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Issue 18 – June 2008 **CONTACT** AIR, LAND & SEA



Cover Story

On Ops
Infantry in the field
Full story page 38

Pic: ??????????????

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Published by Contact Publishing Pty Ltd
PO Box 897, Dickson, ACT 2602, AUSTRALIA
www.militarycontact.com

Printed by Pirion, Fyshwick, ACT
Australian distribution by Network Services Company
Overseas distribution by Pansing IMM

CONTACT – AIR LAND & SEA is published on the Friday closest to the first of March, June, September and December. Address general enquiries to the Editor. Advertising queries should be directed to the Advertising Manager. Subscriptions are \$34 per year (incl GST, postage and handling within Australia). Check our web site for costs to other countries, fill out credit card details on the subscription form available in this issue, or send a cheque or money order made payable to Contact Publishing, with the completed form, to the Subscriptions Manager. Alternatively, use our secure on-line credit card facilities on the Acquisitions page of our web site www.militarycontact.com

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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.

THE EDITOR'S LETTER

I spent Anzac Day in Iraq. Yes, I am bragging.

It was a real thrill for me personally to spend this special day in a special place.

But, of course, I was there to work, and you'll see some of the fruit of my labours in this issue. But, I have plenty more to follow up with in the next as well.

I'll also take this opportunity to say a big thank you to the soldiers in Iraq, especially Tallil, for their hospitality and for allowing me to intrude on their special day.

Unfortunately, while I was in the MEAO, news came through of another tragic loss from our ranks. Lance Corporal Jason Marks is now added to the stone of remembrance at his beloved 4RAR (Cdo).

While none of us wants to die – ever – as soldiers we all know it could happen at any time. And, despite easily predicting the pain and grief caused to the extended family of loved ones left behind, any soldier would choose to die in battle rather than in bed or through any number of senseless other means. With this in mind, I was not surprised to witness among our soldiers in Iraq a sense of pride and renewed resolve rather than sadness or anger.

Jason's loss is keenly felt by all who wear a uniform. The reaction to the news of his death did not surprise me. It did not dampen their spirits or damage their resolve to get on with the very important job they are doing. If anything, their determination to make a difference was heightened by the news. They showed an obvious keenness to throw the armour and the webbing over the shoulder and get back out there, patrolling the streets, talking to villagers and kicking footballs with kids, ever vigilant to the dangers they all face daily.

Jason Marks will be mourned and remembered, but he will be remembered as a brave man who died doing the job he loved, accepting the risks inherent in his job.

One of the biggest mysteries of modern Australian warfare took a major step closer to being resolved in March when the wreck of HMAS Sydney II was found off the coast of Western Australia. While many questions still linger, a new inquiry into her loss will surely be aided by hours of video evidence and thousands of stills photos taken by the people who found her.

What a feeling must have surged through the faithful members of the Finding Sydney Foundation when the wreck was actually discovered – right where they predicted.

A curious thought struck me though – why is it left to small bands of dedicated, determined and dauntless private citizens to mount such all-consuming missions of national significance? This result, after which politicians are so willing to step into the limelight of success, comes hot on the heels of the miraculous repatriations from Vietnam recently, none of which would have happened were it not for small bands of men and women dedicated to keeping the dream alive.

These people we salute.

Brian Hartigan
Managing Editor

Editor Brian
Hartigan takes
a selfie in Iraq.



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INCOMING

SUSTAINED BURST

During the past few weeks I have been very busy replying to various text messages, phone calls and voice mails – because you decided to put my rude head on the front cover of your March issue!

Denial has been very hard considering how obvious it is to those who know me.

Apparently I now owe about 40 slabs of beer and three bottles of Bundy to various people and units around the country!!!!

The reason I write though is that I am trying to work out where and when you took the photo. I know that the shot was taken when I was on RTF1, I just can't work out where you took it. As I was in OPs most of the time the only place that I can figure is TK hospital, and it must have been early on in the trip as I rarely wore that hat during the later missions.

