School of Musketry in England, dated 16 April 1918, Henry continues a light-hearted tome to his mother. This letter gives us an insight to the economic affects of war on the common people of England with food shortages, elevated prices and restrictions on the finer things in life. It also points to the fact that, perhaps, for his family back in the 'lucky country', things may not have been so harsh. He also postulates on the progress of the war in Europe, in language that must surely reflect a naive optimism – which, ironically, may have been of some small comfort in the events that were to play out for Henry in the following days...

Well dear Mother, what do you think of this big German offensive? Old Fritz is winning ground off us now wholesale but I am sure by the time this letter reaches you, the news will be of the Allies pushing old Fritz to blazes. The Allies will sweep old Fritz back to Germany and completely crush his military power to nothing. This French General, Foch, will strike soon and there will be hell to pay.

Germany is absolutely starving, our fleet have blocked all means of her getting foodstuffs from any neutral country and she has only her own land to harvest from. What a grand time it will be when it is all over and we get back again to dear old Aussie. You cannot imagine how the dear old place appeals to us after being years away.

Well dear Mother, I still do the washing here for the Sergeants and it always brings me in a few extra bob. Everything is so very dear over here. Just now, cigarettes are five and a halfpence a packet of 10 and tobacco is nine and a halfpence an ounce. I was very lucky in receiving a lb of Havelock tobacco from Pauline a couple of weeks ago. It is 2/6 a two ounce tin over here.

The civil population are having a terrible hard time of it and I do not know how they manage to live, the prices of foodstuffs is awful.

Thanks very much for papers and paper cuttings. Everything like that is all news to me.

Your Gazette enclosed in the letter was received the same time as your other letters, so by addressing the letter direct here and putting on 14th Battalion made no difference this time.

So Florrie has another daughter. By Joves, those two mean business and I don't think it fair, for I have no chance of keeping pace with them. I reckon I will have to knock them out two at a time.*

Well now my dear Mother, I must close my letter for this time as I will be soon running out of ink or you will be charged extra postage.

So with fondest love to all and cheerio till Xmas next. I remain your ever loving son, Henry.

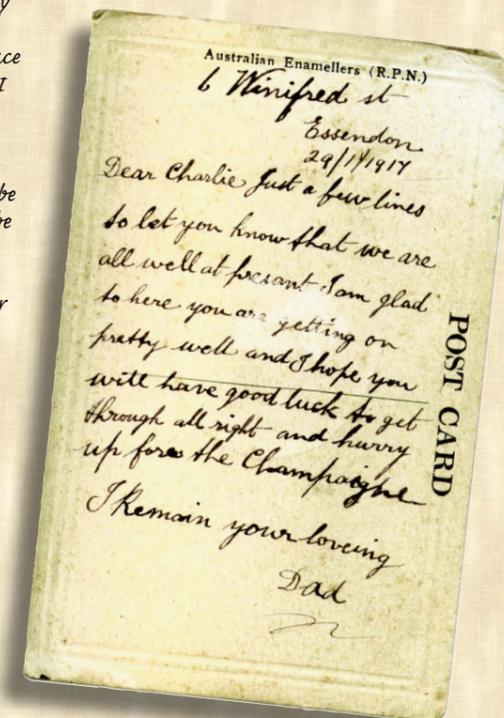
* Florence, Henry's sister.

As mentioned in his letter, Henry was quite comfortable at the School of Musketry, Bhurtpore Barracks, and, naturally, was in no hurry to return to active service.

Unfortunately, Henry failed to obey an order given by an NCO and was fined seven days' pay on 24 April 1918. The National Archives of Australia in Canberra, which holds the World War I records of service personnel

does not have any information as to exactly what the charge was.

Whatever it was, Private HJ Wright, 14th Battalion AIF, was given orders to return to active duty.



Call for submissions

On 23 November 1948, three Australian battalions of the 2nd AIF were regimented to form the Australian Regiment – Australia's first ever standing regular infantry units.

Less than a year later the regiment received the 'Royal' prefix.

