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# CONTACT

**AIR LAND & SEA**

THE AUSTRALIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

**Year of the  
INFANTRY**

**RANGE SHOOT**

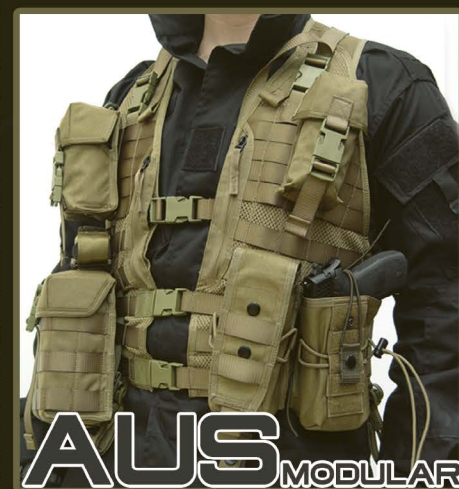
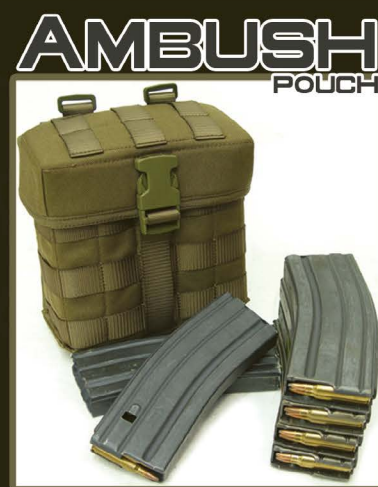
ASLAV CUTS LOOSE

**KILLED IN ACTION**

DARK DAYS IN AFGHANISTAN







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# ULTRAMARINE

MULTIPURPOSE AMPHIBIAN DIVE KNIFE



Extrema Ratio is an Italian-based company that specialises in knives for users who require a no-compromise solution. The company is continuously developing new products based on feedback from users.

Ultramarine is the result of four years research and development, and collaboration with professional Military Dive Teams throughout Europe, including special-forces groups, law-enforcement dive teams and civilian underwater operations experts.

Units involved in underwater and amphibious operations use a variety of specialty tools.

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An explosive ordnance detection version is also available by request. In the EOD variant, all steel components are replaced by titanium, resulting in negligible magnetic mass. However, this version is only suitable for EOD tasks because, even though Extrema Ratio uses only the highest grade alloys, titanium is soft compared to steel and, as such, is difficult to sharpen and doesn't hold an edge well.

**SPECIFICATIONS**  
**Total length:** 298mm  
**Blade length:** 150mm  
**Blade thickness:** 6.3mm  
**Length - knife in sheath:** 320mm  
**Thickness - knife in sheath:** 55mm

**WEIGHTS**  
**Sheath weight:** 280g  
**Knife w/o shackle wrench slot:** 390g  
**Knife with shackle wrench slot:** 375g

**MATERIALS**  
**Blade steel:** Bohler N690, X105CrCoMo182  
**EOD version:** Titanium grade 5 @ 40 HRC  
**Handle:** Polyamide (Nylon)  
**Hard sheath:** ABS  
**Soft sheath:** Cordura, polyamide, polyethylene foam  
**ACCESSORIES**  
 Polyamide

Extrema Ratio knives are imported into Australia by Canberra-based Tactical Edge  
**PHONE 0417 931 536**



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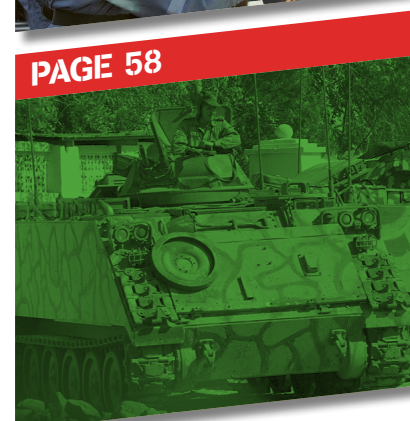
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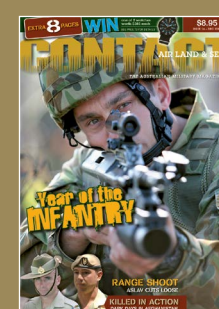
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## THE EDITOR'S LETTER

Issue 16 – December 2007

### CONTACT

AIR, LAND & SEA



#### Cover Story

Private Corey Wooten, 2 Section, 4 Platoon, B Company, 7RAR.

Full story page 38

Pic Brian Hartigan

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Authors and photographers may submit articles and high-quality photos for consideration for publication, however, the editor accepts no responsibility for any material submitted and does not undertake to publish all submissions. Include a stamped, self-addressed envelope if material is to be returned.

**C**ONTACT magazine is now officially four years old. This issue, number 16, marks a major milestone for us here at Contact Publishing. While four years seems such a long time ago, we also think 'where the hell did it go?!' It has been a memorable ride and we very much look forward to having you along into a bright and promising future.

One person who has been along for the ride since the beginning, but is taking a well-deserved break, is Wayne 'Super Trooper' Cooper, author of the very popular Somalia series. While Wayne is stepping down for a spell, he promises he has plenty more tales to tell and we sincerely hope he will return. In the mean time, we have engaged a new author to take up the Somalia story, from the infantry viewpoint. I will let him introduce himself in March, but I want to thank him in advance for keeping 'Somalia' going.

There's a second reason I am happy that we get to see Somalia through the eyes of an infanteer and that is because 2008 sees the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Royal Australian Regiment. To mark this fact, CONTACT will adopt a heavy lean towards infantry for all of next year.

We actually kick off the 'Year of the Infantry' early, starting in this issue. Our cover story endeavours to look at infantry generally – what is it, how does it work, what does it take to be a good infantryman etc – looking at 7RAR as a good example of a modern, proud infantry battalion. As the year progresses we will look at specialist aspects of infantry – heavy weapons, mortars, reconnaissance and so on, and possibly taking a fresh look at aspects we've examined before, such as snipers and parachuting.

We also remind our current and retired infantry readers that we have a unique opportunity to tell your story. We will publish a one-off, infantry-only special issue of CONTACT in October to coincide with the anniversary of the corps in November – and we invite you to participate. We would very much like to have at least one story from each of the contemporary and past battalions and, hopefully, at least one story from each of Australia's operations and from major exercises. You can write the story yourself, or tell us the story and we'll write it for you. Please don't think "someone else will do that, so I won't bother", because, so far, the response has been very disappointing, probably for that very reason. So call today. We believe this is a worthwhile project and we need your support.



Brian Hartigan  
Managing Editor



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**INCOMING**

## ON TARGET...

I have been part of a cadet unit for almost three years. I am eligible for promotion and intend taking my course at the time it should arise. As a seasoned cadet, I have experienced much of what Cadets has to offer – including things such as WTSS shoots and live fire, which are the highlights of most cadets' careers.

Though my time in cadets has been and will continue to be enjoyable, there are some points I would like to bring to the attention of CONTACT readers or anyone who reads this letter.

To some, this may sound like I am complaining, but I am not. My motivation is to expand the activities/equipment available to cadets.

Earlier this year, a cadet died when eating a One Man Combat Ration Pack. I do not know the details, but this event has caused the AAC to stop cadets eating ration packs, even though this was an isolated event.

Several years ago, a cadet in Queensland lost an eye setting up a hootchie with an ockie strap. This was also an isolated event, but resulted in a ban on ockie straps.

My unit requested the use of training Styres, for our next bivouac, for advanced members. Our request for innocuous Styres was turned down on the argument that it "creates unsafe weapon-handling practices".

To conclude – I would like the AAC to reconsider the bans on these items and to reconsider its policy on weapons.

**Sam C, Carrington, NSW**

Our star letter writer wins a 3ltr Hydrapak worth \$115, from **Cool Kit Australia** – visit [www.coolkit.com.au](http://www.coolkit.com.au)



## FRIENDLY FIRE...

I first got into your great magazine when I picked up a copy at my Reserve Depot in Canberra and I couldn't put it down! The magazine is full of info and news on what's going on globally, and interesting stories from a wide group of Defence Force members.

I like how it's not chock-o-block stuffed with advertisements and I especially like the recent stories of soldiers dealing with homesickness while away on a deployment.

After reading the latest issue I back ordered a couple that interested me about 3RAR and they have helped me make a decision on where to transfer to out of Reserves.

It's great that your mag doesn't forget about Reservists!

**Ben R, via email**

Canada calling – I think this is an excellent site. I frequently check in to view the fantastic photos of your armed forces and the personnel. Keep up the tremendous work!

BTW – your magazine is available here in Victoria, British Columbia.

**Phil V, via web-site feedback**

Just wanted to say thanks so much to Rosie for taking the time to contact me regarding my subscription and then replacing my copy of the June issue that mysteriously vanished. I currently have the prime suspect – my neighbour – under close surveillance.

Thanks so much. I couldn't live without my CONTACT.

**Anna P, via email**

Cheque's in the mail for another two years. I thoroughly enjoy the magazine and always look forward to the next issue.

**Tony D, via subscription renewal**

## SUPPORT MISSION

I was asked recently – and didn't know – why the Australian Army does not have the 'Royal' prefix, as the other two services do.

Could you enlighten me, for future reference?

**Bonnie W, Sydney**

Following the British model, the Australian Army has regiments that have been assigned the 'royal' prefix. This prefix is usually approved after meritorious service in the field. As these regiments have the 'royal' prefix, the Australian Army does not have the 'royal' title for the entire organisation.

The Royal Australian Air Force does not have squadrons prefixed with 'royal' so the entire Air Force was granted that title when it was raised following the First World War. The Royal Australian Navy followed the Royal Navy, which has been so named for hundreds of years. Once again, while ships bear the HMS or HMAS prefix, none are 'royal'.

**Dr Andrew Richardson**  
Historian – Army History Unit  
Campbell Park Offices

Please keep your letters short and to the point, to fit more in. The Editor reserves the right to abbreviate and otherwise edit letters for any reason, including to make them fit.

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Members of Battle Group Samichon watch their colleagues repel from a Royal New Zealand Air Force Iroquois helicopter during airborne repelling training in Dili, Timor-Leste. Approximately 850 Australian Defence Force personnel, working alongside their New Zealand counterparts, are deployed in Timor-Leste with a mission to support police from Australia and 24 other countries in bringing security and stability to the troubled country.

PIC LEADING AIRCRAFTMAN GUY YOUNG

# A REPELLING EXPERIENCE



PIC CAPTAIN MICHAEL BROOKE



Australia sets an aggressive field for the last Englishman standing in the 'Desert Ashes'

## AUSSIES WIN ASHES - AGAIN

Aussie soldiers in Iraq thrashed a British Army cricket team by 9 wickets and 11 overs in September to claim the 'Desert Ashes', a replica of the famous cricketing trophy.

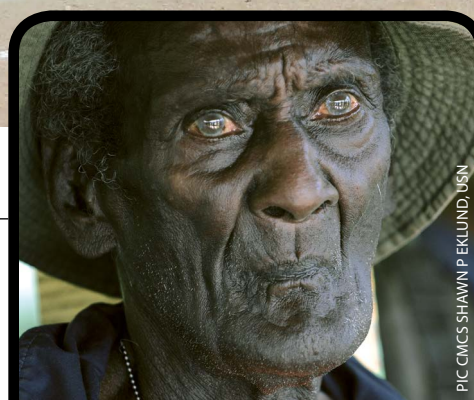
The plucky Australians bowled the Brits out for 92 runs in just 15 overs, and needed only 55 balls for the loss of one wicket to clinch the prize and pride.

Playing in the official Australian one-day international strip, thanks to Cricket Australia, the best 11 from Overwatch Battle Group (West)-Three took on the British Army's 1st Brigade (Forward), based at Basrah.

One wicket down for no runs after just two deliveries from 5RAR's pace-man Captain Marco De Freitas the Brits were in strife early. Captain De Freitas finished with a creditable 4 for 12.

Sticking it to the Poms off the field, Commanding Officer OBG(W)-3 Lieutenant Colonel Jake Ellwood joked that the match was the first time an Australian Battle Group of 515 personnel had routed a British Brigade of 5000.

More than 600 soldiers watched the game and helped raise US\$10,000 for local charities.



PIC CMCS SHAWN P. EKLUND, USN

Eroni 'Aaron' Kumana, 85, waits to meet US Naval Secretary Donald Winter on board USS Peleliu off the Solomon Islands. Wearing an orange t-shirt with the words "I saved JFK" emblazoned across the chest, the old timer was given a hero's reception aboard the visiting US warship. He is indeed credited (along with other men previously honoured) with rescuing Lieutenant John F. Kennedy, 18 years before he became the 35th president of the United States, after his torpedo boat was cut in half by a Japanese destroyer on 2 August 1943.

## FINAL DELIVERY

Westeran Australia-based shipbuilder, Austal, marked the delivery of 14 Armidale Class patrol boats with an historic naming ceremony at its facility near Fremantle in October.

The final, 56-metre, all-aluminium monohull patrol boat was officially named 'Glenelg' in salute to the first HMAS Glenelg, one of 60 Australian minesweepers built during World War II.

Executive Chairman John Rothwell said the naming ceremony was a significant milestone for the company, having successfully provided the Royal Australian Navy with a state-of-the-art patrol-boat capability.

"These modern, capable and stylish vessels have, without doubt, enhanced our credibility in the eyes of foreign navies," he said.

"For our staff, it is a very proud moment, not only because each one was involved in meeting the demanding delivery schedule, but also because the pride of Austal's fleet is now protecting Australia's waters."



Austal staff celebrate the end of Armidale-class production

With a total contract value of approximately \$550 million, the patrol-boat fleet will primarily carry out surveillance, interception, investigation,

apprehension and escort-to-port of vessels suspected of illegal fisheries, quarantine, customs or immigration offences.

## CHINA AHOY

Two ships from the People's Liberation Army-Navy visited Sydney in September to mark the 35th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Australia and China.

Chinese destroyer Haerbin and replenishment ship Hongzhu and about 500 personnel spent five days in Sydney – coinciding with China's National Day on 1 October – before participating in two days of trilateral search and rescue exercises with the Royal Australian Navy and the Royal New Zealand Navy.

The visit and exercise provided excellent opportunities to enhance cooperation between the Chinese, Australian and New Zealand navies, foster mutual understanding and develop lines of communication.

Two Australian ships, HMAS Parramatta and HMAS Perth, had completed a similar visit to China earlier in September.



BOTH PICS: ABLE SEAMAN DAVID MCMAHON



Above: Chinese Luhu Class Destroyer Haerbin enters Sydney Harbour, and, above; receives an appropriate welcome to Garden Island, Sydney

## VIETNAM VET RETIRES

Three venerable UH-1H Iroquois helicopters, affectionately known as 'Hueys', took to the skies over Brisbane on Friday 21 September to formally mark the type's retirement after more than 45 years.



Three UH-1H Iroquois from A Squadron, 5 Aviation Regiment finish a final flight over Brisbane  
PIC CORPORAL CHRIS MOORE

Serving the nation since 1962, the UH-1H first flew with the Australian Defence Force in Malaysia, however it was their use in the Vietnam War that earned them iconic status.

Based at the Army Aviation Centre, Oakey in south-east Queensland, and flying with A Squadron, 5 Aviation Regiment, the UH-1H will be replaced by MRH-90, which offers higher performance, greater load capacity and improved combat survivability.

Huey's flew with Royal Australian Air Force livery from 1962 until 1989 when they transferred into Army hands. The Royal Australian Navy also flew Hueys for 20 years from 1967.

## GET SMART

The Department of Defence has finalised a \$14 million contract to acquire a new anti-tank artillery round – the SMARt 155 – to replace the in-service Copperhead laser-guided round.

SMARt 155 artillery rounds are sensor-fused precision munitions developed by GIWS in Germany for use against tanks and other armoured vehicles in all weather and terrain environments.

They use a range of sensors to detect targets, and self-destruct if no target is found.

## ENHANCED NIGHT VISION

BAE Systems is set to develop a digitally enhanced night-vision goggle for the US Army using digital imagery to improve mobility and situational awareness under all lighting conditions.

The helmet-mounted goggle will digitally combine video imagery from a low-light sensor and an uncooled long-wave infrared sensor on a single color display in front of the soldier's eye.

BAE Systems says digital technology will provide improved image quality and will enable imagery to be shared on a network.

## SEA SPARROW SHOT

HMAS Sydney successfully fired an Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile against a Kalkara unmanned airborne target in August.

The missile was fired from the vertical launch system recently installed as part of the FFG Upgrade Program.

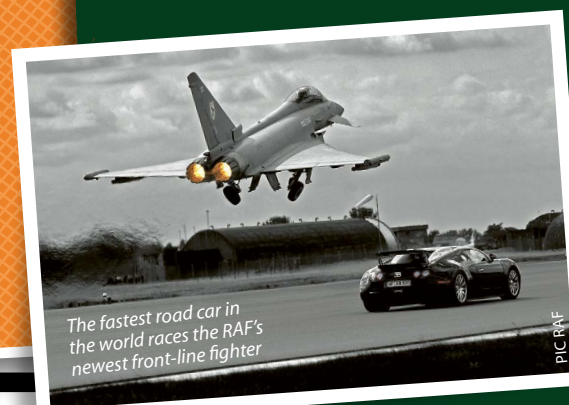
It was the first such firing from any FFG-7 class frigate, a class in service with many navies around the world.

## SPEED CHALLENGE

One of television's most popular fast-car shows recently challenged the Royal Air Force to pit one of its brand-new supersonic Eurofighter Typhoons to a race of pure speed against the world's fastest street-legal car – the Bugatti Veyron.

Devising a race that would be fair to both camps, the organisers came up with a simple straight-line race over one mile and back – from a standing start, the car ran its course along the runway at RAF Coningsby, Lincolnshire, while the Typhoon travelled one mile up and back to cross the finishing line at 100 feet.

The episode was scheduled to air in the UK on 28 October – unfortunately, we may have to wait to see the result in Australia.



The fastest road car in the world races the RAF's newest front-line fighter



# HEADS UP

## MORTAR SECTION FOR RTF

A 12-man 81mm mortar section from Townsville-based 2RAR has been deployed to Afghanistan to provide indirect fire support to Reconstruction Task Force operations.

This deployment is in response to ongoing reviews of the situation faced by our soldiers in operational areas and comes in the wake of recent large-scale attacks on Australian forces (but announced before the recent deaths of Aussie soldiers).

The deployment will mark a significant boost to RTF capability in Oruzgan Province, 81mm mortars being renowned for their accuracy and effectiveness in the hands of a capable crew.

Calibre	81mm
Weight	38kg
Barrel length	1.28m
Max Range (HE)	5650m
Min Range	80m
Rate of Fire	15 rounds per minute
Crew	3



## CAMOUFLAGED SAILORS

Aussie sailors will soon be wearing similar Auscam-patterned uniforms to their Army and RAAF counterparts – albeit in Navy-sympathetic colours.

Much of the design for the replacement Navy uniform derives from the land warfare version introduced in the mid-90s by the Australian Army.

Defence says there are tangible benefits in moving to a two-piece uniform in terms of health, comfort and morale, providing both male and female personnel at sea with an enhanced, practical, contemporary uniform, distinct to Navy.

Patrol boat crews operating in tropical and humid environments will be among the first recipients of the new uniforms, which also includes new, improved safety boots.

Rollout of the 60,000 sets required for the initial delivery will commence mid next year, injecting \$13m into Australian textile and manufacturing industries.



## SAS TURNS 50

Australia's premier special-forces unit, the Special Air Service Regiment, celebrated its 50th anniversary in September with various reunions, parades and functions – Australia Post even marking the occasion by issuing 50-cent stamps in the unit's honour.

Chief of Army Lieutenant General Peter Leahy congratulated the Regiment, saying that over the past 50 years, the SAS has established itself as a unit with few equals in the international special-forces community.

"This did not just happen – it is the result of the dedication of generations of outstanding young soldiers singularly committed to excellence," Lieutenant General Leahy said.

The Australian Special Air Service Regiment was formed on 4 September 1964, although its predecessor, the 1st Special Air Service Company, which was part of the Royal Australian Infantry Corps, had been in existence since 1957.

With operations in Borneo, Vietnam, Rwanda, Somalia, Cambodia, East Timor, Iraq, Afghanistan and various regional contingencies where it has conducted itself with the utmost professionalism, the unit has earned an enviable reputation.

## The Elite Force

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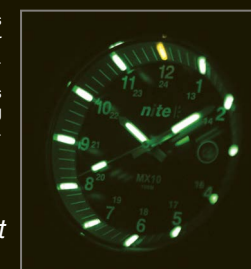
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HMNZS Canterbury lowers her landing craft during trials



Able Hydrographic Systems Operator Byron Solomon

PIC CORPORAL CHRIS WEISSENBORN

## CANTERBURY PUT THROUGH HER PACES

HMNZS Canterbury, New Zealand's largest and newest ship, commissioned into operational service in June, sailed from Devonport Naval Base in the early hours of 6 August heading for an intensive few days of sea trials. Much to the delight of local yachts and power boats who regularly 'buzzed' past to get a good look at the huge new ship, Canterbury made an impressive sight anchored in Auckland Harbour. While the ship was at anchor, the crew took the opportunity to train in the launch and recovery of her landing craft.