My only gripe is that I have copped heaps of flak as I am a gunner (RAA) and the boys have taken great pleasure in highlighting the "Year of the Infantry" across the front of the mag. Apparently, this is as good as a Corp transfer!

Keep up the good work.

Matthew Dawson

Matthew Dawson, eh? Now I have a name to go with the face!!!

I took this photo at TK Hospital in October 2006. I was on an escorted media trip with ABC and the Age.

I always liked this pic from day one, but others didn't share my enthusiasm. I even picked it as a possible front pager at the start, but it took 'till now to convince people.

Anyway, I'm sure you won't mind paying a few cartons – it's a small price for immortality!

Sorry about the corps transfer. I had no way of knowing who or what you were and took a punt on you being Infantry. But since it turns out you are not, I claim plausible deniability in that the 'Year of the Infantry' referred to the story inside, not necessarily the cover photo. If you can get your mates to swallow that bulls!t line, good luck to you!*

Seriously though, I hope this incident didn't cause you too much angst. In any case, I apologise – Ed.

No apologies necessary, as you mentioned, it's a small price to pay.

After seeing the full photo I now remember the patrol (and yes you were the least of our worries!).

It was certainly early days at that stage and, as you are well aware, things have changed dramatically. Like most of the boys, I hope to be back there again to keep doing the job.

On a serious note, I am glad it was your magazine's cover I was on rather than some of the second-rate ones getting around. Thanks for the privilege. It'll be something to show the kids when they get older.

Matthew

RAPID FIRE

I am a specialist recruiter for ADF - Tech Trades. I am currently liaising with IAME to put a feature in their quarterly magazine on Armygeddon. In issue #9 you ran an excellent article and I was wondering what the process is to have it reproduced in their magazine? This will be linked to a recruiting drive for tradesmen who are members of their organisation.

David H

David, I have no problem syndicating articles from CONTACT and, when used for a good cause such as yours, am happy to waive fees. You and I can nut out the specifics off line. Cheers – Ed.

VOLLEY FIRE

Recent answers in the magazine appear to ignore the historical reasons why the British Army does not have the prefix 'Royal'.

The Navy Royal was founded by Henry VIII in the 16th century. The Royal Air Force was formed in 1918.

The New Model Army was created in 1645 by Parliament, at the height of the English Civil War, as the first full-time, professional army in England and fought against the Kings 'Royalist' army in that conflict. This was England's first 'standing army'.

Prior to this, militias were raised on an as-required basis throughout the country, and individual regiments were able to carry the prefix 'Royal'. Consequently, the New Model Army did not carry the Royal prefix. Today's British Regular Army continues this precedent.

David Barker, Kalgoorlie, WA

NON-LINE-OF-SIGHT

I am writing concerning the article on Reg Boys in the Sept 2004 issue of your magazine.

My dad served in the same squadron and knew Reg well. He also went on to fly with Buck Jones replacing Reg as navigator when the crew moved to 83 Pathfinder Squadron.

My dad is alive and well at 87 years-of-age and he was delighted to read the article and look at the photographs I found on the Internet.

Dad has been trying to contact his old comrades for years and this is the first time he has had any news about any of his Aussie mates. If you could possibly help us contact Reg or his family or Buck Jones or any of the other lads, I know my dad would be delighted, as he hasn't seen any of them for 65 years.

Dad's name is Martin Rooney (nicknames Mickey or Paddy). Fergus Rooney, Newcastle, Co. Down, Ireland

I have spoken to Reg's son and passed on your email. He reports that Reg is fit and well. At 91 he's still driving, plays golf twice a week and mows the lawn – "anything to keep away from mum!"

You can expect to hear from Reg soon, I should think. Let me know if they start planning a reunion or something – it would make a brilliant follow-up story for the magazine – Ed.

WHAT A BLAST

VEHICLE LIVE-FIRE RANGE OPENS

Minister for Defence Science and Personnel Warren Snowdon and Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support Mike Kelly officially opened enhanced facilities at the Armoured Fighting Vehicle Field Firing Target System (AFVFFTS) range at Mount Bundy near Darwin in April.