Since that time, the battalions of the Royal Australian Regiment have acquitted themselves with distinction in several conflicts, policing actions, peacekeeping missions and exercises around the world.

In 2008, the regiment celebrates its 60th birthday. While the battalions, the regiment and regiment associations are undoubtedly planning massive celebrations, CONTACT is also planning to mark the anniversary through the

publication of a special, one-off, extra issue of CONTACT magazine.

To that end, we are calling on members and former members of the RAR, of all ranks, to express an interest in writing stories of various lengths and to supply supporting original photos. It is our desire to cover each of the major missions of the RAR and to cover each of the current and former battalions.

We invite prospective authors to first contact the editor, Brian Hartigan, on 0408 496 664 to discuss editorial and technical requirements.

The Governor General, Major General Michael Jeffery has agreed to write the Foreword for this publication. Ten per cent of all profits will be donated to Legacy.

A MAN WITH A SECRET

PRIVATE EDWARD ELART

BY WO1 DARRYL KELLY

The young sailor stared pensively at the dark grey outline of the battle cruiser moored alongside the pier. A million thoughts ran through his mind as he stood transfixed, as if in a trance. A passing sailor stumbled against him and muttered, 'Come on mate, better get aboard'. His reverie interrupted, the young seaman turned away from the ship and jogged towards a waiting tram.

'WAR!'

– this was the bold headline that dominated the front pages of newspapers around the country. It was the topic of conversation in every home, pub, shop and factory as young Australian men from all walks of life flocked to the recruiting depots to sign up for service overseas. A hastily assembled force of soldiers and sailors was already preparing to sail to seize German assets to Australia's north.

As eager young volunteers skirted around him, a young man paused and stared intently at the building that housed Naval Headquarters. He was poised to go in, but, on the threshold, he changed his mind. Instead, he turned on his heel and headed towards the military barracks down the road, where some time later he stood before the officer, raised his right hand and pledged,

'I, Edward Elart, do hereby swear...'¹

Edward had been allocated to the newly raised 1st Battalion, AIF and, along with other volunteers who also enlisted that day, he marched to the temporary barracks at Randwick Racecourse.¹

In the early days of the Great War, uniforms and equipment were in short supply, and many of the new recruits commenced their initial training wearing their civilian clothes, drilled by uniformed non-commissioned officers of the permanent forces. Eventually, Edward lined up to receive his first issue of the coarse woollen tunic and breeches, and an oversized hat that the quartermaster sergeant ceremoniously jammed on his head.

Days drifted into weeks during which time the battalion was slowly whipped into shape. Edward enjoyed the close contact with the other recruits and soon had plenty of new friends. He worked hard to prove his worth and, whenever a volunteer was required, Edward was among the first to raise his hand.

Soon the waiting and anticipation to put their training into practice was over. The order came, 'We're breaking camp and moving to the docks tomorrow'. As the lines of khaki-clad figures marched proudly towards waiting ships, a group of sailors stood at the roadside to watch the 'gravel

crushers' pass by. Edward quickly turned his head the other way as he drew near.

With the rest of the Division, the 1st Battalion was bound for the training camps in Egypt.² As the ship plied its way across the Great Australian Bight, Elart spent hours standing by the railing, staring at the ocean as it surged past the side of the ship. His mates noticed that he always seemed preoccupied when not actively involved in training.

Life in Egypt and their exposure to so many new sights, sounds and smells was akin to an exotic adventure for the young Diggers. They found plenty to keep them occupied on leave in nearby Cairo. They bought souvenirs to send home to family and friends, enjoyed drink that was cheap and plentiful and, for the more adventurous, the brothels in the local Wassers provided other forms of entertainment – delights that many a youngster had never before experienced. Such 'pleasure' however, also often left them with a dose of disease that was not quite so enjoyable.

Before long, the Division was on the move again. The troops boarded ships at Alexandria and headed east across the Mediterranean towards Turkey. On Saturday 24 April 1915, after a brief layover at Lemnos Island, the convoy set sail for the Gallipoli Peninsula.³ The Diggers aboard the ships spent the hours before the dawn landing in a variety of ways. Some attended religious services, some wrote letters, the experienced bushmen broke up crates to provide a supply of firewood to carry ashore, and others, like Elart, spent the time contemplating what lay in store.