Tuesday 7 August was a highly successful day of machinery trials, where the latest in marine control technology was put through its paces in a naval environment with some excellent results achieved. Subsequent trials to confirm full power and endurance capabilities went

without a hitch with the ship reaching a top speed of 20.1 knots.

The ship's gun, radar, navigation and radio systems were also put under the microscope by the trials team – again passing with flying colours; the only casualty was the target that received the full brunt of the 25mm Bushmaster gun!

Trials officer Lieutenant Commander Andrew Curlewis said, "The trials period has been a great success in terms of beginning to explore the boundaries of HMNZS Canterbury's capabilities. It has also allowed the ship's crew to gain valuable lessons in operating the ship".

Unfortunately, just two months later, Canterbury was touched by tragedy, with the drowning of 22-year-old Able Hydrographic Systems Operator Byron Solomon from Auckland.

## CHIEF'S RECOGNITION

A New Zealand Army soldier has received a Chief of Defence Force Commendation in recognition of his courage and professionalism after an attack by a suicide bomber in Egypt.

Lance Corporal Joshua Roewen of the Royal New Zealand Army Logistics Regiment was serving with the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai in 2006 when the vehicle he was driving was attacked by a suicide bomber.

Despite the shock of the explosion and the damage caused, Lance Corporal Roewen continued to drive the vehicle out of danger while calling for help on the vehicle's radio.

After parking, he established initial security then assisted in providing comfort to distressed officials who were passengers in the vehicle.

Chief of Defence Force Lieutenant General Jerry Mateparae says the actions of Lance Corporal Roewen clearly demonstrate the NZ Army's core values of courage and commitment.

"Throughout the incident, Lance Corporal Roewen displayed the highest levels of professionalism, competence and initiative. His actions in continuing to control the damaged vehicle while maintaining communications with the operations centre were instrumental in the MFO response to this incident," he said.

"Through his conduct, Lance Corporal Roewen has earned the highest respect and admiration from his peers and superiors and is considered worthy of formal recognition."

Hercules wait for takeoff after delivering supplies to McMurdo and Scott Base, November 2001.



PIC NZDF

## ICE MECHANICS

Royal New Zealand Air Force technicians had to work in temperatures as low as -55C to repair a mechanical fault that delayed the departure of a C-130 Hercules from Antarctica in October.

The aircraft was operating as part of the Antarctica New Zealand summer program and was taxiing for departure from McMurdo when a warning light activated. Evaluation by the crew showed that a propeller change was required.

RNZAF technicians and replacement parts departed for the ice on a US-operated C-17 Globemaster to conduct the repairs.

Air Component Commander Air Commodore Peter Stockwell says

the efforts of the technicians in very challenging conditions showed true fortitude.

"I'm very proud of the team who worked to get this aircraft serviceable in such challenging conditions. They saw the job through and it's a testament to their focus, skill level and dedication," he said.

To beat the conditions, the team rotated through a 10-minutes-on, 20-minutes-off work schedule.

## COLD SUMMER POSTING

An Antarctic summer posting has begun for seven New Zealand Defence Force personnel and the No. 40 Squadron Royal New Zealand Air Force with the troops

arriving at their new home on the ice in early October.

Led by Major Toni Duffield, the NZDF personnel on the ground are spread between Scott and McMurdo Bases and will carry out a variety of roles in support of Antarctica New Zealand and the United States Antarctic Programme.

Duties include escorting visiting scientists and dignitaries, assisting with the transport of scientific equipment and ensuring supplies at various Antarctic facilities remain well stocked. They also provide support to search and rescue operations on the ice.

No. 40 Squadron will undertake up to six C-130 flights before Christmas this year, with continued assistance through early 2008.

## PASSCHENDAELE REMEMBERED

Hundreds of New Zealanders gathered at Tyne Cot Cemetery in Belgium to mark the anniversary of New Zealand's most tragic day – 12 October 1917.

A dawn service held in light mist was the first of three ceremonies held to mark the 90th anniversary of the Battle of Passchendaele when more than 2800 New Zealand soldiers were killed, wounded or listed as missing in action in just two hours during World War One.

The ceremony was officiated by New Zealand Army Chaplain Don Parker. New Zealand Defence Force personnel formed an honour guard and Air Force bugler Sergeant Stephen Pilkington played the Last Post and Reveille.

"October 12, 1917, is a significant date in New Zealand's history where more people died, were wounded or went missing

on a single day than any other day in our history," Chief of Army Major General Lou Gardiner said. "It is important that we remember the courage exhibited by the soldiers who fought and died here."

"Their courage, comradeship, commitment and integrity are values we continue in the Defence Force today."

Tyne Cot is the largest Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery in the world with nearly 12,000 graves, including 519 New Zealanders, 322 of them unidentified.

NZDF personnel took part in two further ceremonies on 12 October to mark the 90th anniversary of the battle of Passchendaele including a small ceremony at Nine Elms cemetery where former All Black captain Dave Gallaher is buried, and a service at the New Zealand memorial at 's Gravenstafel.

Below: Warrant Officer NZDF Warrant Officer Class One John Barclay, Corporal Bill Atiapa VC, NZ CDF Lieutenant General Jerry Mateparae and Australian VCDF Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie pay respects at the Gravenstafel memorial in Belgium



PIC CORPORAL CHRIS MOORE (ADF)

## ROTATION TO AFGHANISTAN

On Wednesday 17 October a contingent of 77 New Zealand Defence Force personnel departed on a six-month deployment to Afghanistan.

Seventy-four of the personnel will serve with the New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team in the Bamyan Province of Afghanistan with the remaining serving as trainers for the Afghan National Army or as staff officers at

the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Headquarters in Kabul.

## HERC OVERHAUL

A second Royal New Zealand Air Force C-130 Hercules has been dispatched to Canada to undergo modifications to extend its life out to 2017.

Modifications include a centre-wing refurbishment, major rewire, new flight deck instrumentation and replacement of the aircraft's communication and navigation systems.

The aircraft is the second of the Air Force's fleet of five Hercules to be upgraded, with the first expected to return in mid next year.

With more than 30 new or upgraded aircraft to be introduced into service by the end of 2011, the Hercules Life Extension Project is part of a major aircraft modernisation program for the RNZAF.

## HANGAR SKY JACKED

The Royal New Zealand Air Force is preparing to move its A-4 Skyhawk jets from their

hangar at Woodbourne to make way for C-130 Hercules undergoing life extension overhaul.

Chief of Air Force Air Vice-Marshal Graham Lintott said alterations to the hangar would begin in November to prepare it for the C-130s.

No alternate accommodation was identified for the Skyhawks, fuelling press speculation that the fleet was to be sold. The RNZDF refuted this claim saying options were still being considered by the government.



# “ONE FRIENDLY KIA”

WORDS BRIAN HARTIGAN PICS ADF

*... the words that wrenched the hearts of colleagues and commanders on foreign soil – and a stricken family back home.*



“It’s my sad duty to inform you of the death of an Australian soldier while on operations in Afghanistan.” Chief of Defence Force Air Marshal Angus Houston delivered the dreaded message that had for a long time been feared – yet was surely inevitable.

Trooper David Pearce, 2/14 Light Horse Regiment (Queensland Mounted Infantry), serving with the Reconstruction Task Force, was killed and another soldier seriously wounded when a roadside bomb detonated next to their vehicle in Oruzgan Province on the morning of 8 October.

The men were part of a patrol returning from an engineer reconnaissance task and were 6km from their base at Tarin Kowt when the incident occurred.

In the immediate aftermath of the explosion, other members of the patrol secured the scene and provided assistance to the crew of the stricken vehicle.

Despite their best efforts, Trooper Pearce died as a result of the blast, while the

wounded soldier was provided immediate first aid and evacuated to the nearby International Security Assistance Force medical facilities by helicopter. His wounds were initially classified as serious but not life-threatening.

Trooper Pearce was the driver of the vehicle that was hit.

Two days after the blast, members of Trooper Pearce’s unit, the Reconstruction Task Force and their Dutch colleagues farewelled their fallen comrade’s remains from the theatre of operations in a moving and fitting ‘ramp ceremony’.

Lance Corporal Michael Crossley, commander of the stricken vehicle – himself bearing scars from the attack – lead the pall bearers who carried the casket to the C-130 waiting to take Trooper Pearce on the first leg of his long journey home.

The ramp ceremony provided a last opportunity for soldiers in Tarin Kowt to farewell their mate before they returned to their difficult and dangerous duties.



Trooper David Pearce, 41, was born in Liverpool, New South Wales, and enlisted in the Australian Army Reserve in 2002. Following a period of Reserve service he transferred to the Australian Regular Army in July 2006 and was posted to the Brisbane-based 2/14 Light Horse Regiment (Queensland Mounted Infantry) in October 2006. He had been in Afghanistan for only a couple of weeks when he was killed.

Trooper Pearce had previous operational experience having deployed to the Solomon Islands on Operation Anode with 9 Battalion, Royal Queensland Regiment, in 2005–2006.

He is survived by his wife and two children.





**Statement on behalf of David Pearce's family:**

"David Pearce spent 18 wonderful years with his wife and had two beautiful daughters aged 11 and 6 years, who were the love and centre of his life.

"David joined the Army relatively late in life.

"After three years with the Army Reserve, including a tour of Solomon Islands, he joined the Regular Army at the age of 39.

"With his life experience, outgoing personality and ability to relate to people of all ages, he was a popular and respected member of his unit.

"He was a patriotic Australian and loved his work with the Army, particularly the comradeship he developed with his mates."

Trooper Pearce's remains were returned to Australia aboard a C-17 Globemaster for a private repatriation ceremony at RAAF Base Amberley. A guard and bearer party from the 2/14 Light Horse Regiment (Queensland Mounted Infantry) carried the casket from the aircraft.

Trooper Pearce's family and closest friends were present for the solemn occasion.

A funeral service with full military honours was attended by hundreds of mourners, including family, friends, colleagues, politicians and military leaders at Brisbane's Cathedral of Saint Stephen on 17 October.

Despite the tragic loss, Australian soldiers alongside their Dutch and Afghani colleagues in Tarin Kowt are back to business as usual and, as Air Marshal Houston has reiterated on numerous occasions, they face the same dangers and challenges that cost the life of their colleague and close friend.

"Afghanistan remains a very dangerous place and Taliban extremists see International Security Assistant Force efforts as a direct threat to their continued existence," he said.

"We've said all along that, with a very high threat, casualties are likely. It's something we work against all the time – that's why we have the Counter IED Task Force, that's why we work so hard on our tactics, techniques and procedures, that's why we work so hard on modifying our vehicles – to ensure that we have the best technology available to counter these lethal weapons.

"We do the best we can, but, we work in an extremely dangerous environment and casualties will occur from time to time.

"That's a threat we have been living with, it's a threat we've been working against but, unfortunately, on this occasion, the adversary got through with a successful strike."

**Lance Corporal Michael Crossley (Vehicle Commander V30E RTF-3)**

"Poppy always said that if he died tomorrow he would be happy because he had lived such a great life.

"While no one likes death or dying, Poppy never had any regrets about his life. Poppy always lived life to the full.

"Poppy loved his family and the Army, and I know that he was doing what he loved when he died. He was an inspiration to all he met and no words can describe the loss that will be felt by all that had the honour of knowing him.

"Our thoughts will always be with his family and we will always be there for them.

"Gone but never forgotten."

**Sergeant Justin Smith (Troop Sergeant, Cavalry Troop, RTF-3)**

"As his Troop Sergeant and commander of the patrol that was hit, I will never forget that moment when I heard the words, 'one friendly KIA', and my heart sank as I saw Poppy lying there at the back of his car, at peace.

"He must never be forgotten, like all Australian soldiers before him who have paid the ultimate sacrifice to better other people's lives.

"Poppy you brought wisdom to our troop. Your commitment to your buddies and your humour will be sadly missed. I will miss your cheese-spread sandwiches and our many conversations we had – not as soldiers, but as proud fathers of young girls.

"I cannot speak any words to ease the pain for your family and friends, mate, but be sure to know that we as a troop will forever honour you and your family as part of our family."

**Lieutenant Gavin Vague (Troop Leader, Cavalry Troop, RTF 3)**

"You could not find any other individual who adequately sums up the legacy of the Australian soldier.

"A brave, motivated, hardworking and loyal soldier. A true character that could bring a smile to the men during the hardest of times.

"He will be dearly missed by all who have had the privilege and pleasure of working with him. From the men of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment, his sacrifice will never be forgotten, his commitment to the job will be carried on, and above all, his love for his family will always be remembered.

"This tragic incident will not blur our focus, will not prevent us from helping others nor looking after our mates. Poppy's drive to do what is good and what is right will ensure the men of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment will succeed in completing our mission.

"My thoughts are with the family and friends of Pops throughout this difficult time.

"I am proud to have served with such a man."



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SAS LOSES ONE OF ITS FINEST

# DEATH OF A HERO

October 2007 will go down as a dark month for the Australian Defence Force with the deaths of two respected and professional soldiers – **killed in action**

WORDS BRIAN HARTIGAN PICS ADF



SASR memorial 'The Rock' at Swanbourne Barracks, home of the SAS



**IT'S A VERY SAD DAY THAT THE NATION HAS LOST A MAN OF THIS CALIBRE**

**O**n 25 October 2007, Sergeant Matthew Locke, serving with the Special Air Service Regiment in Oruzgan Province in southern Afghanistan was shot in the chest while engaged with the enemy during an operation close to the Australian base.

Operation Spin Ghar, an operation involving Australian, ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces, targeted the Taliban in their sanctuaries and was designed to drive them from the area around Tarin Kowt in Oruzgan Province.

Sergeant Locke was shot in the chest during a firefight in the Chora Valley on the first day of the operation. His colleagues administered first aid on the scene and summoned an on-call medical-evacuation helicopter, which took the Aussie soldier to a nearby coalition medical facility. However, despite the best efforts of the highly trained soldiers on the ground and the medical staff in the evacuation chain, Sergeant Locke could not be revived.

Chief of Army Lieutenant General Peter Leahy said Australia had lost a genuine hero.

Sergeant Locke was awarded the Medal for Gallantry, one of the country's highest military honours, in December last year for his actions under heavy fire during his first tour of Afghanistan in 2006.

"The nation has lost a genuine hero – the Army has lost a gallant and respected soldier – our Special Air Service Regiment has lost a comrade and a mate," Lieutenant General Leahy said.

"Sergeant Locke was a great soldier, one of those inspirational leaders who knew his duty and knew his task.

"It's a very sad day that the nation has lost a man of this calibre."

Chief of Defence Force Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston said Sergeant Locke exemplified the extraordinary valour we have come to expect from the Special Air Service Regiment.

"Sergeant Matthew Locke was everything you would expect of an Australian soldier. He was courageous, dedicated and very

## BIOGRAPHY

Sergeant Matthew Locke enlisted into the Australian Regular Army on 11 June 1991. After completing recruit training at Kapooka, he was allocated to the Royal Australian Infantry Corps and commenced Initial Employment Training at Singleton, NSW, after which he was posted to 5/7 Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment.

Matthew had a flair for infantry training and while he was at 5/7RAR, he completed driver, basic mortar and promotion courses and became a small-arms coach.

It was obvious he wanted to be challenged as a soldier so, in November 1997, Matthew successfully completed the Special Air Service Selection Course. Over the next two years, he completed another 15 specialist courses including patrolling, demolitions, diving, parachuting and medical.

He was posted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Air Service Squadron.

During his service in the ADF, Matthew Locke was awarded the Medal for Gallantry, the Australian Active Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Australian Defence Medal, the United Nations Medal with the United Nations Transitional Authority East Timor Ribbon, the Iraq Clasp to the Australian Active Service Medal, the International Coalition Against Terrorism Clasp to the Australian Active Service Medal, the Infantry Combat Badge and the Returned from Active Service Badge.

professional. He took great pride in being an Aussie digger, displaying the characteristics of loyalty, mateship and determination for which Australian soldiers are renowned," he said.

Soldiers from the Australian Special Operations Task Group and the Reconstruction Task Force farewelled their fallen comrade during a Ramp Ceremony at Tarin Kowt.

His remains were escorted by colleagues on the military flight back to Australia.

Upon arrival at RAAF Base Pearce, Western Australia, SAS soldiers formed a guard and bearer party on the tarmac before carrying the casket from the C-130 Hercules to a private room for a solemn and dignified ceremony.

Sergeant Matthew Locke was buried in a private funeral service, with full military honours, in Perth on 2 November 2007.

He will be memorialised on 'The Rock' at Swanbourne Barracks, along with more than 40 comrades killed on duty with the SAS in its 60 years of service.



## MEDAL FOR GALLANTRY

**S**ergeant Matthew Locke was awarded the Medal for Gallantry in December 2006. The citation reads – For gallantry in action in hazardous circumstances as the second-in-command of a Special Air Service Regiment patrol in the Special Forces Task Group whilst deployed on Operation Slipper, Afghanistan, in 2006.

During the conduct of an operation, a patrol, with Sergeant Locke as second-in-command, were tasked with establishing an observation post in extremely rugged terrain overlooking an Anti-Coalition Militia sanctuary. After an arduous 10-hour foot infiltration up the side of the mountain, the patrol was called in to action to support elements of the Combined Task Force Special Forces patrol that were in contact with the Anti-Coalition Militia in the valley floor to their north. After the engagement, Sergeant Locke's patrol remained in their location and was the only coalition ground element with visibility of the target area.

During the course of the next day the patrol continued to coordinate offensive air support against identified Anti-Coalition Militia positions in order to further disrupt and degrade the enemy's morale. During the afternoon, the observation post became the focus of the Anti-Coalition Militia who made repeated attempts by day and night to overrun and surround the position. In one such incident the Anti-Coalition Militia attempted to outflank the observation post and Sergeant Locke, without regard for his own personal safety, led a two-man team to locate and successfully neutralise the Anti-Coalition Militia in order to regain the initiative and protect his patrol from being overrun.

This particular incident was followed by another Anti-Coalition Militia attempt to manoeuvre to attack the patrol observation post from another flank. Sergeant Locke, again with little regard for his personal safety, adopted a fire position that was exposed on high ground which dominated the planned Anti-Coalition Militia assault. Whilst deliberately exposing himself to intense



Sergeant Matthew Locke is presented with the Medal for Gallantry by the Governor General – 1 December 2006

rifle and machinegun fire from the Anti-Coalition Militia, he again neutralised the lead assaulting elements whilst suppressing other Militia until the arrival of offensive air support. Whilst still under sustained fire, Sergeant Locke then directed indirect fire to effectively neutralise another Anti-Coalition Militia advance on his patrol's position. The courageous and gallant actions of Sergeant Locke were instrumental in regaining the initiative from the Anti-Coalition Militia and allowing the successful exfiltration of the patrol on foot prior to first light the next day.

Sergeant Locke's actions of gallantry whilst under enemy fire in extremely hazardous circumstances, displayed courage of the highest order and is in keeping with the finest traditions of Special Operations Command-Australia, the Australian Army and the Australian Defence Force.



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# LAID TO REST

PICS CORPORAL CHRIS MOORE



**M**ists parted and the sun shone brightly the moment soldiers from the 51<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Far North Queensland Regiment, slow-marched one of their own and four Digger mates to newly dug graves on a former battlefield in Belgium.

A 21-strong contingent ensured the five World War I soldiers, including one from the original 51<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, received a funeral with full military honours.

Sergeant Rick Leeman said it was fitting that the sun pierced the gloom as the first coffin was carried into the Buttes New British Cemetery.

"Every Aussie loves the sun – it couldn't have felt better," he said.

The five casualties of the Great War were buried in the presence of Australian Governor General Major General Michael Jeffery, New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark, recent Kiwi Victoria Cross winner Corporal Bill Apiata, Vice Chief of the Australian Defence Force Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie and a crowd of more than a thousand.



Marlena Jeffery, the Governor General's wife, placed sprigs of wattle on the coffins, which were adorned with Australian national flags, slouch hats, .303 bayonets and WWI medals.

Chaplain Jim Pearson, 51FNQR, conducted the service. He and Sergeant Noel Chillego tipped sand and seawater from Albany, Western Australia – the embarkation point for WWI soldiers destined for the Western Front – on the coffins as they were lowered into the ground.

The Governor-General said that 90 years ago, almost to the day, the five soldiers died in a "savage but successful battle" to capture Polygon Wood, in which the Buttes cemetery is now located.

"It's hard to imagine standing here in this beautiful, productive countryside that in 1917 not a tree, not a blade of grass, not an animal or a bird, or indeed a building, was left standing," he said.

"We commit the bodies of these five Australian soldiers to permanent rest in this beautiful and sacred place, to lie at peace alongside their mates, ordinary men who did such extraordinary things."