Enhancements to the facility include structural works on the control tower, targetry system improvement, vehicle-movement-area paving and new shelter for troops.

Dr Kelly said the upgrades to the Mount Bundy facilities would enable troops to focus on their key training outcomes.

"Providing sustainable, effective ranges that support critical training for deploying troops is a pivotal role for Defence Support in the Northern Territory and Kimberley region," he said.

The unique climate and environment in the 'Top End' – particularly the wet season – presents a huge challenge just to access training areas and maximise training opportunities for Australia's only mechanised brigade. These new facilities will allow greater access for armoured live-fire training on static and moving targets from static firing points or while the vehicles are moving [see 'Shooting the Breeze' in CONTACT #16 for more detail].

Upgrade work on the Mount Bundy AFVFFTS complex was completed in February this year by a local construction company, Norbuilt, at a cost of \$1.95 million.





PIC LEADING AIRCRAFTSMAN SCOTT WOODWARD

FLEET ALL HERE

Australia's fourth and final Boeing C-17A Globemaster III aircraft touched down in March at its home base at Amberley after flying from the USA.

The delivery completes the RAAF's new fleet, with the first Globemaster entering service in December 2006.

These aircraft have already made a positive impact in supporting Australian Defence Force operations. Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Geoff Shepherd said, with the aircraft assisting in Operation Catalyst (Iraq), Operation PNG Assist and Operation Astute (Timor-Leste), as well as several exercises including Red Flag in Alaska.

Globemaster can carry more than 70 tonnes of cargo – more than four times the capacity of a Hercules.

MINOR MIRACLE HITS SYDNEY

In a small miracle befitting Easter Monday a storm that had raged for hours suddenly cleared when the World Youth Day Cross and Icon was handed over to Catholic Bishop of the ADF Max Davis in front of the main gates of HMAS Kuttatubul on 24 March.

The storm that had drenched the city all morning suddenly lifted to allow 100 young ADF members and Cadets to carry the Cross and Icon on a Rosary Procession around the base to the chapel.

Bishop Davis said it was good to start the day with a small miracle.

During the procession, prayers were recited alongside HMAS Darwin and at the HMAS Kuttatubul Memorial, which commemorates 19 Australian and two British sailors killed when three Japanese midget submarines attacked Sydney Harbour in 1942.

At the chapel, Bishop Davis led a World-Youth-Day-style catechistic session, which was attended by scores of RAN, Army and Air Force personnel and their families.

Commanding officer HMAS Kuttatubul Commander Bryan Parker said the journey of the Cross and Icon was an international event that the base was proud to be part of.



PIC BY ABLE SEAMAN JUSTIN BROWN

Minister for Defence, Science and Personnel Warren Snowden (2nd from the right) in the thick of the action during an RMC Duntroon Old Boys V Federal Parliamentarians rugby match. The pollies won 17-14.



PIC LEADING AIRCRAFTSMAN AARON CURRAN

SPECIAL VISA FOR IRAQI WORKERS

Locally engaged employees (LEEs) such as interpreters who supported Australian troops in Iraq may now apply for resettlement in Australia in recognition of the personal security situation they will face as Australia withdraws its combat forces from southern Iraq.

Anti-coalition forces have deliberately targeted individuals working with Australian troops and other coalition forces in the past.

In response, the Australian government has announced a new visa policy to enable LEEs and their families to migrate to Australia on permanent humanitarian visas.

Up to 600 visas are expected to be granted under the scheme with the first group to be selected from those who have worked for or with the Overwatch Battle Group (West), which is withdrawing from Iraq this month (June).

Defence Minister Joel Fitzgibbon said these Iraqis had repeatedly shown commitment to Australia's security and reconstruction operations in Iraq.

Granting of these new visas is still conditional upon the result of strict health, character and national security checks.

The LEEs and their families will be settled throughout Australia and those with relatives already living here will be settled in the same State or territory as their families, where possible.