As the landing boat nudged the shore, the Diggers leaped out. Some made it to the relative safety of the cliffs, others lay face-down on the bloody sand. Some didn't even get off the boats before Turkish machine-guns cut them to pieces.

The platoon was ordered to move up the cliffs, self-preservation their prime objective as enemy bullets caused havoc among the ANZACs struggling to reach some form of shelter. When they reached the top of the cliffs, they moved forward by sections and were ordered by the officer to dig in along the ridge. Assessing the situation, Elart complained to his superior, 'But, Sir, we're miles short of our objective'.

'We've been landed in the wrong spot. The enemy has the high ground, knows the country and he's got reinforcements moving up. I think we're in strife mate, so just start digging,' the officer replied.

That first night was one of sleepless anticipation for the ANZAC troops. The smarter ones knew how precarious their situation really was. If one part of the ANZAC line were to be breached, they would be overrun. The Turks were determined to drive out the invaders and their attacks were relentless. The Diggers fought like demons and held their position – but at a terrible cost in young lives.

Life on the peninsula had become a routine of living and fighting in trenches and dugouts. It was a campaign of sniping and bombing under the constant threat from enemy snipers and artillery. To put one's head above the parapet was to risk having it blown off.

By mid-May, the Diggers had been subjected to a continuous enemy barrage and the Turks now were poised for an all-out attack, their objective to push the infidels back into the sea.

Elart took his place in the line, two of his mates standing on either side of him.

'Right lads, watch your front, mark your targets carefully,' the sergeant ordered.

In the blink of an eye, there they were – Turks, hordes of them, screaming and yelling, heading straight towards the ANZAC line.

'God help us,' Elart prayed.

Bullets flew in all directions – it was on for young and old. As fast as he used up one clip of ammunition, Elart slammed another into place. An incoming round struck the soldier on his right, throwing him backwards and, less than a minute later, the Digger on his left took a round between the eyes. The Turks had reached the threshold of the Australian trenches. Elart continued to squeeze the trigger, eject the expended round, fire, eject, fire and eject – it was just a blur.

Suddenly it was over and the Turks were withdrawing. The Diggers continued to engage the enemy as the Turks broke and ran. When Elart finally laid down his rifle, its barrel was smouldering and red-hot. He examined the bloody crease where a bullet had grazed his upper arm and considered how lucky he had been.¹

During the ensuing weeks, the events surrounding the deaths of his two friends continually played on his mind and he couldn't help but contemplate how close he had come to joining them. After much agonising, he wrote two letters, one to his commanding officer and the other to General Walker, now in command of the 1st Division. When he had finished, he asked the company clerk to ensure that they were delivered.

A Turkish machine-gun had been set up and was causing havoc in front of the 1st Battalion's position. Sergeant Harry Freame, the battalion's renowned Japanese-Australian scout, had unsuccessfully ventured out over the previous two nights in an attempt to silence the gun.

On the night of 6 June, he was ordered to go out again. 'I'll need a couple of blokes to go with me,' Freame said. A newly arrived lad by the name of Morris said he'd go. The other volunteer was Edward Elart.⁴

Just after dark, the trio crawled out from their lines – Freame armed with his customary twin pistols and five bombs, the other two with a rifle and two bombs each.⁴

The three silently moved forward and, suddenly, there it was, the troublesome machinegun. Each primed a bomb and, on Freame's command, hurled them towards their target, the missiles landing fairly close to their mark. The Diggers then moved to the rear of the gun and threw more bombs. The Turks retaliated with rifle fire. The threesome continued changing position until they had expended their supply of bombs. In a last-ditch effort, Freame emptied his pistols in the direction of the enemy post.⁴

Out of ammunition, the men snaked their way back towards the ANZAC line.