**"TO HAVE HIS RELATIVES HERE, AND THE CLOSURE IT GIVES THEM, IS JUST FANTASTIC"**

The remains of the Diggers were discovered during excavations for a pipeline last year. Two were identified from DNA – Sergeant George Calder, of the 51<sup>st</sup> Battalion, and Private John Hunter, of the 49<sup>th</sup> Battalion. The Australian Army flew the descendants of both men to Belgium for the re-interment ceremony.

An inscription on Private Hunter's headstone best sums up the meaning of the event: "At rest after being lost for 90 years".

Commanding Officer 51FNQR Lieutenant Colonel Paddy Evans said it was a tremendous honour for the regiment to provide the ceremonial guard for the reinterment.

"This doesn't happen very often, and to find one of your own from history who was in the original 51<sup>st</sup>, is like we've gone full circle.

"To have his relatives here, and the closure it gives them, is just fantastic," he said.

As the coffins were eased into the ground, the sky again turned a gun-metal grey and there were spatters of rain – appropriate symbolism as the campaign in which the five Australians perished became mired in mud in October 1917.

Earlier in the day, some 51<sup>st</sup> Battalion members took part in an Anzac service at Tyne Cot Cemetery as part of 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations of the Battle of Passchendaele.





# LAND WARFARE

DSTO's annual conference hits Adelaide

WORDS AND PICS BRIAN HARTIGAN

**C**hief of Army Lieutenant General Peter Leahy officially opened the annual Land Warfare Conference in Adelaide in October, saying the contribution of science and industry was vital to ensure that the Australian Army could continue with its combat operations in the field and further develop the larger Hardened and Networked Army.

"Events such as the Land Warfare Conference are one way in which the Army, defence scientists, academia and defence industry can communicate to solve the problems that military forces face in the modern world," he said.

"Land Warfare Conference brings together those very people who can provide the solutions to networking the Army in today's digital world.

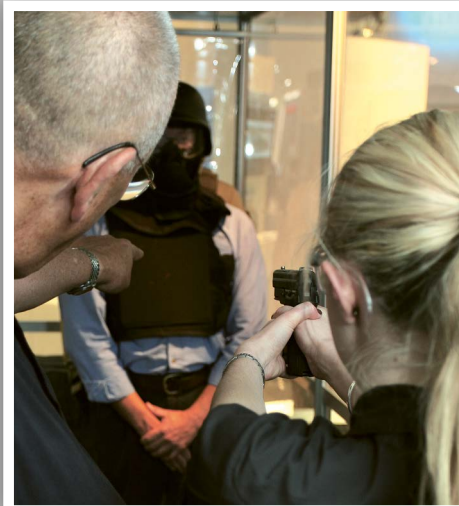
"The conference provides a forum to share visionary ideas, canvass business opportunities, consider new acquisitions and seek collaborative research arrangements.

"This is a very focused audience. I applaud their efforts to support our soldiers today and into the future."

Lieutenant General Leahy said the annual conference attracted delegates from DSTO, Army, academia and Australia's growing defence industry, as well as international military and industry representatives.

Displays at the accompanying trade exhibition included a huge range of military and related hardware, software and everything in between, from a very diverse range of companies – CONTACT magazine among them.

## SOME ITEMS THAT CAUGHT OUR EYE AT LWC...



Carmen O'Keefe, Army HQ, under instruction from XTek weapons' expert Cole Cairn, aims to shoot 'friend' and colleague Richard Barwise, DMO, at the UTM range



Richard Hope, Highgate Group, demonstrates the Bullard TacSight S2 remote receiver



Refurbished and stretched M113 AS4 displayed by Tenix

### UTM RANGE

A live-fire simulated-ammunition shooting gallery demonstrating some of the options for 'pain-incentive' training, with real weapons, available from XTek. The perspex-walled shooting range was brilliant in its simple yet vivid showcasing of a product, bringing a semi-dangerous activity safely into the very heart of a busy trade-show exhibition hall.

### BULLARD TACSIGHT S2

A light-weight, versatile, and very tough thermal imaging camera. I say tough because, as was heart-stoppingly demonstrated on the Highgate Group stall, it could be dropped (repeatedly) on a hard floor without ill effect. The camera can be operated single-handed, allowing a weapon to be carried in the free hand. With very nifty accessories, it can be monitored by remote receiver up to 1km away – ideal for covert surveillance.

### M113 AS4 APC

Chassis number five, just off the production line looked brand spanking new and, to all intents and purposes it is. With more than 600mm added to the hull, and two fuel tanks added to that, she certainly looks bigger than the old model – and with the fuel on the outside, not only would I feel a whole lot safer inside, I'd probably be happy with the extra leg room as well. Apparently the engine has an alternator "bigger than Mars" attached to it, so there's power aplenty to run all the modern (and future) battlefield accessories.

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# FLASH TARGETS

WORDS AND PICS  
BRIAN HARTIGAN

## POLICE AND SERVICES AUSTRALASIAN CLAY TARGET CHAMPIONSHIPS



**T**he 2007 Police and Services Australasian Clay Target Championships were held in Canberra this year with a record number of shooters on hand for four full days of competition.

Organised by the AFP, this year's championships saw more than 100 competitors from as far afield as Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania and even New Zealand compete for a total prize pool of more than \$35,000 worth of trophies, medals and other prizes.

Competition was intense, with shoot-offs required in several categories after more than 300 targets failed to decide a number of placings over four full days of competition.

Organisers were delighted – and exhausted – as the weekend wound up, after hosting one of the biggest turnouts in the event's 27-year history.

Organising committee member Sergeant Trevor Cootes says clay target shooting is a fast-paced, intense sport that is both physically and mentally challenging, and can be as rewarding and as frustrating as other skill-based sports such as golf.

Officer Cadet Nicholas Wells, a second-year Army cadet at ADFA, agrees.

"Raising a shotgun that weighs between 5 and 7kg, to engage 100 or more targets per day, and standing out front for long periods in the sun, can be very tiring physically," he says.

"But it's the mental challenge that can really take its toll. You might

only be concentrating for a couple of seconds at a time, but the concentration required is intense, especially in a big competition like this and, again, when you're facing 100 or more targets a day, it really adds up."

He also says that the concentration and discipline required in clay-target shooting can assist an Army career.

"When you are out on the range shooting Steyr or Minimi, the ability to concentrate and focus on the task really helps out.

"But more than that – being able to concentrate in intense blocks and to be able to switch it on and off can definitely help in general Army taskings."

Next year's championships will be hosted by NSW Police at Coffs Harbour, from 17 to 19 October 2008. Contact [math1ric@police.nsw.gov.au](mailto:math1ric@police.nsw.gov.au) for details.



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# CHONG JU

COMBAT OFFICERS' COURSE GOES OFF WITH A BANG

PICS CORPORAL RODNEY WELCH

**A** rmy officers and invited guests at the Combined Arms Training Centre in Puckapunyal witnessed an awesome show of force when a live-fire exercise, simulating an attack on multiple enemy positions, thundered across the range in August.

Run as part of a Combat Officers' Advanced Course (COAC), Exercise Chong Ju gave the officers a taste of the devastating battlefield effects achievable through the employment of combined arms.

Abrams tanks, ASLAV, M113 and Bushmaster armoured vehicles, artillery, anti-tank missiles, small-arms and F-111 aircraft attacked multiple simulated enemy positions during the demonstration.

COAC is designed to provide the officers with essential tactical and technical training

in the employment of weapons and support elements – key skills required for current or future operations.

Colonel Mark Holmes, Commandant of the Combined Arms Training Centre, says Exercise Chong Ju is an essential part of combat training for the Army's junior officers.

"This Exercise demonstrates some of Australia's newest and most potent military firepower," he says.

"It gives our young officers awareness of the effects of our latest weapons and how to best use them in operational scenarios."

Exercise Chong Ju is named after a battle in North Korea in 1950 when 3RAR, supported by tanks and artillery, attacked and captured a large North Korean defensive line during their northward advance to the Yalu River.

CHONG JU



Sergeant Craig Holdcroft and Warrant Officer Class 2 Dennis Barlow in the turret of an M1A1 Abrams tank



M1A1 Abrams tanks and M113 APCs on the charge

Javelin anti-armour missile



an M1A1 Abrams tank fires on a simulated enemy position



an M1A1 Abrams tank fires on a simulated enemy position





## ADELAIDE SWAN SONG

Exercise Malabar was conducted in the Bay of Bengal in the Indian Ocean in September with five regional naval forces coming together for a series of training and development workups.

The week-long exercise included ships from Australia, the United States, Singapore, Japan and India, and involved more than 20,000 personnel.

Malabar is designed to increase cooperation among regional naval fleets and give participants an opportunity to develop common procedures for maritime security operations, including boarding, search and seizure, surface exercises and coordinated surface-fire support.

It also included air defence exercises, anti-submarine warfare training and a range of professional exchanges between ships and aircraft.

Malabar, in its 11<sup>th</sup> year, is an annual maritime training exercise held between the Indian and US Navies, which saw Australia invited to participate for the first time this year. Frigate HMAS Adelaide and the fleet oiler HMAS Sirius represented the Royal Australian Navy – Adelaide on her final overseas trip before decommissioning.

PICS ABLE SEAMAN NADIA MONTEITH

## NAVIES JOIN FORCES FOR EXERCISE MALABAR



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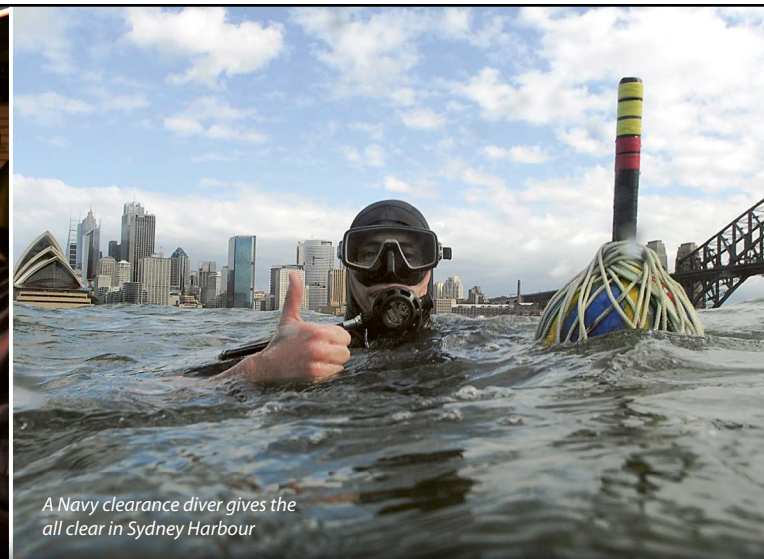
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Sonar operator Lieutenant Paul Clark aboard HMAS Yarra



A Navy clearance diver gives the all clear in Sydney Harbour



Private Jarrod Ingram, 12/40RTR, receives orders outside Sydney's Town Hall



A Black Hawk patrols Sydney's concrete jungle

# AFTER THE DELUGE > SECURING APEC LEADERS' WEEK

WORDS BRIAN HARTIGAN  
PICS CORPORAL CHRIS MOORE

**M**ore than 1500 Defence personnel and a huge range of equipment were deployed to Sydney on Operation Deluge, the ADF's contribution in support of the security blanket put in place for APEC Leaders' Week in September.

While New South Wales Police were the lead agency responsible for security, the ADF, AFP and a range of other agencies contributed in support.

APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) 2007 saw more than nine months of ministerial, officials-level and business-group meetings across Australia since January, but the key focus of security concerns was, of course, Leaders' Week from 2 to 9 September, which brought together the leaders of all major regional economies, thousands of delegates, support personnel and a massive contingent of international media.

The Australian Government agreed to provide a whole-of-government approach



## Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

to the safe conduct of the meetings and it was this commitment that saw so many soldiers, sailors and airmen participate under Joint Task Force 634 command.

ADF's participation was encompassed in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the ADF and New South Wales Police which set out key administrative arrangements including command and control.

Chief of the Defence Force Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston said the ADF was very well placed to support these types

of activities, with a range of capabilities available to deploy.

Defence assets committed included Black Hawk helicopters, a detachment of F/A-18 fighters, air-to-air refuelling capabilities, specialised search teams, a special operations task group, ground-based radar assets and ships from the Royal Australian Navy. The ships, aircraft and personnel stood ready around the clock to divert aircraft, intercept vessels at sea or on the harbour or to respond quickly to counter specific threats or breaches should they arise.

Clearance Diver Teams One and Four scoured the bottom of Sydney Harbour for possible hazards near key venues.

In lead-up training, Black Hawk helicopters flew in formation to drop soldiers on to city rooftops, making several approaches by day and night in order to hone aircrew skills.

Water-borne assets tested and practiced with watercraft large and small.

Number 3 Control and Reporting Unit (3CRU) from the RAAF provided important surveillance assets.

While the event passed without a major security breach, the ADF was involved in one high-profile security incident when a light plane entered restricted airspace and was intercepted by two F/A-18 fighters. The pilot, who had apparently lodged an approved flight plan but then delayed his trip by several hours, thus overlapping with temporary no-fly restrictions, found himself in very close company with fighter jets over western-Sydney suburbs. At least one of the fighters fired flares to gain the pilot's attention and compliance before escorting him to Bankstown airfield where

he was interviewed by Federal Police, and later released.

On the ground, anticipated trouble during street marches was averted by a very visible and well-drilled police operation. The large crowd that gathered for an organised protest rally from Town Hall to Hyde Park was almost outnumbered by cameramen and, while the plethora of hungry media did manage to capture some scuffles with police, the over-reporting of such incidents did an injustice to the overall behaviour of the crowd, who were in festive spirit.

But it was behind the scenes, away from media scrutiny, that the majority of security work was conducted. In the end, the main event was declared a huge success by a very relieved Prime Minister Howard.

One major outcome from APEC Leaders' Week has particular long-term significance to Defence – Prime Minister Howard signed a Treaty on Defence Trade Cooperation with the US which, if ratified, will permit the licence-free export of defence goods and services, cutting a lot of red tape

that can prevent or significantly delay the sharing of equipment, information and technology between Australian and US defence companies. In 2006, for example, nearly 2400 licences and more than 300 agreements were approved by the US for Australia. The removal of such impediments will create significant cost and time savings in the procurement, development or support of defence equipment and open lucrative opportunities for Australian companies in America.

### The Leaders – what the security was all about

**Back Row**, left to right: Stephen Harper, PM of Canada; Hu Jintao, President of China; Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of Indonesia; Roh Moo-hyun, President of Korea; Felipe Calderon, President of Mexico; Sir Michael Somare, PM of Papua New Guinea; Alan Garcia, President of Peru; Lee Hsien Loong, PM of Singapore; Stan Shih, Representative of the Economic Leader of Taipei; Nguyen Minh Triet, President of Vietnam.

**Front Row**, left to right: Haji Hassanah Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan of Brunei; Michelle Bachelet Jeria, President of Chile; Donald Tsang Yam-kuen, Chief Executive of Hong Kong; Shinzo Abe, PM of Japan; Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, PM of Malaysia; John Howard, PM of Australia; Helen Clark, PM of New Zealand; Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President of the Philippines; Vladimir Putin, President of Russia; General Surayud Chulanont, PM of Thailand; George W Bush, President of USA.



An F/A-18 takes on fuel to extend its patrol



# Infantry First



1RAR live-fire activity, Timor-Leste



7RAR on patrol in Dili

Above: Private Cameron Reynolds on Infantry Initial Employment Training in Darwin

WORDS BRIAN HARTIGAN  
PICS BRIAN HARTIGAN AND ADF

## Infantry in a complex world

WHEN MOST PEOPLE THINK ABOUT SOLDIERS AND SOLDIERING, THE IMAGE IN THEIR HEAD IS MORE LIKELY THAN NOT THAT OF AN INFANTRY SOLDIER. WHILE THE STEREOTYPE IS, FOR THE MOST PART, JUSTIFIED, WHAT THEY DON'T REALISE IS HOW COMPLEX AND DEMANDING MODERN INFANTEERING REALLY IS.





1RAR vehicle check point near Dili

PIC PETTY OFFICER DAMIAN PAWLONKO

Private Errol Carmichael

PIC BRIAN HARTIGAN

PIC BRIAN HARTIGAN

Private Errol Carmichael and Lance Corporal Usher, 7RAR

Gun picket in Darwin

PIC BRIAN HARTIGAN

Infantry is the foundation of any army, the basic building block around which everything else is focused. They are the men who seek out and kill or capture the enemy, seize and hold ground, repel attack and so on.

While the other fighting elements of an army – armour, artillery, cavalry, aviation etc – are key fighting elements in their own right, in large part they are built around, modelled on or largely exist to support the infantry. At the very least, they are much less effective as stand alone, specialist fighting elements without the glue that is the infantry.

In Australia, as in most other armies, all soldiers, no matter what corps, are taught the basics of infantry minor tactics – teamwork, patrolling, navigation, shooting, ‘stand to’, ‘dig in’, gun pickets, route marching etc etc – before they eventually specialise in their own corps’ activities. They regularly come back to the basics during exercises, promotion courses, skill-at-arms competitions and a host of other activities throughout their careers. They’re all soldiers – but they are not infantry.

It is the infantry soldier who remains the specialist, bears the brunt of the fight, holds the captured ground and walks the front lines of diplomacy day in and day out.

Infanteering is not a simple or an uncomplicated job by any means. Aside from the growing complexities of the modern battlefield, with its new technologies, weapons, rules of engagement and omnipresent glare of (oft times unfair and

skewed) media scrutiny, the job, by its very nature, is complicated by the sheer scope of possible operations and the diversity of personal and team skills required of every individual. The stated role of the Royal Australian Infantry Corps – ‘to seek out and close with the enemy; to kill or capture him; to seize and hold ground; to repel attack, by day or night, regardless of season, weather or terrain’ – says a lot. But what does it actually mean to the man on the ground – or the bystander looking in.

The Macquarie Dictionary defines infantry, a noun, as *soldiers or military units that fight on foot, with bayonets, rifles, machineguns, grenades, mortars etc.*

Wikipedia expands on that, describing infantry or footmen as *soldiers who fight primarily on foot, with small-arms, in organised military units, though they may be transported to the battlefield by horses, ships, automobiles, skis, bicycles or other means. The word comes from the same Latin root as ‘infant’, either via Italian, where it referred to young men who accompanied knights on foot, or via Spanish, where the infantes (royal princes who were not heirs to the throne) commanded the footmen, hence known as infanteria.*

Neither definition fully encompasses the modern foot soldier, however.

Commanding Officer 7RAR Lieutenant Colonel Shane Gabriel says a succinct definition of an infantryman is a difficult thing to pin down.

“Unlike a plumber or a carpenter – who also has a range of skills, but essentially has one core output – the infantryman really does have to be a jack of all trades to be successful,” he says.

“The infantry soldier has to assimilate a vast array of skills, not only in fieldcraft, communications and a large suite of weapons, but apply those skills in a range of team sizes and in a whole stack of different scenarios – all the way from what could be a fairly benign peacekeeping mission through to high-intensity warfighting.

“So, as you can imagine, that’s a vast scope of skill sets we ask of our junior soldiers.

“And, of course, once they start getting into leadership roles, we ask even more of them.”

Warrant Officer Class One Dave Allen, 7RAR’s Regimental Sergeant Major, says the modern soldier, especially at the junior leader level, has a greater weight of responsibility on his shoulders than his predecessors.

“For example, the Chief of Army talks about ‘the strategic corporal’ where a 21- or 23-year-old corporal can make a mistake on the ground that has ramifications all the way back to the Prime Minister’s office. You just didn’t have that level of responsibility in the past.

“Recognising this, of course, we have the training and the education in place to help him make the right decision.

“We have rules of engagement, we run QDEs (quick decision exercises) and we give him all the professional education and

development we can, but it all comes back to the old adage of teaching him how to think, not what to think.”

When most people think of soldiers and soldiering they think of training, fitness, discipline and, for the most part, a dogged, almost mindless adherence to orders. This is where the stereotype begins to fall apart.

Today’s soldier – and infantry no less so – is expected, even required, to be a free-thinker, capable of making life-or-death decisions in adverse circumstances with no time to seek guidance back through the chain of command.

At the end of the day, it comes down to one man’s decision on the ground that can affect the whole mission.

“It’s not easy today. In the ‘old days’ you had the bad guy shooting at you so you shot back,” Warrant Officer Class One Allen says.

“Today, the young corporal and his diggers are on the streets of Baghdad or in Afghanistan and many other places, where they’ve got civilians, NGOs (non-government organisations) and the bad guy – he thinks – firing from a crowd. Or is it just a riot over food?

“In those kinds of circumstance, with a lot going on around him, he has to make a split-second decision that can have far-reaching consequences.”

While orders are given – and followed – it is more a case of a commander delivering his intent, with certain guidelines and constraints, and then allowing his juniors to

make decisions and plan their own course of action to achieve that intent.

Lieutenant Colonel Gabriel says it is all predicated on a clear command structure that runs through all levels of the battalion through which leadership direction and intent is communicated.

He says the key thing is for a commander at any level to communicate clearly with his people and to provide them with as much relevant information as possible, as early as possible. You need to communicate your intent, give them an opportunity to understand what’s required and then give them time to relay that information further down the chain.