WALLABY AIRLINES HONOURED

The efforts of RAAF personnel who operated Caribou aircraft during the Vietnam War were recognised in April with a plaque unveiled at the Australian War Memorial.

Surviving members and the families of those who have passed away were presented with the United States Air Medal during the ceremony.

A lone RAAF Caribou conducted a flyover of the Australian War Memorial during the ceremony, which was attended by US Ambassador to Australia Robert McCallum, Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support Mike Kelly and Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Geoff Shepherd.

The first Caribous arrived to form the RAAF Transport Flight Vietnam (RTFV) at Vung Tau in 1964, becoming the first RAAF unit in the country. Two years later, seven aircraft were flying with the RTFV and it was reformed as No. 35 Squadron.

'Wallaby Airlines' carried 600,000 passengers and lost one aircraft destroyed by enemy action during six-and-a-half years operating in Vietnam.

Acquired by the RAAF in 1964, Caribou remains in service today with 38 Squadron in Townsville. It has proved to be a very hard aircraft to replace. With initial plans to retire the aircraft in 2002, a likely successor has not yet been announced.

IRISH AIR AMBULANCE

Four newly acquired AW-139 helicopters for the Irish Air Corps are to be put to greater use under a deal struck between the army and medical services.

The military choppers, capable of flying day or night and in most weather conditions have been made compatible with aero-medical equipment and will be used for inter-hospital transfers.

Ireland is the only EU country without a full helicopter emergency medical service and this initiative is seen as a welcome step towards a

system capable of attending traffic accidents and other emergencies.

TANKER WARS

Airbus in partnership with US-based Northrop Grumman has won a US Air Force in-air refuelling tanker project that called for 179 aircraft worth more than US\$35 billion.

Project start has been delayed, however, after Boeing lodged a complaint through a government watchdog alleging bias in favour of the 'foreign' consortium.

Meanwhile, Airbus, as part of another consortium, has

won a British in-air refuelling tanker project worth more than \$25 billion. Under this arrangement, AirTanker Limited will own the 14 tankers called for and lease them to the RAF for 27 years.

SCANEAGLE TURNS 10K

Boeing Australia and Insitu's ScanEagle UAV has successfully delivered 10,000 surveillance and reconnaissance flight hours in support of Australian troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Fully autonomous, ScanEagle can capture still or moving imagery using

stabilised electro-optical or infrared cameras.

Measuring 1.2m long with a 3m wingspan, the UAV can stay 'on-station' for up to 15 hours. It is launched by pneumatic catapult and flies pre-programmed or operator-initiated missions guided by GPS.

The 10,000-hour milestone was achieved in less than one year.

NAVY OFFERS MORE

A new Navy Capability Allowance announced in April aims to encourage trained and experienced serving sailors to stay in the Navy a little longer.

The allowance offers \$24,000 to general service sailors and \$60,000 to submariners of Able Seaman through to Chief Petty Officer rank who agree to serve for a further 18 months.

More than 6000 sailors and 250 submariners are eligible.

NEW RATION PACKS

Beef jerky and energy bars are set to revolutionise ration packs in hot climates after it was realised that soldiers working in hot environments tended to forego hot food or food that required cooking.

DSTO research showed that sports drinks, fruit and savoury

biscuits were also among the most popular items soldiers would like included in hot-weather rations.

Results from prototype hot-weather ration-pack trials in Tully, far north Queensland, will be used to further refine contents, with new ration packs expected to enter service later this year.

UAV TO FLY FOR YEARS

Boeing has been awarded a Defence Advanced Research Projects (DARPA) contract to develop paramaters for a new type of fixed-wing UAV, to be known as the Vulture, that

will be capable of staying on station for up to five years.

Phase one of the project is valued at US\$3.8million.

UK-based partner in the project, QinetiQ, already flies an experimental long-endurance, solar-powered UAV for US and UK Defence Departments called Zepphr.

AUSTAL INDEPENDENCE

Australian shipbuilder, Austal, has launched Independence, the first of what it hopes will be up to 55 Lithoral Combat Ships required by the US Navy, at its new shipyard at Mobile, Alabama.