Elart was in the lead, Morris behind him and Freame brought up the rear. They made it through the first strands of wire before Elart got caught on one, jangling some old jam tins that had been attached to it. The pre-action arrangement had been that there would be no firing until the party was safely 'home' but, unfortunately, no-one had informed the young sentry who instinctively fired towards the noise.

The round hit Elart through one eye, travelled down his neck and exited through his shoulder, then continued its path through the face and shoulder of Morris.⁴

Freame dragged both soldiers to safety but, sadly for Elart, it was too late. His wound had proven fatal.

The commanding officer read Elart's letter with interest:

Sir, It is my desire to present myself as a defaulter before you. I am a deserter from the Royal Australian Navy. I am known here as Edward Elart but my real name is Harry Hart. My rating was Stoker HMAS Australia when I cut the painter at the time when war was least expected. When war broke out I left my job in Portland and went to Sydney with the object of

surrendering myself. But when I reached there I thought of the long term of punishment to be gone through, and the reception a man would get on the ship, so I took advantage of the other outlet for my services to my country, and came as a soldier.

It was my intention to remain silent and be 'Edward Elart' always. The reason why I do not remain so is the experience of that memorable Sunday and also the attack by the enemy a few mornings ago, when my mates were shot on both sides of me, and when I was also slightly wounded, make me realise that the honour of death may now be any mans and I wish to go out with a clean bill. It is for my sister's sake. I know that the penalty for my crime is a severe one and to say the least of it I could lose everything.

I have weighed it over in my mind for a few days. But I have also heard that a free pardon has been granted to offenders of my calibre. Perhaps the authorities in their clemency may pardon me and count this as part of my five-years service in the Navy (about eight more years) when we go home again.

I am writing this statement so as not to take up your valuable time in talking. My next of kin is Mrs G Turner, 40 Bronte St, East Perth. If she could one morning get a note saying that I could use my name again, it would be the finest present in the world I could make her.

Trusting that I may have the matter put before the authorities so soon as a favourable opportunity presents itself.

I am your obedient servant

103 Edward Elart
14 Platoon 'D' Coy 1st Battalion⁵

1 National Archives of Australia: B2455, WWI Service Records, 103 Private E Elart

2 AWM 8, Unit Embarkation Nominal Rolls, 1st Battalion AIF, 1914-1918 War

3 Stacy, BV; Kindon, FJ; Chedgley, HV, The History of the First Battalion A.I.F., 1914-1919, First Battalion: A.I.F. Association, Sydney, 1931

4 Bean, CEW, The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume II, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1936

5 E Elart/H Hart, letter to the CO, 1st Battalion

Author's note: An estimated 150 Australian sailors deserted in World War I to serve in the ranks of various armies of the British Empire.

At the Australian War Memorial, in front of the Hall of Memory where the remains of the Unknown Australian Soldier have been laid to rest, and overlooking the tranquil Pool of Reflection, are stone cloisters overlaid with bronze panels known as the Roll of Honour. On these panels are engraved the names of more than one 100,000 Australian service men and women who have died in wars. Private Harry Hart, alias Edward Elart, is one of them.

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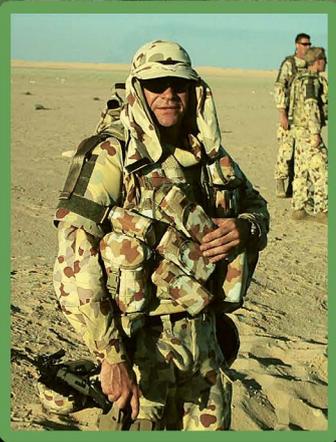
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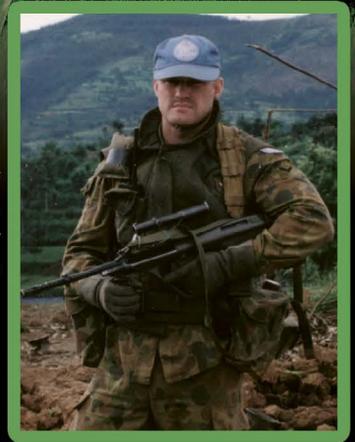
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