“One of the key things I try to impart in our junior leaders’ training – in fact leaders at all levels – is that I want them to learn how to think, not what to think.

“What I don’t want to have to do – and it would be impractical anyway – is to teach people a templated solution for every possible scenario.

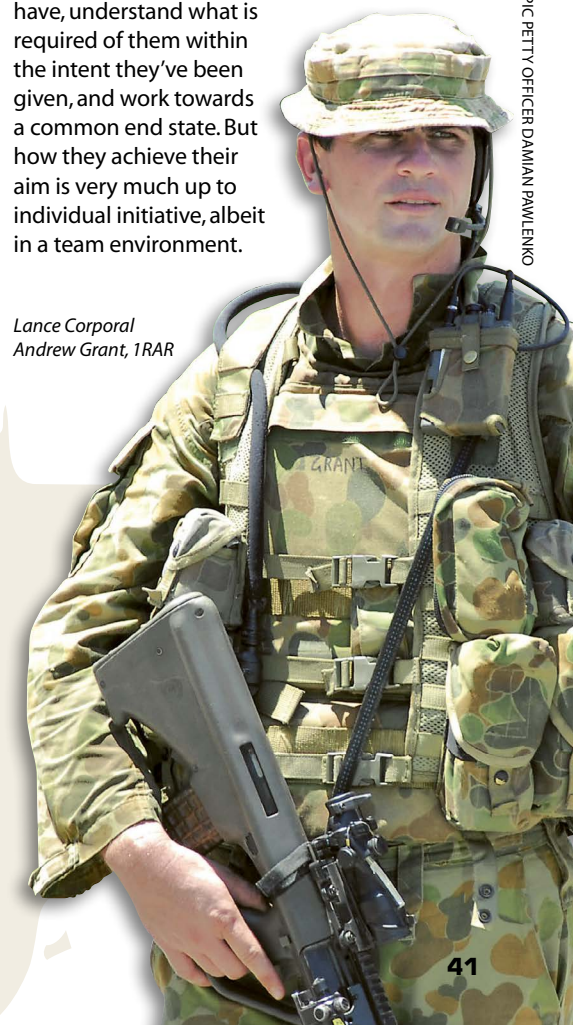
“While drills and instant actions are very important, they are really just designed to give the man on the ground the time to react to the specific situation, make an assessment, make his own decisions to suit the circumstance and achieve his mission.”

Lieutenant Colonel Gabriel says that, contrary to common misconceptions, independence of thought goes right down the line to every man in the battalion – from himself, right down to the newest rifleman

just marched in from the school of infantry. And, indeed, from higher commands down the chain through his command as well.

Soldiers must use the information they have, understand what is required of them within the intent they’ve been given, and work towards a common end state. But how they achieve their aim is very much up to individual initiative, albeit in a team environment.

Lance Corporal Andrew Grant, 1RAR



PIC PETTY OFFICER DAMIAN PAWLONKO



## Infantry Weapons

The weapons suite used by modern infantry is limited by many factors, not least of which is the carrying capacity of the soldier. In a mechanised battalion, however, that capacity is greatly enhanced.

### F88 AUSTEYR:

- 3.6kg
- 5.56mm
- 30-round magazine
- 10 to 14 rounds per second
- 400m effective range
- add-on accessories, include
  - 40mm grenade launcher
  - night sights
  - laser targeting device

### F89 MINIMI LSW

(light support weapon):

- 7.1kg
- 5.56mm
- belt fed
- 750 to 1000 rounds per minute
- effective range 1000m

### MAG 58 MACHINEGUN:

- 10.15kg
- 7.62mm
- belt fed
- 850 rounds per minute
- effective range
  - 800m on bipod
  - 1800m on tripod
  - 2500m max

No one is better placed than the person on the ground to assess his own circumstances.

At the end of the day, someone needs to make a decision, and it often needs to be made far quicker than the soldier on the ground can afford to wait for advice, information or orders through the chain of command. So, as long as they know what their limitations are, they are, in the ideal setting, allowed maximum freedom of action to work towards the plan within their own sphere of influence.

Lieutenant Colonel Gabriel says that, while trusting his men to apply their knowledge, skills and initiative is the only way to operate, freedom of action and following orders are not mutually exclusive.

"Just because someone has the freedom to make a decision does not mean he is making that decision in a vacuum of direction – his actions are still very much predicated on orders, directions and intent."

Formal orders are the commander's means to communicate his intent. He will craft a mission statement that is a balance between a very clear objective, constrained by such things as locations, timings, resources and a host of other possible limiting factors – then give his juniors the freedom of action to decide how they will achieve that task. They can't, however, decide to change one of the key limitations or constraints without recourse back up the chain of command.

Having received his orders, the modern infantry soldier can be transported to the field by a number of means – foot, truck, helicopter,

Higher up the structure, the battalion is built pretty much the same as any other – with three sections plus a headquarters to a platoon; three platoons plus a headquarters and support section to a company; and, three companies plus a support company and headquarters in the battalion. The support company includes a mortar platoon (soon to be mounted in the new M125 AS3 AM (armoured mortar) variant of the old M113); anti-armour platoon (equipped with Javelin missiles); direct fire support weapons platoon; a reconnaissance and surveillance platoon (including snipers); and, a signals platoon, responsible for the 'networking' of the battalion.

In all, at full strength, Lieutenant Colonel Gabriel would expect to command about 800 men – or more correctly these days, 800 men and women (while infanteering is, by law, restricted to men only, women can now be posted to a battalion in support roles). However, having just recently delinked from 5RAR, the battalion is currently [at time of writing] at approximately half strength, but growing – and without a permanent home.

In the fullness of time, 7RAR will be based in Adelaide, in new facilities currently under construction.

It will also be re-equipped with upgraded M113 AS3 and AS4 variants [see CONTACT issue #12 for descriptions] of the venerable M113 tracked armoured personnel carrier, bringing it well into line with the ADF's Hardened and Networked Army aspirations.

growth of 7RAR. Far from being an impost on the busy battalion, though, it was warmly embraced by participants and instructors alike.

Lieutenant Lambert says there is a real advantage for the participating soldiers in being exposed to the people, the equipment and the tempo of the battalion before they march in to the unit, and the battalion gets a good return on its investment in the soldiers it will keep into the future.

There's also a very good continuity for the battalion in training its own soldiers in so far as the instructors on the course know that when they go back to their sections they could potentially be commanding some of the same soldiers they actually helped develop.

For the trainees, too, there's a certain 'realness' about what they are doing and in working closely with the unit they will soon march in to.

"Everything we do is with a focus on relating it to what we do in the battalion," Lieutenant Lambert says.

"Particularly with mechanised operations – that requires a bit more explanation.

"The course we deliver here is exactly the same TMP (training management plan) that's used at the School of Infantry in Singleton, so therefore it has a light-infantry focus. Here we can deliver that TMP, but also add our own spin to it.

"We teach the students how it is done by the TMP but then add that 'in the mech

environment, you'll also have this, this and this at your disposal as well. That seems to work really well."

Private Cameron Reynolds, a participant on the IET course, says he and all his cohorts chose to come to 7RAR.

"I jumped at the chance to do it this way," he says.

"I didn't know very much about 7RAR before I came up here, but I did know they were mechanised and I did know they were undermanned since the split with 5RAR – and I figured that could open up some good opportunities for my future as the battalion grows."

Lieutenant Lambert says the IET course is far from easy – and he makes no apology for that.

"We are not 'playing' soldiers here – this is the real thing."

Run over 10 weeks and culminating in the ominously named 'Exercise Hard Core', the course typically sees up to 25 per cent attrition rate through injury or other causes. Those who fall off the pace, however, are retrained and retested before eventual graduation, but rarely dismissed from the Army.

Infantry IET, or 'the basic rifleman's course', takes the soldiers through a series of inter-related and escalating phases – for example, range phase in week two, HE (high explosive) weapons in week three, building to introduction to offensive operations and security operations in week five.

"At this stage, we conduct attacks and ambushes and that kind of thing, which is primarily designed to fatigue and challenge the soldiers," Lieutenant Lambert says.

"In week six we confirm all those objectives through a section offensive operations test, which pretty much covers the whole spectrum of what they have learnt to that point.

"That's done by moving the soldiers down a 'lane', for want of a better term, where they conduct attacks, ambushes, mine-incident drills and so on.

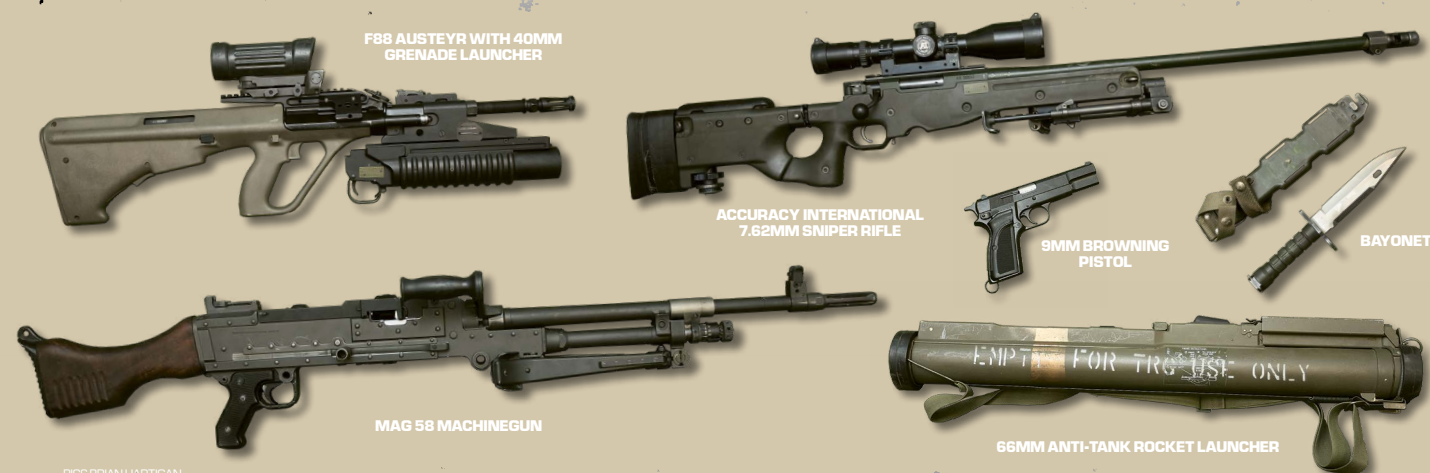
"It's designed to be particularly arduous and is designed that way to make sure they are ready for the next phase."

In week seven, the potential new infantrymen move on to stage four and stage five battle shooting, which comprises sneaker lanes (where the shooter moves forward, engaging pop-up targets), pairs fire-and-movement, group fire-and-movement and other activities escalating in complexity, right up to section attacks by night.

After that, the soldiers 'dig in' for 10 days in a defensive position – another very demanding phase in the trainees lives, working in the heat of the Northern Territory.

Private Reynolds confirms it can be very draining.

"For example, I drank five or six litres of water today already – and it's only about lunchtime – and I've only been to the toilet twice.



PICTURE BY BRIAN HARTIGAN



7RAR LIVE-FIRE ACTIVITY IN TIMOR-LESTE



PICTURE BY SEAMAN KADE ROBERTS

Other weapons that fill an infantry battalion armoury include, bayonet, Browning 9mm pistol, 66mm anti-tank rocket, 84mm Carl Gustav, F1 hand grenade, Claymore anti-personnel mine, Accuracy International 7.62mm sniper rifle, Accuracy International .50 calibre anti-materiel weapon and Javelin anti-tank missile.

parachute or, in the case of 7RAR, the battalion's own embedded armoured personnel carries.

As a mechanised infantry battalion, Darwin-based 7RAR could be described as 'heavy' infantry – certainly by comparison to other, 'light' infantry such as 1RAR or 2RAR, based in Townsville – but the more correct term is 'mechanised'. As such, 7RAR is not a 'typical' infantry unit, but the basics are very similar.

Where a 'normal' infantry section might comprise nine men, 7RAR sections are based on a 10-man format, two of whom man the M113 armoured personnel carrier embedded in the section.

With 7RAR in a period of rapid growth since the delinking with 5RAR, and with several concurrent and important missions on hand, demand on training assets has rarely ever been higher or more important.

Lieutenant Von Lambert is the officer commanding the Keith Downard MM Platoon, a special platoon set up to deliver Infantry IET (initial employment training) to soldiers fresh from recruit training at Kapooka.

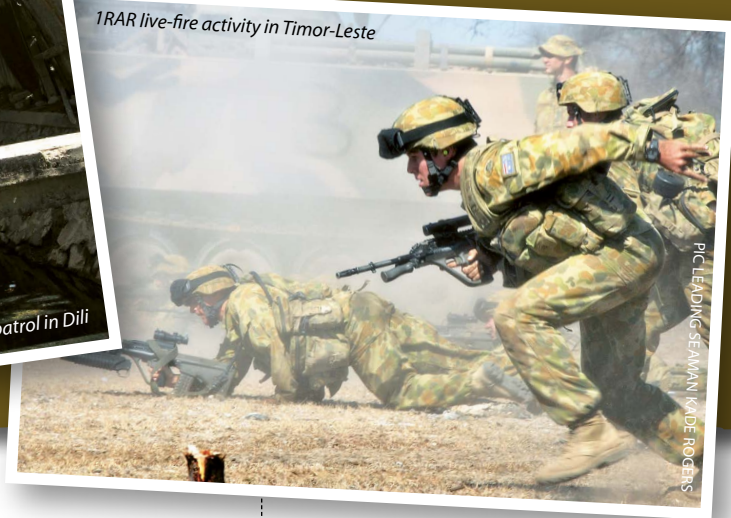
Running an IET course in an operational battalion is a rare, though not unique situation made necessary by Army's high operational tempo, generally and specifically the rapid





Private Corey Wooten, 7RAR

1RAR live-fire activity in Timor-Leste



PIC LEADING AIRCRAFTSMAN GUY YOUNG

7RAR on patrol in Dili



**THE CHALLENGE FOR 7RAR NOW, AS WE GROW AND RE-ESTABLISH OURSELVES, IS TO BUILD ON THE BATTALION'S REPUTATION AND TRADITION AND BRING OUR OWN STORIES TO THAT HISTORY**

"Some of it is more mentally challenging, though. You're always thinking of what you need to do next and what lies ahead.

"Yes it's tough, but we all know it's done this way for good reason and we all know we have to get through the shit to get to the light at the end of the tunnel.

"For me, that light is 1 September – the day we march out. When I get that far, I'm in. I'll be a fully qualified soldier, as good as all the other diggers.

"That day I know I'll be very proud of what I've achieved so far."

When he marches out from the Infantry IET Course, Private Reynolds and 7RAR's other new infantry soldiers are presented with the green beret, featuring the Infantry Corps badge, which they will wear with pride for years to come.

Pride – the good healthy kind – is something that all soldiers, sailors and airmen share, none more so than infantry – pride in themselves, pride in their unit and pride in the history they have inherited and continue to contribute to.

Unit history, customs and traditions play a very big part in the daily lives of infantrymen – in fact it goes to the very core of who they are.

Lieutenant Colonel Gabriel, sitting at his desk in his temporary headquarters, appropriately housed in what was the 5/7RAR Museum, explains that history is an essential part of the battalion's identity.

"History is part of our image, of who we are.

"It is an essential part of building a spirit – an esprit de corps – without which we would just be a collection of blokes with weapons.

"History and that esprit de corps gives us a sense of pride and purpose and drives us on to do our best in all that we do, to represent ourselves and our unit in the best possible light."

He says that while unit colours, flags, bands and so on are the outward, optical façade of a unit, it is its intangible spirit that makes it a unit and enables it to deliver a warfighting capability.

"The challenge for 7RAR now, as we grow and re-establish ourselves, is to build on the battalion's reputation and tradition and bring our own stories to that history.

"Every man here is aware of what has gone before and is conscious of the part he is playing today in writing the future history of the battalion."

Looking to that future, Lieutenant Colonel

Gabriel says the battalion is growing quickly and looking forward to the challenges ahead.

"The Army appears to be recruiting very well for infantrymen – which is a great thing. It's always good to be talking about getting bigger rather than talking about getting smaller.

"We are also anticipating the arrival of our first company's worth of the upgraded M113 AS4 vehicles and are fully prepared for their arrival having recently completed most of our conversion training.

"And I can tell you, having done my own conversion course, that that vehicle will deliver a fantastic capability to this unit."

He says 7RAR, despite being a battalion in its own right for such a short time, is ready for operations and is already providing a valuable capability.

"We'll be here in Darwin – or so my latest information says – until the new facilities in Adelaide are completed and ready for occupation from January 2011.

"Having this additional mechanised battalion will offer the Army a huge increase in capability and additional options for Government, and will also open up excellent opportunities for soldiers and officers as they migrate between one mechanised battalion and the other at various stages in their careers."

Warrant Officer Class One Allen sees the future of the battalion and the Army generally in a very positive light.

"As little as eight or 10 years ago when the current tempo of operations picked up, soldiers who eventually got a deployment overseas tended to come home and say, 'We'll, I've been there, done that', and moved on to a new career," he says.

"Today, however, going on operations is not a key event or a career highlight – operations are just a part of normal business.

"Because of that, soldiers come to work, they work hard at their core business and then they go home. And look forward to coming back again tomorrow, because it all means something, there's a sense of purpose."

He also believes soldiers are a lot smarter today than 'in his day'.

"A few years ago when we came back, cashed up from operations we bought big cars and motorbikes and generally splashed out.

## INFANTRY

"Today we have young diggers here who think a bit more about what they are doing, and listen to advice, and we have some here who have one, two or even three houses in their investment portfolios."

They are also smarter, or at least clued in to new technology and equipment and all that that means to modern soldiering.

"When I sit in the new vehicles I'm struggling to adjust, but these guys jump in and 'zip, zip' with their Xbox thumbs and they just get it."

He says that while today's soldiers still drink – but not nearly as much as previous generations – they still have that sense of humour that sets Aussie soldiers apart. They are still Aussie diggers through and through.

And while the Army has captured nine core values on a 'shopping list' for easy reference, the soldiers Warrant Officer Class One Allen works with live by those values every day without needing to think about them or refer to a list.

"One of the big things they have today, and need to have more than we used to years ago, is a real sense of moral courage.

"On operations especially, moral courage is a big thing.

"Our soldiers have to deal with very sensitive situations and very complex scenarios, and make the right decision every time.

"It takes real courage to deal with that every day.

"Even at home, because of the way modern society has become more tolerant of drugs and such, our guys really have to be prepared to step up and say 'no'.

"That's courage, and I see it every day."

Spend a day among the soldiers of 7RAR, or any battalion in the Royal Australian Regiment, and you too will discover that contrary to Xbox- or Y-generation stereotypes, the newest generation of Aussie soldiers still enjoy the customs and traditions, history and the hard yards of basic soldiering.

"It's what sets them apart from civilians. And being infantry sets them apart from the rest of the Army," Warrant Officer Class One Allen says.

"They like all that stuff, they like being 'The Pig Battalion'.

"So, I think the future bodes well for us."

And for the Royal Australian Regiment.

## Role of the Australian Infantry

*is to seek out and close with the enemy; to kill or capture him; to seize and hold ground; to repel attack, by day or night, regardless of season, weather or terrain.*

## Infantry Missions

An infantry battalion can be tasked with a wide range of missions, most of which fall under the following headings:

**Attack:** is one of the main infantry functions – *to seek out and close with the enemy; to kill or capture him; to seize ground.*

**Defence:** the opposite to attack – *to hold ground; to repel attack.*

**Patrol:** probably the most common activity conducted by the infantry soldier, usually on foot. Patrolling is required whether attacking or defending, to find and survey positions – *to seek out, [but not always] close with the enemy.*

**Pursuit:** a role best suited to infantry, especially in urban or rugged terrain – *to seek out and close with the enemy; to kill or capture him.*

**Escort:** often involves protecting friendly units from the enemy, especially other infantry – *to repel attack.*

**Misc:** other tasks, even in peacetime, often take advantage of the ready manpower in an infantry battalion, for example in aiding civil authorities after a natural disaster.

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# AUSSIES IN CONTACT-AGAIN

DIGGER SHOT IN THE BACK KEEPS FIGHTING



Lieutenant Cliff De Laine gives orders during an early morning battle on 26 September 2007



Lieutenant Cliff De Laine takes a breather during a lull in fighting on 26 August 2007

WORDS BRIAN HARTIGAN  
PICS CORPORAL JAMIE OSBORNE

**A**ustralian soldiers with the Reconstruction Task Force (RTF) in Afghanistan were involved in several battles with Taliban extremists in recent months and while enemy casualties are thought to be high, the Australians have fared much better.

In one incident, a 1RAR section scout was shot twice in the back by 7.62mm ammunition but was saved by his body armour – and returned heavy fire on his attackers before stopping to check himself for holes.

Also notable about several of these attacks was that Joint Public Affairs Unit cameramen were on hand to film the action and capture our soldiers going about their business calmly and professionally. Full credit goes to Corporal Jamie Osborne in particular who not only captured live battle action on video, but also took the time to shoot quality still photographs as well.