The 127m trimaran is one of two ships that will be evaluated by the US Navy in coming years to fill a capability gap in what it terms 'green water' – coastal waters not covered by its 'blue water' (oceanic) or 'brown water' (riverine) fleets.

Independence will be moored alongside Austal's Alabama facility while it undergoes fitment and testing of combat and other systems, before commencing sea trials later this year.

The ship's futuristic shape (see p14, CONTACT #8) allows her to receive helicopters up to CH-53 'Jolly Green Giant' size.

LOCAL ARMOUR APPEALS TO DEFENCE

Australian Defence Apparel (ADA) has won a contract to supply body armour to the ADF after beating off other highly competitive Australian and overseas bidders.

ADA, based in Bendigo, Victoria, is all-Australian owned. Eighty new staff,

required because of this contract, will increase the company to 250, plus 10 more added to its headquarters in Coburg.

Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Procurement Greg Combet said the contract will see ADF personnel equipped with the latest protective technology available, with the new Modular Combat Body Armour System starting to roll out in May.

The contract, part of the survivability component of Project Land 125, Soldier Modernisation Program, is valued at \$80.7 million, and includes ongoing support services for the next five years.

Managing director Brian Rush said ADA was gaining recognition for its wide range of products, which are worn by military, security and fire-fighting services around the world.

Mr Combet said the Modular Combat Body Armour System would provide advanced ballistic and fragmentation protection for our troops and had the flexibility to be tailored to specific missions.



ADA's Alan Bent points out key features on Australia's new body armour to Greg Combet

AUSSIES MAN BRITISH GUNS

Fifteen Australian soldiers from Darwin-based 8/12 Medium Regiment spent the six months to March in the UK preparing for a deployment with Task Force Helmand and a stint manning the guns of the 7th Regiment Royal Horse Artillery.

Chief of Army Lieutenant General Peter Leahy said the deployment of

Australian artillerymen in their primary role was the first time Australians had manned a gun line on operations since Vietnam in 1973.

"This deployment into a complex operational environment in support of one of our longest-standing military partners is an excellent opportunity for the Royal Australian Artillery, the Australian Army and the ADF," Lieutenant General Leahy said.

This first deployment of the 8/12 Medium Regiment personnel will be followed by a similar embedding of gunners from Townsville's 4 Field Regiment later this year.

The Australian gunners will employ the 105mm L118 Light Gun, a similar weapon to the ADF's L119 Hamel Gun, from forward operating bases throughout Helmand Province, Afghanistan.



Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Geoff Shepherd returns a salute to graduates of 1/08 Initial Officer Course (IOC) as The Roulettes fly over. The first IOC graduation at RAAF Base East Sale on 14 March coincided with the official opening of the RAAF's Officers' Training School, recently finished at a cost of \$60 million. ■ Air Marshal Shepherd also opened the new recruit Training Unit at RAAF Base Wagga Wagga in April.

PIC CORPORAL COL DADD



Soldiers from 8/12 Medium Regiment simulate anti-aircraft fire during 66th anniversary commemorations of the first bombing raids by the Japanese on Darwin in 1942

PIC LEADING SEAMAN HELEN FRANK

GLOUCESTER CUP



Ship's company HMAS Rankin celebrate winning the Gloucester Cup for the second time

CUP WINNER – RANKIN TOPS FLEET

PICS ABLE SEAMAN LINCOLN COMMANE

Rockingham-based Collins Class submarine HMAS Rankin has been awarded the coveted Gloucester Cup by the Governor General Major General Michael Jeffery at a ceremony in Western Australia, recognising the crew's excellence in teamwork, loyalty and dedication.

To mark the occasion, 'Ceremonial Divisions' was held at HMAS Stirling with HMAS Rankin's ships company resplendent in ceremonial whites.