An Aussie soldier covers his mates during a firefight, 26 August 2007



Watching for enemy activity during a firefight, 26 September 2007





On alert after a firefight, 26 August 2007

# SHOT IN THE BACK

*Private Philip Hodgskiss from 1RAR talks about the day he was shot twice in the back...*

"I'm the lead scout for the section. Our section was forward left, which stopped for a short harbour at which time we were called in to receive orders for what we were about to do. I stood up and turned around to walk in to my section commander.

At that time I was shot in the back by a Taliban from the north west and, after that, all hell broke loose with bullets flying everywhere.

I turned back and faced where the bullets had come from to try and see if I could see the enemy. I then hit the ground as fast as possible. I crawled forward and popped back up and started shooting.

Initially, I knew I'd been shot because it felt like someone had run up behind me and punched me very hard in the back.

My initial instinct was just to maintain fire superiority – just to keep shooting, to get their heads down.

After I put my first magazine down, I checked myself to see if there was blood coming out of my front, and then my back, and let the rest of my section know that I'd been shot.

After the intensity of the firing had slowed down, our first-aider for the section came over to check me out and give me a once over. He removed my webbing and lifted my body armour and cut my shirt open to see if I was bleeding.

He said, 'Yeah, you've definitely been shot, but it doesn't look like anything has gone through'.

The body armour saved my life.

I didn't feel any pain to begin with. My training took over instinctive – just shoot back, just make sure that you've got cover – which for me was a pile of dirt about 30cm high.

I was actually worried that I might be sent back to the headquarters for the rest of the mission. I think it was very important that I just kept on going with the job."

*Private Philip Hodgskiss, 1RAR, holds the ceramic plate from his body armour that saved his life, and the two bullets that nearly took it*



In one of the incidents captured on film, Taliban extremists fired automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) at an Australian patrol from the cover of an orchard. The patrol immediately returned fire, engaging in an intense confrontation over the following four hours.

Platoon Commander Lieutenant Glenn Neilson says the Taliban established strong firing positions and were reinforced with more fighters as the attack progressed.

"We were engaged with some very accurate fire from a range of about 300m and there were a lot of bullets coming our way," he says.

"Making use of all the weapons at our disposal, including the Australian Light Armoured Vehicle (ASLAV) and Bushmaster Infantry Mobility Vehicle (IMV), we held our ground."

Another Australian platoon supported the movement of RTF troops by providing essential covering fire as soldiers moved across hazardous open ground.

Afghan National Army troops, trained by the Australians, also participated in the patrol and performed admirably.

Dutch F16 fighters and Apache helicopters also lent support.

"Together we neutralised the positions that were causing us trouble," Lieutenant Neilson says.

RTF Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Harry Jarvie says Australian soldiers have been regularly tested by Taliban extremists and in every case performed magnificently.

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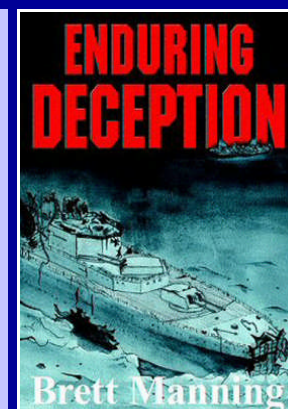
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Gary Warner - Geraldton Guardian Newspaper - 16 March 2005

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# SCHOOL'S OUT – WHAT NOW?

GAP YEAR COULD BE THE ANSWER

WORDS BRIAN HARTIGAN PICS ADF

**H**ave you ever thought about joining the Army, Navy or RAAF but were turned off by the thought of signing your life away to an institution you knew scarily little about?

Well now there's two excellent solutions to the problem – especially if you are between 17 and 24 years of age.

First, (obviously) CONTACT magazine is here to tell you all we can about life in uniform.

Then there's the Gap Year – a very clever (from Defence's viewpoint) and convenient (from yours) initiative that allows you to join the Army, Navy or Air Force for just 12 months.

'The Gap Year' is designed to capture the interests of young Aussies who might otherwise waste their first year after finishing school to bum around Europe, or who simply haven't made up their minds what to do next.

Defence, not unreasonably, hopes that having tried it for a year, many young people will choose to stay on for a longer career – there's even financial incentives in place to encourage this.

Looking closer at the Gap Year, CONTACT found a variety of choices open to school-leavers and a fair degree of difference in the options each Service is offering.

Comparing the three, Navy and RAAF seem to be offering a sort of familiarisation tour of their respective organisations in that participants are not assigned to a job per-se, but are exposed to a variety of experiences across various bases and ships. The Army, on the other hand offers a selection of 11 jobs (four restricted to males only) in which Gap Year participants train and eventually work alongside regular soldiers. You can even start Army recruit training without deciding which job you want to eventually go to.

Everyone starts the Gap Year at basic-training level.

In the Army, this is no different to any other soldier and involves 12 weeks at Kapooka near Wagga Wagga, NSW, graduating as a private or equivalent, followed by initial employment training (IET) courses of various lengths, depending on the job.

Navy's 11-week basic course at Westernport, Victoria, is followed by a four-week mariner's skills course and a week-long tour of ADFA and the officer school at HMAS Creswell – a total of 16 weeks before graduating as Seaman General Experience.

The RAAF's basic course is the equivalent of a combined Initial Officer Course and Airman Recruit Course and is conducted at Point Cook, Victoria. During the Gap Year, RAAF participants hold the rank of Officer Cadet.

Dear to any employee's heart, and no less so a young person, is wages. Here again, it varies depending on the Service. Yearly rates to be expected are; \$30,015 in the RAAF; between \$33,000 and \$46,817, depending on how long is spent at sea, with the Navy; and, either \$37,609.38 or \$39,558.47, depending on the job, in the Army.



However, participants should note, the figures above are the per-year-equivalent rates you will get after graduating from initial employment training. Recruits earn \$27,295.46 (per-year-equivalent) in all three Services, and \$30,855.42 (per-year-equivalent) during IET courses in the Army.

Pay is complicated even more by the addition of a large range of extra allowances. One of note that everyone will find added to their salary is Service Allowance – \$10,380.74 per-year to compensate for the unique requirements that service life imposes, but this only applies after graduating from training.

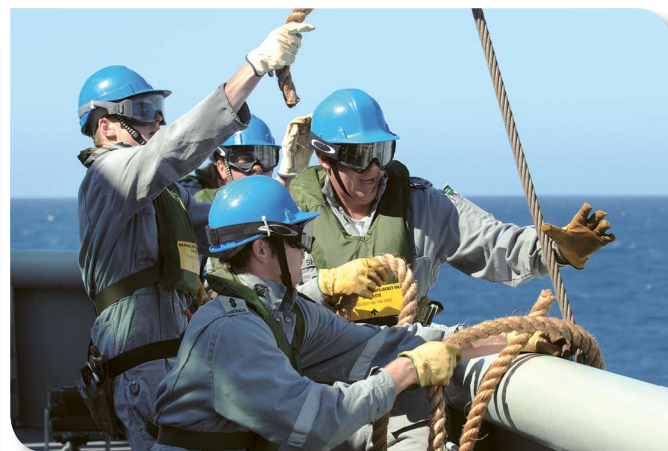
The bottom line is that a young school leaver of just 17 years of age could be earning anywhere between \$40k and \$57k per year in their first 12 months! Stick around and the pay keeps going up with time, experience, qualifications and rank.

But what if you sign up and you really don't like it? No problem. You can resign at any time from Navy or RAAF.

Army is a little more restrictive, though. You can apply for discharge at any time during recruit training, but you must finish the training. But if you graduate and decide to stay on, you cannot resign before the Gap Year finishes.

After a somewhat superficial examination of the ADF's Gap Year scheme (more detailed analysis should be undertaken before signing up), CONTACT suggests that all three Services will deliver high-quality training and an unbeatable addition to a young person's CV. However, our analysis is that the RAAF and Navy appear to be running try-before-you-buy exposure to the Service, whereas the Army is offering a fair dinkum job.

CONTACT would like to reiterate that Defence Recruiting does not advertise with us, so the above opinions are genuinely ours and not influenced by the prospect of financial reward.



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# Shooting the breeze

WORDS AND PICS  
BRIAN HARTIGAN

**S**o it is for 2 Cavalry Regiment in Darwin. Owning the best deployable equipment in the Top End and being one unit in a relatively small available pool, 2 Cav Regt soldiers have seen quite a few operations in recent years.

During a live-fire exercise at Mount Bundy Training Area near Darwin in September, I travelled down range with Troopers Mathew Lindsay and Kim Jennion and Corporal Paul Portelli on board an ASLAV called 'Chewie'. Between them, the three cavalymen have seen seven operational deployments to Iraq or Afghanistan, with Corporal Portelli looking forward to adding a fourth mission to his personal tally, early next year.

The aim of this particular live-fire exercise was also born out of operational tempo. Its purpose, to fully qualify new ASLAV gunners who had actually commenced their course

in Iraq, but needed one final competency on the range back home to get the all-important last tick of approval on their course reports.

To become a gunner on an ASLAV, soldiers must first qualify as an ASLAV driver and, after amassing about four years' experience in that role, complete a four-week gunners' course.

As a gunner, the soldier must learn to maintain the weapons on the ASLAV, service the turret and, of course, master the sighting systems to deliver accurate fire on both static and moving targets and while the ASLAV itself is also moving.

Because of the tempo of recent operations, 2 Cav was falling behind in its training schedule and had to do something to claw back lost time. So it was decided to commence the gunners' course while still in Iraq. However, with only static targets and a static firing point available on the range in Iraq, use of Mount Bundy's excellent

Armoured Fighting Vehicle Field Firing Target System was necessary – the range enabling armoured vehicles to fire at fixed and moving targets while on the move.

The ASLAV sighting system, as explained to me by Trooper Jennion, is pretty complex in terms of what it actually does and can achieve, yet is very user friendly, he says.

When the gunner takes aim through either the amplified optical 'day sight' or the infra-red 'thermal' sight, several computer algorithms set to work. The computers take inputs from gyros on the vehicle, calculate distance to the target using laser range finding, allow for the speed and direction of both the target and the ASLAV, factor in wind speed and direction as well as ambient temperature and humidity, before producing a firing solution that will keep the barrel locked on to the target, regardless of the myriad variables. Of course, this is done so quickly as to be undetectable to the human eye.

Computers aren't everything, of course, and gunner skills play a big part, especially making necessary minor adjustments in a rapidly changing environment. But, in the end when the trigger is pulled, the gunner and his commander can be almost certain of a first-round hit on target.

Despite all the technology, the human finger on the trigger remains the most

important factor in deciding whether a target lives or dies. And, in the case of the ASLAV, two humans make that decision. While the gunner is the one who ultimately fires the shot, the commander is the final arbiter, authorising his trigger man to do so.

With a target acquired and the firing solution locked in, the commander double checks that the gunner has selected the right target and the most appropriate ammunition type before finally making the decision to engage and ordering, 'FIRE!'

When the trigger is pulled, the gunner holds it until he hears the second round fire, then releases before the third goes down range. Without further instruction from the commander he continues to fire three-round bursts, adjusting aim as necessary, until ordered to stop or to change to a new target.

He could release just single shots or, if the circumstances dictate and the commander so orders, hold pressure on the trigger to sustain fire indefinitely, mindful of course of proscribed limitations on barrel heating and wear. In normal operation the 25mm Bushmaster cannon fires 200 rounds per minute or, by selection, 100 rounds per minute.

As simply as flicking a switch, the gunner can also select a different ammunition type – ball, high explosive or armour piercing. Or he can choose to use the co-axial 7.62mm

Mag 58 machinegun instead of the 25mm cannon.

After firing, the loading mechanism of the main gun holds the next round poised and ready and, when the trigger is pulled, sets it in place for the breach block and firing mechanism to slam it forward into the chamber, where it is immediately fired. When firing stops, the feed mechanism is again ready with the next round. Because of this cyclic action, the first round fired at the next trigger pull is always the same as the last round fired, even when a new ammunition type is selected.

During battle runs, the driver, situated towards the front left of the vehicle, is invisible as he steers us through this bush-track battle run, battened down below his hatch, using thick glass periscopes to view the road ahead and to the sides. The gunner is also seated wholly within the vehicle, eyes peering through one of two sights, while the commander is normally seated, head above



Spent ammunition link – 'happiness is a warm gun'

Crew debrief – Trooper Kim Jennion (left in gunner's hatch), Trooper Mathew Lindsay (front in driver's hole) and Corporal Paul Portelli (right in crew commander's position)

AUSTRALIAN LIGHT ARMoured VEHICLE (ASLAV)

## SIZE/WEIGHT

**Length:** 6.53m  
**Width:** 2.62m  
**Height:** 2.69m  
**Empty weight:** 11,680kg  
**Combat weight:** 13,200kg

## MECHANICALS

**Engine:** Detroit Diesel 6V53T  
**Power:** 275hp  
**Transmission:** Allison MT653 auto (5 forward, 1 reverse)  
**Suspension:** 8-wheel independent  
**Drive:** fulltime 4WD – selective 8WD  
**Power steering:** 4 front wheels

## PERFORMANCE

**Speed:** 100km/h+  
**Range:** 660km  
**Max trench crossing:** 2m  
**Max grade:** 60%  
**Max side slope:** 30%

## WEAPONS

**Primary:** 25mm M242 'Bushmaster' chain gun  
**Secondary:** 7.62mm M240 machinegun  
**Supplementary:** 7.62mm MAG58 machinegun  
**Ancillary:** 2 x 4-tube 76mm grenade launchers

M242 BUSHMASTER CHAIN GUN

**Calibre:** 25mm NATO  
**Firearm action:** chain gun  
**Manufacturer:** ATK  
**Barrel length:** 2175mm  
**Effective range:** 2000m  
**Max range:** 6800m  
**Rate of fire:**  
200 rounds-per-minute max rate  
100 rounds-per-minute low rate  
single-shot semi-auto  
**Muzzle velocity:** 1100m/s  
**Weight:** 110kg





deck, watching for alternate, higher-priority targets in the peripheries. At any moment, however, he too can disappear inside to monitor systems and, if necessary, over-ride the gunner's control. He might do this if, for example, he wanted the gunner to take aim at a new, more pressing target where explaining his intent might take longer than to show.

So, at the end of this shoot, I get a chance to ask what do these experienced soldiers think of the vehicle they drive?

Corporal Portelli says that after receiving numerous modifications and upgrades over the years since its introduction, the ASLAV is an exceptional machine.

He says the sighting system currently installed on the Australianised LAV is about fifth generation, while some American counterparts he spoke to in Iraq were still making do with first generation.

Another important upgrade, he explains, is that turret operation is now electric instead of the original hydraulic system. This, according to the man who has used it for several years and in countless situations, is much quieter, a little faster and much easier to maintain. It is also much easier to make small adjustments in position and for the sighting system to keep the weapon on target – and it stays on target, regardless of what the rest of the vehicle is doing beneath it.

Incorporation of spall lining is another modification and, while it is a very welcome addition for crew peace of mind, the added weight means the modern ASLAV is now too heavy to swim!

In summary, Corporal Portelli tells me something I thought was very unusual for an operator of any piece of equipment, military or otherwise – "It's just about perfect as it is. I can't think of anything else you could add to it to make it any better, except maybe an anti-tank missile system – but they trialled that and it didn't really work out."

How did he assess Trooper Jennion's performance on the range? Not too bad – but, it seems, it was almost a formality after the time they spent in simulation recently. With the unavoidable gap between completing all other aspects of the course in Iraq and the final mobile shoot at Mount Bundy, a little revision was appropriate, so, Trooper Jennion spent, "All day every day for the past two weeks in the CPT" [Crew Procedural Trainer – one of three ASLAV simulators, currently installed at Robertson Barracks].

"The CPT is excellent. It's exactly the same on the inside as the real thing and does everything the real thing does, except fire live rounds," Trooper Jennion says.

"With the cost of live ammunition, there's no way you could do that much training

on the range. But, to be able to do that much training is so great in terms of getting familiar with the equipment and procedures. It becomes second nature."

Corporal Portelli says simulated training is even better than a live range in some respects.

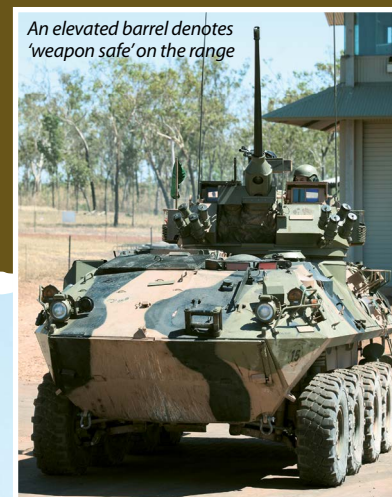
"You can actually take on 'real' targets in scenario-based missions in the CPT instead of just flat timber targets out here.

"And, the whole mission is recorded on harddrive, so you can go over it for debriefing straight away.

"It's a fantastic tool."

With three fully networked CPTs at Robertson Barracks and six more on the way, 2 Cav is looking forward to even greater flexibility in complex and effective training opportunities, even when local ranges are closed during total fire bans, the wet season or when other units are using them.

But then, there's always the chance of seeing the real thing overseas.



An elevated barrel denotes 'weapon safe' on the range



Rapid engagement of multiple targets on the move



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# Welcome Home

WORDS AND PICS  
BRIAN HARTIGAN

Whenever our soldiers, sailors and airmen go away on a mission, families are left behind. Wives and husbands work even harder to maintain the family while the Defence member is away. Loved ones worry for the safety of their man or woman. Births and birthdays, anniversaries, the first words, the first steps – large chunks of a families' history are missed. But eventually they come home, and the excitement is huge.



As Kelly waits in the arrival's hall at Darwin International Airport, she does her best to entertain daughters Erin 3 and Keira 16 months, neither of whom slept the night before – because Daddy is coming home today.

While Daddy – Adam – has missed 10 months out of Keira's life, he did manage to be there for her birth and her first birthday. Erin, however, missed out on having Daddy home for her recent birthday. But that's OK – they are planning a special birthday party to make up for it, "and Daddy has lots of presents for me," she says.



Nearby, 8-year-old Jayden can't wait for his Dad to come home. "I miss wrestling with him the most," he says. "He's a great dad."

Jayden's Mum, Vron, says the support she's had while her husband, Marc, was away has been fantastic.

"DFO [Defence Families Organisation] have been great," she says. "They phoned every week to check up on us and they took us for a family cruise on the harbour a couple of weeks ago."

"They've been really great."

She also says there was a great atmosphere of support and networking among the families left behind.

"There wasn't one man left in our street and, come tomorrow, mine will be the only man home," she says as she wipes away a sudden outbreak of tears.

"Sorry. I shouldn't be crying when he's coming home – I'm just so relieved."



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# THE LONG ROAD HOME

Five months is a long time to be away from home – at least it was for me. The thought that I would be back in Australia in a matter of days was more than a little surreal. Home had become a magical, idealised concept, and the last days between Somalia and my front door were an exquisite torture.

**T**he dying days of Operation Solace were a combination of nervous tension and relief. While the operation had not been trench warfare, it had had its moments and, with one tragic exception, our luck had held out. As our imminent departure grew closer I became progressively less keen to push my luck. It was time to go home.

The deployment to Somalia had become a very predictable routine, which was both a blessing and a curse. The cycle of patrols, cordon and search and vehicle control points had a tiresome familiarity in what was, by the late stage of the operation, a relatively tame area of operations. This, predictability, had its pitfalls.

Boredom, homesickness and over familiarity can be hard on morale. The eight individuals who made up the vehicle crews in 23 Section had gotten to know each other very well over the long, hot days in Africa. Although we had forged a series of unique friendships, we had lived in each others pockets for more than five months and it would be fair to say that by May 1993 we were getting sick of the sight of each other.

The relationship between my driver and I was a prime example of the malaise that would inevitably descend on a group of restless young men confined to each others company for such a long time. Pete and I had gotten off to a shaky start when we were first thrown together as a crew in January. Both stubborn, impatient and with something to prove to the other, the inevitable clash early in our deployment had lead to an embarrassing rebuke from our section commander.

However, despite our poor start, Pete and I had developed a strong friendship and mutual respect. Over the previous five months we had learned to live with each other and, more importantly, how to keep out of each other's way when things were tense. Of course in the close confines of an armoured vehicle this didn't always work.

We had already had a run-in a few weeks earlier. After a long series of patrols we had been changing track in the middle of the night during a torrential downpour when Pete took exception to some smart-assed comment I made while yelling directions at him as we ran the track back on to the vehicle. Standing up in his driver's hole he gave me a mouthful.

Not to be outdone I ran up the vehicle's glacius plate and proceeded to explain the ways in which he could pull his head in. Pete, choose discretion over valor (and an insubordination charge) and with barely contained indignation, sat back in his seat and stared defiantly back at me. Put round two down to me outranking my driver.