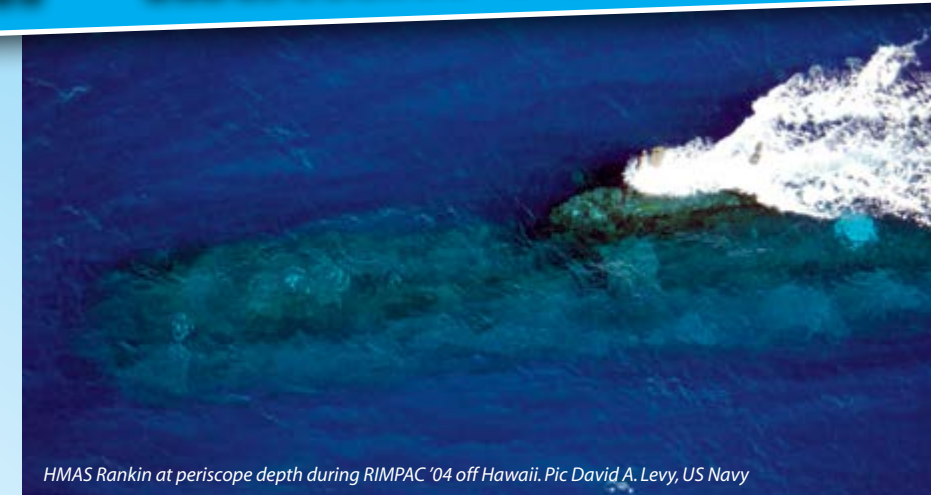
Rankin's commanding officer Commander Phillip Stanford said it was a proud day for him, and especially for his crew.

"This award recognises everything that we hold dear and strive for in the submarine squadron and the Navy," Commander Stanford said.

"I would especially like to thank my crew and their families. The dedication and sacrifice of those associated with HMAS Rankin is something of which we can all be very proud."

The Gloucester Cup was instituted in 1947 by the then Governor-General, the Duke of Gloucester, and acknowledges excellence against a range of performance criteria including, operational efficiency, seamanship, supply and administration, officer and sailor training, maintenance and resourcefulness.

Such a broad scope of criteria demands consistency from every department over a long period, with each individual playing a critical role in a team effort to achieve and maintain the standards necessary.



HMAS Rankin at periscope depth during RIMPAC '04 off Hawaii. Pic David A. Levy, US Navy

Every RAN ship undergoes thorough evaluation and assessment in the selection process for this distinguished award, with many notable names taking the prize over the years, including *Quadrant*, *Vampire*, *Sydney* and *Hobart*. In recent times, winners have included *Arunta*, *ANZAC*, *Success*, *Adelaide*, *Kanimbla* and, last year, HMAS Sheean.

HMAS Rankin joins those prestigious names for a second time, as a result of her outstanding performance during the past year. She also won the cup in 2005 and was the first Collins Class submarine to do so. Before that, the last submarine to win the Gloucester Cup was HMAS Orion in 1986.

Right: Commander Australian Fleet Rear Admiral Nigel Coates, Governor General Major General Michael Jeffery, commanding officer HMAS Rankin Commander Phillip Stanford (holding Gloucester Cup) and commander Australian Navy Submarine Group Commodore Richard Shalders



TONGAN MARINES IN IRAQ

WORDS ANDREW MCALLEY

Perhaps the least known but by no means smallest contribution to the international coalition operating in Iraq is that of the tiny Pacific Kingdom of Tonga.

Preparation training for the Tongan warriors was conducted at the US Marine facilities at Camp Pendleton, outside San Diego, California.

About 45 Royal Tongan Marines, led by the Chief of Defense of the Tonga Defense Services Colonel Tau'auka 'Uta'atu, departed Tonga on 13 June 2004 for their first tour of duty in the Al Anbar Province.

While this initial deployment supported the US 1st Marine Division's security and stabilisation mission at Camp Blue Diamond, members of the second mission in 2007 were to be found working alongside the US Army in Baghdad.

Working as part of the Multi-National Corps Iraq, the Tongans underwent training in driving, force protection and facility security before commencing guard duties at former dictator Saddam Hussein's Al Faw Palace at Camp Victory.