Some weeks later and we were that much closer to the end of the operation and just that much more tired of each other's company. Sitting in the back of our APC at a vehicle control point, Pete and I were playing another of countless hands of cards during a break from pickets. In the oppressive heat, the boredom, tension and frustration that comes from being close to the end, but not quite there, boiled to the surface.

Laying on the ration-box card table what I was certain was a winning hand, I grinned at Pete and waited for his

capitulation. To my surprise he snorted and explained how he had actually won by virtue of an obscure rule that, after thousands of hands, had never been called into play before.

"Bullshit!" was my indignant retort.

"Them's the breaks me old mate," Pete smirked as he reached for the deck.

I grabbed the un-dealt cards and snatched them away. The smirk dropped from Pete's face and he threw his cards at me from across the back of the carrier. My short fuse quickly reached its end and I sent the remaining deck flying into his chest.

We both lit up like stupid schoolboys and I reached out and grabbed a handful of Pete's shirt. He, in turn, grabbed a handful of mine. With our short tempers spiralling out of control we then both cocked a right hand and attempted to unbalance the other while standing up in the cramped confines of the M113. Fortunately for the both of us, with the cargo hatch shut, the crew compartment is only about 130cm high and we both smacked our thick skulls on the roof before a punch was thrown.

The simultaneous blows to our hot heads was the circuit breaker we needed. Glaring at each other across the card-strewn carrier, a smile began to spread across Pete's face. With my rage quickly being replaced with embarrassment I started to chuckle in spite of myself.

Letting each other go we both sat back down and laughed out loud. Pete scooped up a card from the floor and flicked it at my face.

"Your deal."

The time had finally come to get out of Dodge. The French were rolling into Baidoa in increasing numbers to take over from the 1RAR Battalion Group. With the bulk of the Australian contingent already on its way to Mogadishu, 2 Troop was designated the last APC troop to leave the rejuvenated inland city.

In contrast to our outbound expedition, the return trip to the Somali capital was to be a much-less anxious journey down what was, at one time, one of the most dangerous stretches of road in the world. The rocket run toward home was going to take us back through some of the wild landscape we had helped to tame. So without the abundance of ammunition, spare parts and freight strapped to our vehicles as for our arrival, 23 Section lined up on the road leading out of the Baidoa airfield for the last time.

While I sat waiting in my turret I looked back at the collection of ragged, roughly-restored buildings that had housed the Battalion Group. I felt a mixture of impatience and melancholy. As keen as I was to get home to my family, there was a small part of me that would miss this place and the adventure it represented. After all, what were the chances of ever getting to do something like this again?

Little did we know...

We finally rolled out of the airfield and past the front gate that was now manned by the French Foreign Legion. As we passed by the security point, our enthusiastic waves goodbye were all but ignored by the grim-faced legionnaires. I couldn't help but wonder how the city would fair under its ominous new authority.

WORDS WAYNE COOPER PICS ADF AND COOPER COLLECTION



The last drive through town served as a poignant reminder of why the shedding of blood, sweat and tears had been worthwhile. The contrast in Baidoa between our arrival and our departure was striking. The City of Death, as it was known in January, had come back to life and our reward was the satisfaction of knowing we had been a major factor in its resurrection.

After weaving our way through the bustling city centre, 2 Troop picked up speed down the long, straight stretch of road that led out of town. 23 Section was last in the order of march and, as the Charlie call sign, Pete and I were operating the last Australian APC to rumble out of Baidoa. With my turret traversed over the rear of the vehicle as we descended down the escarpment, the fringes of the city disappeared between the barrels of my machineguns for the last time.

The Troop raced down the highway

Pete's act of ill-conceived generosity turned to mayhem when the bag exploded as it hit the ground with the inertia of the vehicle's relative speed. The result was devastating as the half dozen speeding cans crashed through the group and sent them scampering away from the miniature canted landslide.

"Oh fuck!" was Pete's stunned observation.

With relief I watched as with all but a few hopping exceptions the angry group managed to avoid the ballistic bounty that had sped past their legs. Relieved that we had not caused any serious casualties, the absurdity of the situation overtook us. Pete had already begun to lose it.

"Sorry, but you didn't get the strike mate," I managed to blurt out before we both descended into hysterical laughter.

After arriving back at the Mogadishu port, one major obstacle stood between the Third

With the ordeal of inspection behind us and the vehicles stowed in the bowels of HMA Ships Tobruk and Jervis Bay, we could at last sit back and let some of the pent-up tension we had stored begin to work its way out of our tired bodies. In the relative safety of the secure port facility, behind the fortress-like walls made from old shipping containers and over-watched by machinegun posts, I walked around in shorts and thongs safe in the knowledge that the danger was all behind me...or so I thought.

The night before we were due to fly out, I struck up a conversation with one of the many US military policemen who were patrolling the port. The MP told me of his desire to acquire a slouch hat and, after having been forced to carry an unused and now all-but destroyed slouchy in my echelon bag for the past six months, I was

the far wall behind me took exception to some behavior observed in the pocket and decided to fire their machinegun by way of a disincentive. Unfortunately for me they didn't elevate their gun before pulling the trigger and sent a burst of automatic fire slamming into the compound across the way.

The rounds hit the bitumen a scant few feet away from where I squatted, the crack of the air slitting over my head and the loud smack of the projectiles skipping off the blue metal combining in a heart-stopping screech. I sat frozen for a few seconds, looking over to where the rounds had left gouges in the ground and pondered the geometry. I considered whether I would be pondering anything if I had been standing up when the burst had made its way over the wall?

Eventually my brain engaged and I scrambled out of the spotlight and up against the nearest shipping container.

Virtually speechless, I left if to my nearby comrades to hurl abuse at the morons in the tower. Breathing heavily, I only managed to swear under my breath.

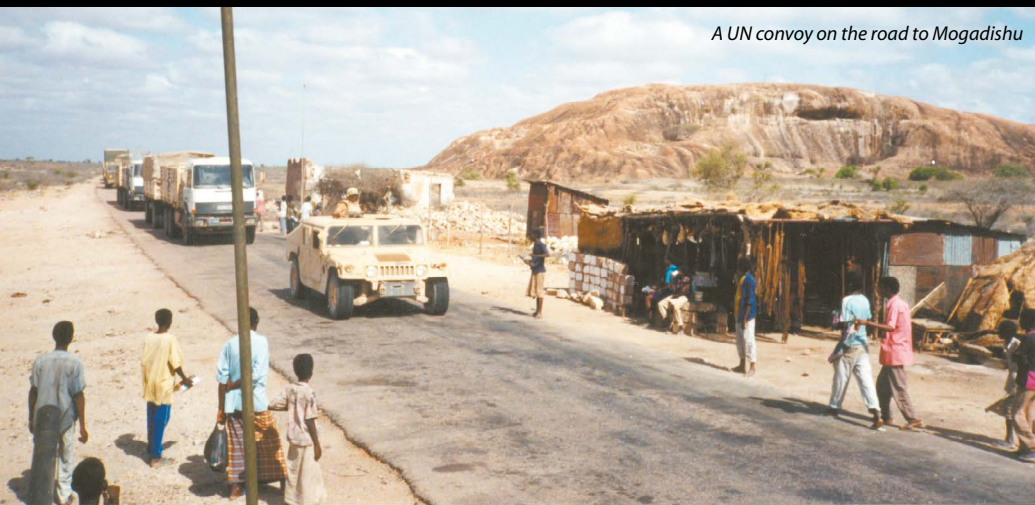
"Ok, I've fucking had enough!"

Dawn arrived on our last day in Somalia. Having farewelled Pete and the others who had volunteered to take the slow trip home on the boats, the remainder of 2 Troop loaded their packs and ech bags onto a Unimog before getting onto the chartered Somali buses for the trip to the airport. Sitting in the decrepit soft-skinned vehicles with our empty, bubble-wrapped rifles on our laps was an unnerving final journey through the wild streets of Mogadishu for the usually well-armed, now defenseless cavalymen.

After waiting at the airport for an hour we watched the RAAF 707 land and taxi toward us. With each step toward the plane,

the dream of home became less and less obscure. Boarding the meticulously clean aircraft was like stepping into another world. In coming aboard, we had returned to a world of order, certainty and safety. As the aircraft's doors closed behind us, shutting out the stench and noise of Somalia's life-and-death struggle, home seemed that much closer.

To our delight, and perhaps by well considered planning, the friendly and attractive RAAF stewards were waiting to greet us with a smile and two cans of VB per man. We taxied out between the C130s and Starlifters and eventually the 707 powered up and, with a rowdy cheer from the pent-up diggers, we left Somalia for good. By the time the plane reached cruising altitude the beers were all consumed and but for a quiet few, the exhausted soldiers on board were fast asleep.



A UN convoy on the road to Mogadishu



Wayne Cooper and Tiño Siliato on board an abandoned Centurian tank



23 Section check out a war relic

toward Mogadishu as fast as our aged M113s would carry us. Stopping every hour or so to conduct the mandatory halt parades, the mood was buoyant now we had made the first move toward home. The euphoria spilled over into exuberant generosity as the boys filled the arms of any locals that happened by during one of our stops with chocolate, bottled water and the calorie-charged US rations we would soon no longer require.

Unfortunately for one poor group of Somalis, Pete's generosity was delivered with painful over-enthusiasm. After months of eating the Yank MREs, Pete had been coveting one of the few remaining Australian ration packs left in the country, which he had kept in his driver's hole for a rainy day that never came. In a gesture symbolic of his imminent departure he withdrew the tightly-packed satchel of cans and threw it toward an oncoming group of locals as we sped down the road at 60km/h.

Fourth Calvary Regiment and the magical 707 ride home – The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service. Several inspectors had flown to Somalia to ensure we would not bring home any nasties from the most disease-ridden place on Earth. This meant our diesel-and-dust covered APCs had to literally be stripped down and cleared of every speck of dirt before being allowed onto the ships for repatriation to Australia.

This was to prove the most excruciating part of the whole deployment. In the near 50 degree heat of the Somali summer, with steam cleaners scorching our sunburned skin, we contorted our bodies into all conceivable shapes in an effort to remove every grain of red soil from our vehicles. The now demonised quarantine inspectors, to their credit, piously and bravely stood over the humorless cavalymen to ensure the national interest was protected from the cocktail of germs we had amassed over six months.

about to make the young Yank's day. As the MP headed back to his billet to see what he could rustle up by way of a trade, I returned to the lean-to we had made home for the night to get the battered object of his desire.

Feeling generous, I thought I would sweeten the deal and throw in the shoulder insignia that I knew was also floating around in the bottom of my ech bag. After dumping most of its contents onto my sleeping bag, I stepped out into the illumination of the huge portable spotlights that lit up our section of the complex. As I squatted down and rifled through the bottom of my bag I was vaguely aware of someone shouting in Arabic some distance behind me.

We were situated in the western corner of the port where the wall bent around on itself forming a pocket on the outside of the complex, an area which had become a small shanty suburb for the Somalis that hung around the port in search of bounty. As I hunted for the insignia, the UAE soldiers manning the watchtower positioned on

When I look back on my time in Africa it is mostly with a sense of pride, nostalgia and mild dismay. Dismay that the person in these stories is actually me. So much has changed since that 707 lifted off from Mogadishu airport in May 1993 that sometimes it seems more like a familiar tale told by another than an account of my own experience.

It was never my intention in telling my story to imply a tale of bravery, sacrifice and skill at arms – that just simply wasn't my experience. My story does not compare to the superhuman exploits of Bravo Two Zero, or the heroics and sacrifice of Kokoda and the like. And any implication that me, or my experiences were somehow more deserving of telling than anyone else involved in Solace was not intended.

Our journey to the Horn of Africa was not to partake in open warfare and the men I was privileged to work with, though exceptional in my eyes, were just regular blokes in what was for us, an extraordinary

adventure. This was the motive behind my narrative.

As a writer, my time in Somalia was, and still is, the single most extraordinary experience of my life. The soldiers with whom I shared this big adventure were typical of the young men who make up our modern armed forces. While we hopefully shared some of the archetypal qualities of our famous predecessors, I wanted to tell our contemporary story, about our contemporary conflict, from a contemporary point of view.

Solace was the biggest adventure of the day. Australia had not made a commitment of combat forces like those deployed to Africa in 1993 for almost 30 years. A whole generation of soldiers had started and ended their careers in the Army without having left Australia's shores or having heard a shot fired in anger.

Not so now. Events have passed us by and Australia's more recent commitments to the World's hot spots have relegated

Operation Solace to a footnote in our military history – perhaps, rightly so. Many of the deployments since '93 have been on a much larger scale and have arguably more historical and strategic significance. But for me, and I suspect many of the 1100 men and women I served with over those six months in Africa, Solace looms large in the memory.

So thank you dear reader, for indulging me. Particular thanks to those of you who have taken the time to encourage me to keep at it over the first 15 editions of Brian's excellent magazine. Of course special thanks are reserved for the 'Big Fella' for providing the vehicle and support for me to tell this story. I may one day find the time and motivation to fill in the rather large gaps and, as has been suggested, publish my tale as a book. Stranger things have happened.

*Continuing next issue – a grunt's-eye view of Somalia and Operation Solace...*





- with the quads, glutes and hamstrings
- > Exhale as you pass through the top half of the movement
- > Never compromise good back position for more reps or more depth, work on your strength and flexibility over a series of sessions.

### Additional tips for front squats

Front squats impose additional demands on your core strength and shoulder flexibility. You will definitely need to drop the weight back and you may need to stretch your forearms and shoulders to achieve the 'elbows high' position required for proper front squats.

Front squats are slightly less demanding on lower back flexibility and can be a good option for people coming back from back injuries (check with your physio first).

### Additional tips for overhead squats

Overhead squats are an excellent exercise for tying together upper and lower body strength and are really more of a core/shoulder exercise than a leg developer.

Because of the position of the load, you'll need to drop the weight right down and take a very wide grip on the bar (many people have to start with a broomstick!).

The full overhead squat requires exceptional flexibility and if you have been living on a diet of pushups and bench presses you may need a lot of flexibility work before you can achieve a full overhead squat.

If you are interested in learning correct exercise technique for squats and all of the other fundamental military fitness exercises jump on our website [www.octogen.com.au](http://www.octogen.com.au) and sign up for our newsletter, which contains all the dates for our upcoming workshops.

back squats, front squats and overhead squats.

**Squat technique** – All three types of squats share the same basic technique with the key difference being the placement of the load and the effect that this has on the core and shoulders.

### The golden rules of squatting are:

- > Feet should be shoulder-width or slightly wider
- > Keep the head and chest up to maintain a neutral arch in the spine
- > For back squats, carry the bar across the muscles of the shoulder, not on the bones of the neck. Chances are if it hurts your neck you need to move the bar, those foam pads are for people who don't know how to squat
- > Inhale and brace the abs before starting to descend
- > Push the hips back as if sitting down on to a chair, the upper body will incline forward but don't use that as an excuse to drop your chest and round your lower back!
- > Weight should be on the heels – coming on to the balls of the feet and lifting the heels is bad form and indicates poor posterior chain flexibility – fix it before squatting!
- > As you descend into the bottom position, keep tight through the core and then drive out of the bottom

**Squat myths** – One of the reasons that a lot of people avoid squats is the false belief that squats are bad for the knees and lower back. Properly performed, all three types of squats are both safe and extremely effective in developing lower body and core strength.

Another myth is that, when squatting, you should not go past the point where the top of the thigh is parallel with the ground. There are two problems with this. The first is that by stopping halfway through the squat you miss out on maximal development of the muscles on the back of the legs and an imbalance between the front and back of the leg is a key factor in many knee problems. The second problem for military personnel is that the world doesn't stop halfway to the ground! Military personnel need to be able to get up and down with speed, power and full range of movement. Full squats are critical for developing this ability.

There are three main types of barbell squats –

# Squats

BY DON STEVENSON

Having looked at a variety of issues relating to military fitness over the past few issues, now it's time to get down to some of the details and look at some of the key exercises that you should be including in your fitness program.

We'll start with the exercise widely regarded as the king of exercises, the barbell squat.

### So why squat?

The squat is the undisputed champion when it comes to developing strength in the lower body and, depending on how you do them, can also be an excellent exercise for core strength and flexibility. It is also an exercise that the majority of gym goers either avoid like the plague, because it's hard work, or butcher with poor technique. Next time you are in the gym take a look at the big guys doing bench press and see how many have got suspiciously baggy pants covering their 'chicken legs'.

Squats are far superior to leg presses, leg extensions and leg curls because they recruit the muscles of the leg in the same way that activities such as lifting, running and jumping do outside the gym.

Squats also promote flexibility through the posterior chain and prepare military personnel for load-carrying and other strenuous military tasks.

# Fit for Fighting – Fighting Fit

Current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan reinforce the need to ensure that our deployed personnel are well prepared physically and mentally for the deployments. The knowledge basis of physical training (PT) in the Australian Defence Force has grown substantially. ADF Physical Training Instructors (PTIs) are the best physical trainers in Australia. Their knowledge base and understanding of anatomy, nutrition and exercise physiology has grown exponentially. ADF PTIs leverage information and knowledge regarding physical fitness from both the civilian fitness industry and allied defence forces. At the same time, the civilian fitness industry has adopted and successfully commercialised defence physical training concepts such as, 'boot camps' to give civvies a taste of so-called military training.

Functional fitness, developed through movement orientated conditioning, is a major aspect of the Military Self Defence Program. ADF personnel are required to wear body armour and combat equipment. The helmet puts an unnatural load on the neck and the flak jacket puts a load on the lower back specifically and the entire body generally. Additionally, extreme climates create a unique situation for performing physical tasks that would be tough, even in the most temperate climates. These, and other environmental factors, only serve to exacerbate the super-human demands (physical stress) that the combat soldier must face on deployment.

ADF personnel need a comprehensive conditioning program that will develop the physical skills necessary for combat, including optimal core function, strength, endurance, speed and coordination. These dedicated Australians should be prepared for the physical challenges of combat with a program that develops both general fitness goals discussed last issue and specific physical goals that integrates strength/endurance training (using complex, movement-orientated exercises), with multi-disciplinary speed, agility and metabolic training. The program needs to be physically and mentally intense and infinitely varied in order to develop both metabolic and neuromuscular ability.

Functional fitness can be described as the ability to perform a broad array of natural or realistic physical work. The quote, 'fit for fighting' implies functional fitness. Analysis of what



occurs on deployments determines the training programs that need to be incorporated into ADF personnel daily PT programs. 'Functional exercise' involves multiple planes and multiple joints.

Most human action (work) seems to involve a relatively limited number of fundamental movements (such as lifting, pushing, pulling, throwing and locomotion). However, many exercise routines (especially weight training or body building as it is popularly practiced) follow a 'reductionist' approach that strives to de-construct a movement in order to apply focused stress on a singular joint and muscle group. Unfortunately, the human body does not work that way.

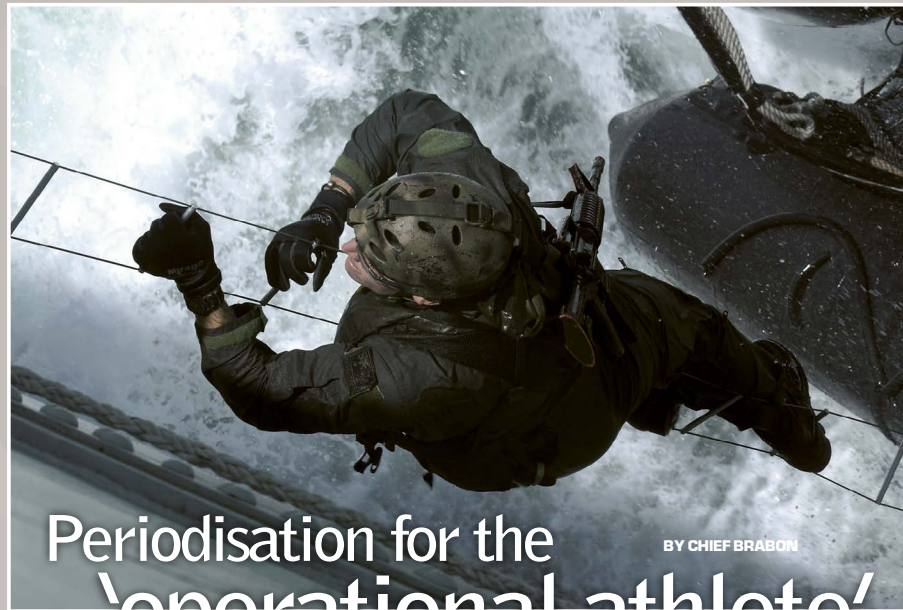
The body works together as a system and exercises that serve to de-construct what are essentially irreducible (though admittedly complex) movements, can create imbalance, unnatural stress on muscles and joints, do not generate an ideal adaptive response and, most importantly, do not mimic the reality that the combat athlete will experience. The aspect of functional exercise is the synergy and integration of all the muscles working together. This ensures the training remains dynamic.

Incorporating exercises that are complex in nature (use more than one joint across a number of functional planes at varying speeds) is an efficient strategy if time is limited and is more applicable to a real environment. Lifting real objects – crates, boxes, tyres and so on, that are unusual in shape and size – promotes greater use of the core stabilisers within the body. This type of training can be performed anywhere and at any time and requires little equipment, but definitely some creativity.

As part of movement-orientated conditioning, dynamic training with a partner develops key aspects of functional fitness. The unpredictability of a training partner, their weight, shape and size adds a 'living' load dimension that does not respond in a predictable fashion like training with weights and other inanimate objects. There is a plethora of drills that can be performed with a partner and they can add a dimension that may be missing from your fitness routine. Combative drills in which your partner provides the resistance, whether it's grappling on the ground, stand-up exchange of punches or partner pushups, situps and other drills, works the whole body and is very fatiguing. This type of training is not the be all and end all but it's like the test of objective for your fitness program. If you can handle various partners of different shapes and sizes in different situations then you're on the way to being 'fit for fighting and fighting fit'.







## Periodisation for the 'operational athlete'

BY CHIEF BRABON

**In recent years, many international military and law-enforcement units have recognised the similarities between the physical conditioning requirements of elite, professional athletes and those of their combat and tactical personnel.**

Just as a professional footballer requires strength, speed, agility, muscular and cardiovascular endurance, so does the 'operational athlete'. In addition, our soldiers are required to not only perform at the same level of intensity for often far longer periods, they also must do so carrying an array of weaponry, protective equipment and additional kit, while under adverse conditions.

Though many principles relating to the training of sporting athletes can be directly implemented within your own operational conditioning program, there are always exceptions to the rules. One such exception is the concept of periodisation.

Periodisation is basically the process of breaking training down into specific phases. In sports conditioning, periodisation is used to prepare athletes to peak in time for a specific series of events that are scheduled to occur on a specified date – for example, State of Origin.

When working with operational athletes we rarely have that luxury. For many Defence Force personnel, in particular members of our Tactical Assault Groups, there is always the chance that grand-final day could be today!

Both methods of periodisation are based upon the same principles of physiological adaptation, the only real difference is that operational periodisation focuses on short-term planning as opposed to long-term planning.

In simple terms, operational periodisation uses an almost random variation of both

intensity and volume to achieve a balance between overreaching and recovery.

For those of you unfamiliar with the term, overreaching describes the practice of 'controlled overtraining', which, if followed by distinct taper in training intensity, will lead to far superior results than the commonly used progressive overload – adding one more rep, or a small amount of additional weight on each workout.

These sharp variations in training intensity assist in preparing soldiers for the obvious randomness of their jobs' physical requirements. Just as a specific day in a soldier's life may require them to undergo extreme physical exertion, hopefully followed by a period of recovery, so too should their conditioning program.

In practice, a soldier may fluctuate between high and moderately high intensity workouts for three to four days, then reduce the intensity of the workouts to a very low intensity for one to two days, followed by another spike in intensity.

Below is an example of a two-week periodised program showing training intensity.

An obvious benefit of this style of operational periodisation is its ability to force the body to adapt to reduced periods of recovery. As any operational athlete can tell you, the ability to recover rapidly after

an operation is an often underrated virtue. Though operational periodisation is random by nature, it still needs to take into account the operational responsibilities of both the soldier and their specific units.

If the unit has been involved in activities of a physically challenging nature, the soldier may need to supplement one or two days of low-intensity training, or even complete rest, before returning to their set program. Obviously this can also apply to training before a scheduled operation, allowing the soldier to put in a game-winning performance.

As with all athletes, any conditioning program should be supported by a tailored nutrition program providing sufficient levels of energy to train and perform at your best.

### About the author:

James 'Chief' Brabon is Australia's leading Tactical Conditioning Coach and the Director of Education for the Institute for Tactical and Operational Conditioning. ITOC provides physical-training instructor certifications designed to suit specific needs of all of today's operational athletes including military, law enforcement, fire department, customs, correctional services and ambulance personnel throughout Australia and the US. For more information regarding ITOC education programs and training products visit [www.ITOC.com.au](http://www.ITOC.com.au) or call Chief on (02) 9315 8966.



DAY	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
INTENSITY	H	MH	MH	H	L	L	MH	H	H	L	MH	H	H	L

L = Low MH = Moderately High H = High

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# The soldier of fortune

When Bob Graham presented himself for enlistment in the AIF, the crusty old sergeant manning the desk asked, 'Have you had any military experience, mate?'

'Yeah, a bit', Graham replied.

**R**obert Louis Graham was born in Canada on 16 April 1876. The son of a superior criminal court judge, he spent much of his vacation time as a youngster among the friendly Indian tribes of central Canada.<sup>1</sup> Young Graham learnt to hunt game, fish, navigate using dead reckoning and drive dog teams. He was comfortable on the water and he learnt to make and paddle bark canoes along the great rivers and skate across frozen lakes.

At the age of 16, a yearning for adventure struck the teenager, inducing him to run off to see the world.

He obtained work on a topsail schooner and made his way to Nova Scotia. There he secured a position with the crew of the English barque, J'or de Nel, which was

destined for Liverpool. As he stepped ashore in England, the lad found himself in a new land with only 30 shillings in his pocket.

Liverpool was the headquarters of the well known White Star Line which employed Bob as an apprentice shipwright and sent him to the Harland and Wolf shipyards in Belfast. As part of his apprenticeship, he served on HMS Fox and was on board when she participated in the Ashanti uprising in 1896.<sup>1</sup>

In order to coax young Bob to return home, his father offered him a position in his office, which the lad accepted, sailing to Canada soon after. In the meantime, war had broken out between the United States and Spain, prompting Bob to change his plans and enlist in Colonel Fredrick Finiston's 20<sup>th</sup> Kansas Volunteer Regiment, setting sail for the Philippines in the early part of 1898. With the defeat of the Spaniards, Bob returned to the United States in July 1899 and took discharge.

He did not return home, however. Instead, he joined the North West Mounted Police and served with 'N' Division until the outbreak of the Boer War in October of that year. He wasted no time, enlisting for service in South Africa with Lord Strathcona's Horse. In 1900, elements of the unit were sent for special duty to help suppress the Boxer Rebellion, as part of the Legation Guard in China. Among their ranks was Bob Graham.<sup>1</sup>

That mission complete, Bob returned to South Africa where he took discharge, then joined the Natal Mounted Police and participated in the expedition to Somaliland, in search of the infamous rebel 'The Mad Mullah'.<sup>1</sup>

After the expedition returned, Bob sought discharge and set sail for Canada where his father persuaded him to settle down. He decided to return to school, matriculate and enter university to study medicine. Bob made every effort to please his father but, in April 1905, on reading of trouble in Nicaragua, he abandoned his studies and set off in search of yet more adventure.

In Nicaragua, the rebel General Rey was attempting to overthrow the government and Bob saw a golden opportunity – to run a cargo of Winchester rifles to the rebels. On his return to Galveston for another shipment, Bob became aware he had attracted the attention of the Texas Rangers. He didn't fancy doing time in prison, so he returned to Nicaragua and enlisted with the rebel forces. He was given a commission in the artillery by Rey's Chief of Staff, General Victor Gordon, who was himself a soldier of fortune. Bob's service was to last five months until the rebels were finally victorious.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, forces in neighbouring Guatemala determined that a change of government was about due. General Gordon offered his services and took Bob with him, this time as a captain of engineers. The revolution spluttered to a finish seven months later.<sup>1</sup>

Bob, still suffering wanderlust and the thirst for adventure, sailed for Australia and then to India where he hoped to join an expedition to Tibet, headed up by Colonel Younghusband. As luck would have it,

however, he was struck down by a bout of malaria in Rawalpindi and the expedition left without him. He returned to South Africa where the Zulus were causing trouble, but finally ended up in Stockade Jacobstown. Once the uprising had been subdued, Bob returned to the United States.<sup>1</sup>

He then travelled to Alaska, where he drove dog teams for the North American Trading Company. In the summer of 1909, he signed on to a whaler out of Nome, sailing the icy waters of Canada's north. He landed and was paid off in Maine, USA.<sup>1</sup>

Bob continued to drift. He visited Buenos Aires, British Honduras, worked on the Texas oil fields and on Arizona's Roosevelt Dam. A revolution broke out in Mexico and again Bob tried his hand as a 'gunrunner'. The United States' authorities were soon on his tail, forcing him to make his way to Tampico, Mexico, where he was commissioned into General Carranza's Army as a colonel of artillery – a term of service that lasted 17 months.<sup>1</sup>

In 1911, Bob Graham was again at sea, making his way first to Cape Town, then by tramp steamer to Bordeaux, France. On arrival in the southern French port of Marseilles, he joined the ranks of the famous French Foreign Legion. He was sent from France to Sidi bel Abbis, then on to the outpost village of Ouadda.

Life in the Legion was not to Bob's liking, so he deserted, eventually making his way back to civilisation and again under what he termed 'the British flag'.<sup>1</sup>

He sailed for Cape Town and then to Australia where, on his arrival in Sydney in August 1914, he learnt of the war with Germany. He wasted no time finding his way to Victoria Barracks and enlisting in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion AIF.

Among the scars and distinguishing marks noted on his record were; tattoos on his chest, arms, legs and hands; a sabre wound to the right hand; a bullet wound to the left thigh; a spear injury in the right leg and a dagger wound inside the left elbow.<sup>2</sup>

When the 3<sup>rd</sup> sailed for Egypt and the ships were closed down for the night, crowds of young soldiers would gather around Bob to listen to his stories of the countries he had visited and of the battles he had fought.<sup>3</sup>

On 21 April 1915, Bob Graham was promoted to Lance Corporal.<sup>2</sup> When the ANZAC forces landed at Gallipoli, Graham's value as a soldier was soon apparent.

He was seen by the high command as 'a scout of unusual ability'. They saw fit to give him a free hand to carry out many and varied jobs which were sensitive to say the least. He was regarded as the battalion's intelligence expert and his powers of observation and attention to detail became legendary.

In those first days, he would spend hours on end perched in his vantage-point on Bolton's Ridge from where he could look across the gully known as the Valley of Despair. With the aid of a telescope, he could clearly see the Turkish lines and their support areas. At times he knew of the visit of high-ranking Turkish and German officers before the Turkish headquarters did.<sup>1</sup>

For his work in the early stages of the Gallipoli campaign, Bob Graham was Mentioned in Despatches.<sup>4</sup>

His work was not without incident and he was wounded on 27 April – seriously enough to retire him from the battalion for three weeks. On his return he was promoted to corporal.<sup>2</sup>

It was during the August attack on Lone Pine that the man, dubbed the 'fighting machine', showed his true prowess. It seemed to those around him that Bob was everywhere at once during the battle.<sup>3</sup> One minute he was seen attacking Turks with his bayonet, next he was observed with a bomb in each hand, lighting them from the cigar clenched between his teeth and throwing them into the enemy trenches. In a battle – where to show one's head risked certain death – he had the uncanny sense to know when to stand up, take aim, fire, and return to the safety of the trench. He did, however, suffer a minor wound, although, following treatment, was fit to return to duty the same night.

For his actions at Lone Pine, he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. Part of the citation reads "...in the Lone Pine trenches he displayed great bravery and energy in the constant bomb fighting". The French were so impressed by Bob's actions that they awarded him the coveted Medaille Militaire.<sup>4</sup>

He was promoted to sergeant on 30 October 1915.

One day, in the closing stages of the Gallipoli campaign, Graham awoke in his observation post and was surprised to see a series of flags heading to the front of the Lone Pine position. Scanning the Turkish lines, he noted a large number of troops in full battle order, massing to attack. Headquarters was notified and the Diggers quickly trained every available machine-gun on the approaching enemy.

As the pre-attack Turkish artillery fire lifted, the ANZAC machine-guns opened up, taking out the first wave of attacking troops. The Turks immediately had second thoughts about continuing the assault.

In mid December, Bob was summoned to 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Headquarters. While making his way to the beach, however, a sniper found him in his sight and squeezed the trigger of his Mauser. Sergeant Graham swore and fell to his knees as he felt the burning pain of the bullet wound to his stomach. He required specialist treatment, so was transported to the hospital ship Laufranc, which lay offshore.<sup>2</sup> He recovered and rejoined the battalion after its evacuation from ANZAC.

On 28 March 1916, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion – now reinforced and re-equipped – disembarked at Marseilles, en route to the Western Front

and the war against the mighty German war machine.<sup>3</sup>

Bob soon settled into life on the front. He became renowned for his lone, night-time sorties towards the enemy trenches. In recognition of these scouting exploits he was Mentioned in Despatches a second time.<sup>4</sup>

On 3 July 1916, his luck ran out when he took a bullet in the left upper arm, shattering his humerus.<sup>2</sup> He was evacuated to England, but the doctors were certain that the wound spelt the end of Graham's fighting days. Obviously the doctors didn't know Bob Graham very well.

During his time in England, Bob met 24-year-old Irene Rhodes whom he married in September 1918.<sup>5</sup> While still in England, Robert Graham Junior was born. The baby captured the old soldier's heart and he was often seen strolling through London, proudly showing off his son.

The German forces were now in headlong retreat. Bob could see the writing on the wall as he made every effort to be certified fit for combat. However, the war ended and the armistice dashed his resolve to return to battle.

Not long after, Bob heard of a force being raised to fight in Russia. Irene pleaded with him not to go, but he needed the stimulation that only combat could provide.

He volunteered and was commissioned as a second lieutenant. Russia was a dirty and disorderly action, but Graham was glad to be there. He was back doing what he did best – fighting.

One day, he was set upon and captured by a Red Russian patrol. He was sentenced by a military court to be shot, but as he was being returned to his cell after the sentencing, he took his guard by surprise and killed him with his bare hands, before making good his escape to his own lines.<sup>1</sup> For his actions in Russia, he is reputed to have been awarded the Russian Order of St John Second Class and a Mention in Despatches.<sup>6</sup>

Graham returned to England where, waiting on the dock to greet him was Irene, holding baby Robert.

On 14 June 1919, the troopship Bremen departed England with a very different cargo – the English and French wives and children of the returning Diggers, sailing to Australia to start a new life. Among the passengers was the Graham family.<sup>2</sup>

Bob's life as a husband and father in the post-war years presented new and difficult challenges. It wasn't an easy time for the old soldier who had spent all his adult life in one battle or another. It is not surprising that, in 1920, he was fined five pounds for fighting in a Sydney pub.

In 1921, he 'shed' some 20 years from his age and enlisted in the 'first 1000' of the fledgling RAAF. He soon found, however, that air force



A SNIPER AND OBSERVER OPERATING IN THE TRENCHES AT GALLIPOLI  
AWM - P01531 014

**"IN PEACE, SONS BURY FATHERS, BUT WAR VIOLATES THE ORDER OF NATURE AND FATHERS BURY SONS."**

*HERODITUS, GREEK HISTORIAN C. 484-425 BC*





3RD BATTALION AIF PARADE IN EGYPT, DECEMBER 1914  
AWM - H00521A

life was not to his liking and was discharged as 'likely not to become an efficient airman'.<sup>7</sup>

In the following years he worked on the Cordeaux Dam in southern New South Wales, during which time the Graham family increased to six, with the addition of three more children, David, Teresa and Norman.

In 1939, Australia was again at war and Bob Graham, now 63, was living in the Sydney suburb of South Hurstville. He wrote to the Army Records Office stating that his record of service had been destroyed in a bush fire the year before. He asked if he could obtain another copy, as 'now that we are in another war, our country may call on my services again...'<sup>8</sup>

For Bob, to stay behind in a time of war was inconceivable, so, giving his age as 43, he enlisted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> AIF on 13 September 1940. During training, however, his actual age was discovered and he was subsequently discharged.<sup>9</sup>

In March of 1941, young Robert Jnr sat at the dining room table and, directly addressing his father, stated, "Dad, I enlisted today". The old soldier could do little but shake his son's hand and tell him how proud he was. Young Robert was posted to the 2<sup>nd</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> Battalion and sailed to Malaya.<sup>10</sup>

On 20 December 1941, Bob Graham once more attempted to enlist. Again – after falsifying his age as 43 – he was accepted into the militia and was assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Garrison Battalion. He found that he was not suited to life as a militiaman and deserted. He was struck off the unit's strength in February 1942, but his records indicate that he was not finally discharged until 1946.<sup>11</sup>

As the war raged to the north of Australia,

the Grahams followed the course of the Japanese thrust down through Malaya and towards Singapore. Robert's battalion was in the thick of the fighting and, by all reports, giving a good account of itself.

In mid February, the Graham family received the inconceivable news that Singapore had fallen and that the Australian 8<sup>th</sup> Division had been defeated. Was Robert alive? Was he dead? Was he a prisoner? These questions distressed and haunted the family as they waited for news. But they would have to wait more than three-and-a-half years to learn the fate of their beloved son and brother.

In 1945, victory over the Japanese was announced and, amid all the celebrations, the Grahams waited anxiously for news of Robert. It arrived in October of that year. Robert was dead. He had been a prisoner in Borneo's infamous Sandakan POW Camp where he had been tortured, starved and beaten and eventually forced onto one of the death marches. On 5 June 1945, racked by the effect of brutal treatment and disease, he could march no more. It is not clear if he simply died by the roadside or was killed where he lay by a Japanese guard.

The family noticed that Bob was never the same after the news of his son's death. He was often withdrawn and preoccupied by thoughts and mental pictures of the atrocities that his son had been forced to endure. Bob believed that he had always fought a good fight against a fair and honourable enemy, but this had been an ignoble way for his son to die.

Robert Louis Graham, DCM, eventually died on 22 March 1958 aged 82.

**Author's note:** Bob Graham was a true adventurer and very much a person of mystery. In researching the man, it was apparent he used various middle names, his birth date changed many times and he also claimed the award of decorations not listed in his official records. The main source of this story was an article which appeared in a 1936 edition of the New South Wales Returned and Services League's journal, 'Reveille'. The other primary source was Graham's record of service.

Today Bob Graham lies at peace in Sydney's Woronora Cemetery. His gravestone commemorates his son, and his wife Irene who joined him in 1979.

- 1 'Graham of the Third', Reveille, 1 June 1936
- 2 National Archives of Australia: B2455, WWI Service Records, Second Lieutenant R L Graham
- 3 Wren E, Randwick to Hargicourt : History of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, AIF, McDonald, Sydney, 1935
- 4 AWM 28, Recommendation Files for Honours and Awards, AIF, 1914-1918 War (the citation appears in the AWM file but the award does not appear to have been made. Bob did use the post nominal MM on his enlistment documentation in WWII – the award of the Medaille Militaire does not warrant the use of these post nominals)
- 5 Certificate of Marriage
- 6 Not found in official records but listed on WWII records of service documents
- 7 RAAF Records, The First 1000, Melbourne, Victoria
- 8 R Graham, letter to Australian Army Records Department, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, 15 December 1939
- 9 National Archives of Australia: WWII Service Records, Robbe Raymond Graham
- 10 National Archives of Australia: WWII Service Records, NX71570 Private RJ Graham
- 11 National Archives of Australia: WWII Service Records, N387670 Private RN Graham

HENRY WRIGHT

# LETTERS FROM THE FRONT LINE



Henry Wright finally returned to his battalion, on the battlefields of France, on 24 July 1918 and it wasn't long before he was to face the enemy on the front lines once again. Yet, despite his initial trepidation, evident in his letters, he seems to have picked his spirits up and was looking forward to the possibility of going home. History now tells us that the war was indeed nearing a close at this time. And then, the issue of 'the 1914 men' might also throw the young Melbournian a lifeline...

Somewhere in France, 7 August 1918.

*My dear Mother, Father, Sisters and Brothers.*

*I am going into a big fight to-night and would just like to write a few lines, for one never knows what may happen. I cannot tell you where we are making our drive but you will read of it in the papers.*

*We'll dear parents, brothers and sisters, should I go under, you will know I have done my duty and have always tried to play the game. I do indeed feel very thankful that Charlie, Bert, and Fred are back home with you. I am going into that great fight with a good heart and with loving thoughts of you all.*

*My ever fondest love to all.  
I remain your ever loving son,  
Henry.*

Having survived the big push foreshadowed earlier in the month, Henry writes to his parents again, on 20 August, from the Western Front, recording his recent battles and his nostalgia for home. He had not seen Australia for 40 months.