The handover to the third contingent of Royal Tongan Marines took place at the Al-Faw Palace on 28 February this year with the new contingent returning the traditional Sipitau challenge laid down by the outgoing second contingent.

Iraq is not the first time Royal Tongan Marines have served with US forces having fought side by side with the US 1st Marine Division at Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands during WWII.

Issued M4 M16 rifles and wearing US-issue desert tri-colour uniforms adorned with Tongan flags on the shoulder, their uniforms also bear the title 'Tongan Marines' above the left breast pocket.

A single rank slide is worn, Brit-style, on the centre chest, but the Tongan's are most discernable by their characteristic smiles, especially if they clock a Kiwi, Samoan or any number of private security contractors from Fiji.

Below: Tongan Marines return a Sipitau challenge at the Al Faw Palace, Iraq



PIC SERGEANT JEREMY D. CRISP, US ARMY

MEDALS RECOVERED

It has all the twists and turns of a TV mini-series in the 'truth is stranger than fiction' mould but New Zealand's great medal heist has been resolved – with nine Victoria Crosses and dozens of other medals stolen from the Waiouru Army Museum last December returned to the nation.

At a press conference on 16 February, Operation Valour head detective Senior Sergeant Chris Bensemann announced that all 12 sets of medals, totalling 96 decorations, had been recovered in good condition.

Working with notorious Kiwi gangland figure Daniel William Chrichton, former detective now lawyer Chris Comesky brokered the safe return of the medals, helped by a \$300,000 reward posted by British Peer and VC collector Lord Michael Ashcroft and Nelson businessman Tom Sturgess, a former US Marine and Vietnam veteran.

Chrichton, given bail from prison in return for his cooperation, convinced those responsible for the theft to return the medals in return for the reward.

Amidst much controversy, New Zealand's first ever payment of a reward in a criminal case was arranged, but Police were quick to assert that immunity from prosecution was not part of the deal and, over several weeks, executed a number of search warrants in Auckland as the hunt for those responsible continued.

Describing the thieves as 'professionals' Chrichton alluded to a degree of amateurism when he said that had they done any research into the significance of the medals they wouldn't have staged the heist in the first place.

Chief of the Army Major General Lou Gardiner commended police for the safe return of the medals adding that the whole country should thank the investigative team for their recovery.

"This theft was not just from Defence and the Army, it was a theft from the nation," he said.

Discussions are still continuing into whether the recovered medals should again be placed on public display. A decision will be made once an ongoing security review is completed.

TE MANA ON GULF DUTY

HMNZS Te Mana has departed New Zealand for a tour of duty in the Persian Gulf.

Maritime Component Commander Commodore Tony Parr said the Navy was well prepared and ready for the task.

"The ANZAC frigate HMNZS Te Mana, with her Sea Sprite helicopter, is ready to go. She will conduct a variety of tasks during a series of presence patrols over three months contributing to maritime security in the area," he said.

New Zealand Navy ships have completed two previous deployments to the Persian Gulf – Te Kaha in 2003 and Te Mana in 2003/04.

"The professionalism and dedication of our New Zealand Navy personnel in these deployments has been widely acknowledged and appreciated internationally," Commodore Parr said.

"I have no doubt that the capability and capacity in Te Mana will make for similar success during this operation."

Captained by Commander Blair Gerritsen, Te Mana and her 175-strong ship's company will also conduct a number of diplomatic port calls during the deployment.

She is expected to return to New Zealand in August.

Te Mana is an ANZAC-class frigate, built in Australia, of 3600 tonne displacement and is armed with a

5in gun, Seasparrow missiles, Phalanx close-in weapon system, torpedoes and a range of small arms.

Her Kaman SH-2G Super Sea Sprite helicopter can be armed with torpedoes, depth charges and Maverick missiles.