*My dear Mother,  
Have just come out from the front line and our Division was supposed to be out for a couple of weeks spell, but everything is so indefinite we may have to go in again in a few days time.*

*We'll, dear Mother, we had not near as much fighting as in our last advance. What do you think of the war news now old Fritz is getting it hot all along the front. I think it is only the beginning of a severe hiding for him as every day the Allies are*

*pushing him back at some part and the prisoners we are capturing are enormous. Guns, ammunition and salvage of all kinds we are getting every day.*

*One of the Battalions of our Brigade were back in the reserve line while amusing themselves in their spare time firing back thousands of rounds of shells [whizz bangs] from captured German guns. An artillery officer had obliged by fixing the guns on a busy part of Fritz's lines and our men peppered him with his own medicine. You can imagine the Huns would be wild being bombarded with their own artillery.*

*We'll dear Mother, I was very pleased to receive your letter of 23rd June and know you are alright, but you must not worry so much about me. I will come through alright and will admit it is a touch different to my job at Tidworth but still don't mind and guess it is my fate to see it through. And, dear Mother, I am ever so grateful it has fallen to myself as the eldest of our four boys to carry on. It does indeed make it easier for me to know my younger brothers are safe home.*

*I am applying for my furlough to Australia but of course will probably have to wait my turn. Pauline says in her letter that she is also trying to get me home, so, between us we may soon have satisfaction. I think I should just about go out of my head at the thought of coming back to Aussie again. We are always hearing news of the 1914 men being relieved from the line but it seems to stop at that. Anyway, I mean to try hard for it.*

*We'll dear Mother, I am pleased to know Charlie is going through the*

*operation to his arm and do hope it will be a success. I am also pleased to know Bert, Fred and Leslie are working and hope Leslie has changed his mind about joining up and hope Dad is alright again. I reckon Dad ought to have a spell for good, he has done his share still dear Mother, I know Dad would not be satisfied with nothing to do.*

*I still have that snap that Fred took of Dad in the garden and like it very much. It brings back memories of that day Charlie and I were told to weed the peas but we went off bird nesting. When we came home for tea, we had to set to and do the weeding anyway.*

*We'll, they were good old times and we boys had as good a home as anyone could have wished for. I received a letter from Charlie, Les and Fred by the same mail as yours but I will owe them a letter as we are limited in sending letters and I want to make certain of one for you and Pauline every week.*

*We'll dear Mother, I have made a lot of friends since coming back to the trenches but I cannot say they are nice ones. They are grey in colour and have legs on both sides. Some say Keating's powder is good but I think a change in flannels much better. People say 'chats' [lice] will not live on a person in poor health. I must be in tiptop health.*

*We'll now dear Mother, I draw my letter to a close, hoping this finds you all in the best of health and fondest love to all.*

*I remain your loving son,  
Henry.*

Henry Wright was killed in action, in the vicinity of Ascension Wood, 3500 yards south west of Bellicourt, before this letter was delivered to his family in Melbourne.

To be continued...



MEDAL OF HONOR: AIRBORNE

Electronic Arts  
Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3

In the fight for supremacy of the WWII first-person shooter market, the greatest struggle has been between the two powerhouse distributors – Activision’s *Call of Duty* and EA’s *Medal of Honor*. The three-word titles with the same conjunction aren’t the only similarities. In fact, such is the level of technical and graphical prowess in each, it’s hard to pick the difference. Back in March, Sapper Gameboy took out his frustrations on the third title in the Activision series declaring it “flashier – but nothing new.” EA therefore has the opportunity to reclaim the lead in the two-title race, with *Medal of Honor: Airborne*.



As the title suggests, this time it’s all about being a paratrooper and, in a first, someone finally found the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne instead of focussing on the 101<sup>st</sup>. The paratrooper concept works extremely well in an FPS title where respawning after an unfortunate and often explosive death is a regular occurrence. The ever-present swarm of Dakotas act as the resparwn point with players coming to life as the jumpmaster screams “hook-on!” A couple of tentative steps towards the door and a quick shove in the back later, I found myself struggling to orient to the ground. The canopies are far more steerable than in reality, but from my experience, my in-game self lands just as shite as I do in real life – that part is definitely realistic. Like the paratroopers of reality, the long drop is just



an insertion method so, once a player is on the ground, it’s back to the now-familiar ping of discharging M1 Garand ammunition clips or the buzzing rip of MG42 bursts. Each mission includes several objectives with no set order in which to complete them, providing a greater deal of freedom over the *Call of Duty* title. Apart from a couple of sections there were multiple approaches to solving a problem. The greatest innovation in *Medal of Honor: Airborne* is the fluid control when firing from cover. The development team have taken the now-familiar lean-and-peek concept but linked it to a controller so it is possible to have a completely fluid, if limited, range of movement while using available cover. When coupled with the precision firing trigger to control breathing, it allows some fantastic opportunities against even the most lethal MG42 gunner. It also uses an upgrade system throughout missions, rewarding careful and skilful play with weapon improvements or specialist equipment. Yet for all its positives, the WWII FPS genre has been done to death, so the competition for the lead is fearsome. The greatest failing in *Medal of Honor: Airborne* is its single-player game length. With only six missions in the campaign, even the bonus unlocked missions result in a total game length of only a few hours for the average virtual grunt. Multi-play options obviously extend this, but some extra single-play content would have made it far more enjoyable. Perhaps EA will release a downloadable expansion through *Xbox Live*.

Score: 3.5/5

COMPANY OF HEROES: OPPOSING FRONTS

THQ  
www.companyofheroesgame.com  
PC

From this edition forward, CONTACT magazine shall become known as the wrapping that surrounds Australia’s most influential military gaming column. You see, the real influence of these glossy pages comes from Sapper Gameboy and his incisive reviews, quality screenshots and cutting commentary on the world of military-themed gaming. In fact, so powerful is Sapper Gameboy’s influence on the punters, (I can afford to be condescending now that I’ve ‘made it’) that multi-million-dollar commercial entities are developing business processes just to seek a coveted 5/5 from these pages. In December 2006 my *Company of Heroes* review closed with a telling paragraph – “If only there was an option to play as Wehrmacht during the single-player campaign, I could have almost given *Company of Heroes* a perfect score.” In recognition of the high esteem in which Sapper Gameboy is held by developers, marketers and industry CEOs, THQ have joined with Relic and expanded their successful franchise based exclusively on Sapper Gameboy’s recommendations\*. As the name, *Opposing Fronts* suggests, the single-player campaign of the expansion lets aspiring company commanders grab some manoeuvrist doctrine, research a few choice German phrases from a nearby *Commando* comic and jump into the fight, leading Kampfgruppe Lehr in the struggle to hold Holland against those “Verdammt Tommies” – or, if one must, one can command the soldiers of the British 2<sup>nd</sup>



Army in its valiant drive to remove the despicable Hun from Western Europe – but where’s the fun in reality. Like the original, *Opposing Fronts* is a furiously paced, real-time, tactical game in which the competing priorities of combat, lines of communication and supply occupy every conceivable second. Manpower caps, ammunition limitations and even team morale conspire to make controlling about 100 troops an all-consuming task. During the course of each game, individual squads gain experience points and battlefield veterancy. This encourages players to actually preserve experienced squads for the next battle rather than just throw them headlong into the trenches. Experience points also impact within the operational level, allowing players to choose from one of three company-commander styles. The Brit campaign allows the development of a defensively minded combined-arms company based around strong combat engineering support, organic offensive-fire



support or special operations forces. Over in Kampfgruppe Lehr, the focus is simple – attack, attack, attack. The best bit however is that *Opposing Forces* doesn’t require the original game to play. It blends seamlessly with its parent title to allow increased multi-play functionality, but for those who missed *Company of Heroes*, it’s ready to go, out of the case. Without doubt, this is the real-time tactical game of the year and it wouldn’t be too much of a stretch to give it the “best-ever” title.

Score: 5/5

\* THQ may or may not have used the Sapper Gameboy column as the sole influencing factor in their commercial decisions on this game, but, despite his protestations, he will not be getting a pay rise – Ed.

HALO 3

Microsoft  
www.halo3.com  
Xbox 360

It had to happen. The epic title that launched Microsoft’s Xbox console into the big time has concluded. Fans and sci-fi nerds alike already knew how it was going to end. They had been reading the novels and absorbing every snippet of Internet gossip for years. In fact, they recently all went slightly cuckoo when someone did some freeze-frame work on a promo video that apparently, when you squint and hold your tongue to the left, reveals Master Chief’s face. Yet all of this pre-knowledge did not make the passing of Master Chief any less painful – or did he actually die? – but the series is finished, right? – maybe. As screwed up as the *Halo* storyline is, it is also one of the most immersive since the dawn of gaming. The Master Chief character is legendary and I wouldn’t mind betting his Hollywood incarnation is not far off. The electrons that make up Cortona are the sexiest to have ever graced a screen and the general gameplay offers the perfect mix between frantic action, destruction, destruction and more destruction. It is a series that revolutionised gaming but, in spite of all that, the third



iteration is probably time to put it to sleep. You see, when *Halo* launched back in the day, it was unlike anything else. When *Halo 2* was born it was also unlike anything else – except *Halo*. Likewise, *Halo 3* is unique – uniquely like *Halo*. This is great, but it also highlights just how far game design has come. After playing other recent FPS games, I’ve become so frustrated at Master Chief’s inability to lean or peek. His focus on staring down the hordes and hoping his armour lasts is great, but if a WWII American paratrooper can learn the value of cover, why the hell can’t the most perfect killing machine on the planet? Yet it was also reassuring to step into a completely familiar gaming environment. There’s no annoying training mission, just a quick controller calibration and it’s off to kill some Covenant. The multi-play enhancements of *Halo 3* are where the real development has occurred. Bungie and Microsoft have focused on what made

the previous titles the most popular Xbox Live games, and offered more. The new vehicles are great fun, but still, nothing beats a loaded warthog. Some of the new weapons are devastatingly effective and Master Chief’s ability to snap a crew-served cannon from its mounts and lumber into a fight like Blain from *Predator* is a hoot. Like Blain, Master Chief doesn’t have time to bleed either. *Halo 3* also includes an option to save each in-game encounter and then go back and edit it from any viewpoint on line. The recent death of the Red vs Blue series has only opened the way for thousands more budding machination directors. Increased *Halo 3* film functionality will serve them well. *Halo 3* is an excellent end to the most groundbreaking title in Xbox history but even the most immersive storyline since *System Shock* wasn’t enough to stop me wishing for Master Chief in *Gears of War*.

Score: 4.5/5

BLAZING ANGELS 2: SECRET MISSIONS OF WWII

Ubisoft  
www.blazingangels2.com  
PC, Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3

The first *Blazing Angels* title was a great compromise between console entertainment and historical accuracy – actually apart from the locations and the aircraft types, there wasn’t that much historical accuracy about it, but it was bloody fun. *Blazing Angels 2* pushes the boundaries even further by dropping any semblance of historical accuracy and allowing players to strap into

the jet- or rocket-powered concept aircraft that may or may not have ever got off the drawing board. It’s over-the-top, but deliberately so. With 18 single-player missions and upgrade opportunities galore, *Blazing Angels 2*, like its predecessor, has a lot to recommend it. Split-screen dogfights against a mate are brilliant fun for those without *Xbox Live*. Those with the Live connection and the account can slash through the skies with up to 15 other players. In single-play mode there’s enough extras and bonus-unlock opportunities to keep you striving for absolute success. I found myself

replaying almost every mission to get the complete unlocks. The AI wingman-system returns from the original allowing a degree of support when needed and an increase in pressure as wingmates strive for quicker success. Like the original, successfully completing a mission without having to call on a wingmate’s specialist skill increases unlocks and opportunities in multi-play. *Blazing Angels 2* doesn’t try to be accurate, historical or even representative of WWII aerial combat. Instead it focuses on immersion, the challenge and total enjoyment – it has those attributes in spades.

Score: 4/5

HOUR OF VICTORY

Red-Ant  
www.hourofvictory.com  
Xbox 360

It’s funny how advertising can set expectations so high. For those who follow the gaming press, the *Hour of Victory* campaign was glossy, enticing and seemed to promise a cracker. Never believe the advertising, though! *Hour of Victory* is a pathetic WWII FPS that fails to measure up. The supposed ‘unique’ gameplay option of selecting one of three characters is so poorly executed it becomes a burden let alone offering any challenge or enjoyment. At the beginning of each mission, players can choose from a pompous Brit Special Forces head-kicker, a stereotyped Native American Ranger sniper or a cranky Scot OSS-type, the supposed stealthy, cunning one. Each persona is limited in what he can achieve and the avenues of approach he can take. The concept would be great if, like every other freaking game out there, you could swap between team members to accomplish the mission. Obviously that concept would have taken too much coding! Instead, players are locked into one persona for the mission and, just like a game of rock, paper, scissors, if you’ve chosen the wrong bloke, the mission is screwed. All of the things we have taken for granted, such as shooting from behind cover, situational awareness and responsive weapon control were obviously ditched at the production meeting. With another 12-months’ development *Hour of Victory* could have been a worthwhile competitor. As it stands, it’s a very expensive coaster.

Score: 0.5/5





# GIVEAWAY/GUEST REVIEW

CODE BLUE

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Thanks to our friends at Traser Australia, CONTACT has not one, but two magnificent **P 6508 Code blue** watches to give away.

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## WORLD IN CONFLICT

Vivendi Universal

[www.massive.se](http://www.massive.se)

PC

Reviewed by Steve Polak

As far as genres go, few are as durable as the real-time wargame. To date, however, we have seen few games set in contemporary times. Thankfully, *World In Conflict* has stormed the beaches and might just be one of the best PC offerings I have come across.

Set in the late '80s, it starts with an improbable plot – the Soviets have launched a full-scale land invasion of the United States. Notwithstanding this implausibility, the game is quite compelling.

*World In Conflict* is a stunning game because it embodies the doctrine of combined-arms battle tactics in multiplayer mode. Single-player campaigns build to this point, gradually adding new layers as you take the fight to the Soviets, first on US soil and then in Europe. There is a huge selection of unit types, every one having an obvious weakness. A player's challenge is to use forces cleverly, supporting different



units to compensate for individual weaknesses.

The game lets you play with a huge variety of accurately modelled contemporary weapons. There are many categories of land and air assets on offer with Soviet, NATO and American types reproduced in superb detail.

In single-player mode the player is guided to objectives by the at-times frantic ravings of Captain Bannon, a commander often in over his head. As the game starts, you are fighting a desperate staged retreat from the Seattle docks and the sense of drama is really exciting.

Mission objectives change often as the fluid dynamics of battle come into play. The campaign also takes you from the US to Europe where there are new toys to experiment with. Additional to the ground and air units you get to control 'on map' you also have access

to 'off-board' support such as long-range artillery, air strikes and the 'grand daddy' of all battlefield weapons, the tactical nuke. These are at your disposal sporadically in the single-player game, with timed 'recharge counts' to help keep the play balanced. In multiplayer battles you also get these toys, but have to earn them by taking the fight to the enemy.

*World In Conflict* is good when you play it by yourself, but the game really excels when you battle online against other budding generals. The game encourages multiplayer team combat, each player having specialised roles. You can choose to be an infantry, tank or artillery commander or a chopper squadron leader. Each role is necessary as the game stresses interdependence and combined-arms tactics. However, the first time you fire up on-line play you'd better have a few free hours up your sleeve.

The game is also substantially better to look at than most other RTS offerings. Indeed the real-time glimpses through a soldier's-eye view of the action are stunning. Pan back to take a long-range view of the battlefield for another awesome dimension.

Cityscapes, rolling hills and other locations are the best I have seen in a real-time war game and the attention to detail, especially when looking at military ordinance from the late 80s, is second to none.

My main disappointment with *World In Conflict* is that there are not more formation types on offer. The game is also perhaps a little on the easy side for seasoned PC strategy players, but you can pump up the difficulty.

*World In Conflict* does its best to convey realism, but the need for play balance means that, in multiplayer mode, asset types from the same category have the same firepower – a Soviet T80 can battle an M1A1 on equal terms, for example! Even more odd, the mighty Mi-28 Havoc is no more powerful than an SA-341 Gazelle. While these 'tweaks' may be necessary to bring balance to gameplay, they do irk those with real-world knowledge of the hardware involved.

That said, this is an incredible game. Single-player action is compelling and very well scripted, while on-line play will keep you battling for years.

Score: 4.5/5

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Should Australia  
withdraw from Iraq  
and Afghanistan?

Yes



16.34% (67)

No



83.66% (343)

Total Votes: 410

#### Posted subject: Why are you joining our Defence Force?

<b>Author:</b> Brisbane2007 <b>Posted:</b> Tue Feb 20, 2007 2:41 pm	I was tasked to write out the reason why I wanted to enlist and particularly why I wanted to join the army as a rifleman. So, it got me to thinking about what other people's reasons are for joining the ADF. I know that some reasons are going to be corny and seem romantic at best but I am just curious to know why others have taken the military as their choice of career. I know that we can no longer join the army for KING and COUNTRY. Isn't it now UNIT, CORP, GOD and COUNTRY? Anyway...
<b>Author:</b> rargid <b>Posted:</b> Tue Feb 20, 2007 3:16 pm	No such thing as a corp mate, a corps on the other hand... That's a pretty American saying, we've already talked about the religion thing here, it's not relevant to a lot of diggers these days. Patriotism on the other hand is prevalent amongst diggers (and young Australians in general), you just have to look at the tattoos to see that.
<b>Author:</b> phamcd <b>Posted:</b> Tue Feb 20, 2007 6:31 pm	I have a lot of Army officers in my family, so it sort of rubs off on you. I honestly can't think of a better job in the world that I would want to do. You get to defend your country's interests and get paid for it.
<b>Author:</b> Clarke <b>Posted:</b> Tue Feb 20, 2007 10:05 pm	Beats going to uni.
<b>Author:</b> Brisbane 2007 <b>Posted:</b> Wed Feb 21, 2007 11:12 am	Thanks for your replies, what I was looking for, but I don't think I was very clear about, was what people wrote on their application on the reasons for enlisting. If someone asked you in 25 words why are you joining the ADF what would you say?
<b>Author:</b> Clarke <b>Posted:</b> Wed Feb 21, 2007 11:43 am	You would tell them the truth.
<b>Author:</b> Brisbane2007 <b>Posted:</b> Wed Feb 21, 2007 11:55 am	The reason for this topic is that I handed in my essay on the reason why I wanted to enlist. I was kind of made to feel that I was over patriotic. So, I was hoping that someone would type what they would write if they were asked to write an 'essay' on why they wanted to join. I just thought that if you showed a love for the ADF and Australia you would be welcomed with open arms. But it seems that there is such a thing as loving your military and country too much.
<b>Author:</b> Clarke <b>Posted:</b> Wed Feb 21, 2007 12:38 pm	Well I certainly wouldn't go overboard. I'm not sure if love of the constitution is going to sustain you when you still have 40km to go. I basically listed all my reasons along the lines of challenges, opportunities and related goodies and put a line at the end with something like, "and the whole patriotic thing".
<b>Author:</b> Tonino <b>Posted:</b> Wed Feb 21, 2007 4:06 pm	I agree phamcd. I can't think of any job I'd rather do. I feel I should earn the right to live in Australia and what better way to earn it?
<b>Author:</b> Omega_Dogg1 <b>Posted:</b> Thu Feb 22, 2007 1:32 pm	Other ppl's answers won't help you mate. They don't want the usual starry-eyed 'defend my country' speech that every second teenager spouts them. More interested in the challenges, mateship, lifestyle etc. Not saying the patriotic thing isn't important, but can't be the overall majority of your answer.
<b>Author:</b> gerty <b>Posted:</b> Fri Feb 23, 2007 1:30 pm	Ya-know, it really twists my nipples, when I see people asking similar questions to the ones that have been asked by others on this forum before. My answer is the same as I have already given to the other similar questions - that being, if you don't know why you want to join, then it won't be any good asking someone else. Stop trying to find the easy solution to your problems. There won't be an easy solution when you're getting 7.62-short invading your personal space. Using someone else's answer, might get you through now, but one day, you're going to wish you could solve problems by yourself, because there won't be anyone else around to give the answer to you.
<b>Author:</b> lil_thomas78 <b>Posted:</b> Mon Feb 26, 2007 10:15 am	I recently enlisted as of two weeks ago. When I was asked why I wanted to 'join' I simply stated I wanted to belong to something I believed in. Defending this country would be a privilege. I would be joining because of the career opportunities, mateship, honour and to repay my country for providing me with opportunities. Two of my grandfathers gave their lives for this country, so we wouldn't be taken over by the likes of others. I too recently enlisted with the Australian Army and the feeling that came over me was beyond words, it was the proudest moment of my life. So when they ask why are you joining? It has to be for your own reasons. It is no good asking others why you are joining. You join because it is who and what you are. If you need others to tell you, you are not a soldier!

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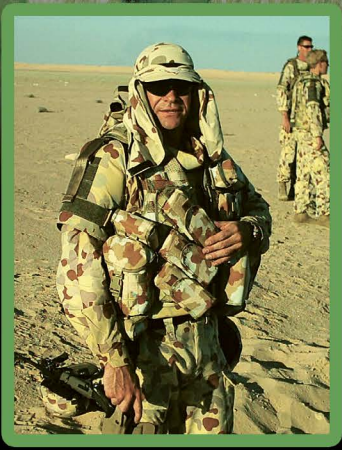
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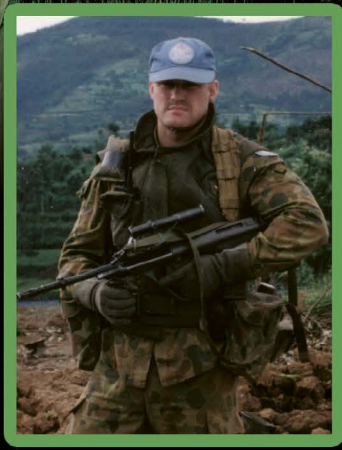
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