PIC NZ NAVY

RIGHT: A 3 Squadron Iroquois takes off behind a pair of Australian Caribou at La Tontouta airport, New Caledonia
PIC LEADING AIRCRAFTSMAN AARON CURRAN (ADF)



LEFT: HMNZS Canterbury receives a French Alouette III helicopter off the coast of Noumea
PIC ABLE SEAMAN ANDREW DAKIN (ADF)

CROIX DU SUD SOUTH PACIFIC COMES TOGETHER

Exercise Croix du Sud 2008 (CDS08) kicked off in New Caledonia – approximately 1200 kilometres east of central Queensland and 1500 kilometres north-west of New Zealand – and saw personnel from six countries come together for an annual cooperative exercise hosted by the French Armed Forces New Caledonia (FANC).

The biennial exercise aims to enhance the capability and interoperability of the armed forces of Pacific countries in preparation to respond to a potential regional emergency or crisis. In this case, France, Australia, New Zealand, Tonga, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea trained in the evacuation of foreign nationals from a threatening situation.

This year's exercise was based on a perfectly plausible scenario where internal strife had overtaken authority in a country close to New Zealand when extremists disrupted government control of the fictional nation. Rioting, instability and social breakdown was placing foreign nationals at risk.

As part of a UN-mandated action, Canterbury, other NZDF elements and their international partners were tasked to provide assistance in extracting expatriates from the strife-torn country, and to support its legitimate government.

It was a busy start to 2008 for Canterbury – and many others – with

the young ship seeing action in another major amphibious exercise – Sea Lion – with the Australian and French defence forces off Townsville in February.

Canterbury's commanding officer Commander Tony Millar said Croix du Sud was a key enabling exercise.

"It is of greater complexity to Exercise Sea Lion and requires us to perform similar drills but under the stress of a realistic operational or tactical situation," he said.

"It helps test our priorities of being a combat-ready, deployable and sustainable defence force in a challenging and realistic environment."

Captain Pete Laver, who commanded an Australian amphibious operations team on board Canterbury during Exercise Sea Lion said amphibious operations training was vital for everyone taking part.

"These ships could be called on to perform a range of tasks from disaster relief to offensive operations," Captain Laver said.

"We are learning about the many capabilities of this ship and, while it is early days, things are looking very positive."

Canterbury sailed back to New Zealand after Croix du Sud, via Raoul Island where it had left 15 sailors to assist with Department of Conservation activities.

IN BRIEF



KIWIS TARGETED

A four-vehicle patrol from the New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan was hit by an improvised explosive device at the end of March while en-route for a mobile medical clinic.

The explosion hit the flank of one vehicle, damaging the front lights and popping the windscreen, but no shrapnel entered the vehicle and no injuries were sustained.

DRUG USE TRIAL

Six personnel from New Zealand's Afghanistan Provincial Reconstruction Team have been sent home to face court martial for alleged drug use.

The six junior personnel are alleged to have used a Class B drug while deployed in Bamyan Province.

Brigadier Dave Gawn said a thorough investigation into the allegations was conducted, which had resulted in the six being remanded for court martial.

"[Their alleged] behaviour is at odds with NZDF core values and undermines the security, stability and achievements of more than 1200 NZDF personnel who have served in Bamyan since 2003," he said.

KIWIS THROW JAVELINS

The NZ Army successfully tested the Javelin medium range anti-armour weapon (MRAAW) in its first live firing at Waiouru in March.

Javelin, a shoulder-launched man-portable anti-tank missile system, provides land forces with a medium-range capability against armoured vehicles and other targets to a range of up to 2500m.

BABY DELIVERED

Royal New Zealand Air Force personnel in Timor-Leste performed an aero medical evacuation on 12 March for a 20-year-old local woman requiring an emergency caesarean.

Carrying a doctor and paramedic, the Iroquois and crew flew to Maliana to return the woman to Dili, where a UN ambulance moved her to Dili Hospital.

Thirty RNZAF personnel and two Iroquois from the Ohakea-based 3 Squadron are part of a 180-strong New Zealand contribution to support the Combined Joint Task Force in Timor-Leste.

WATER ON TAP

The New Zealand Army has procured three water purification units capable of being used in harsh operational environments and civil defence emergencies.

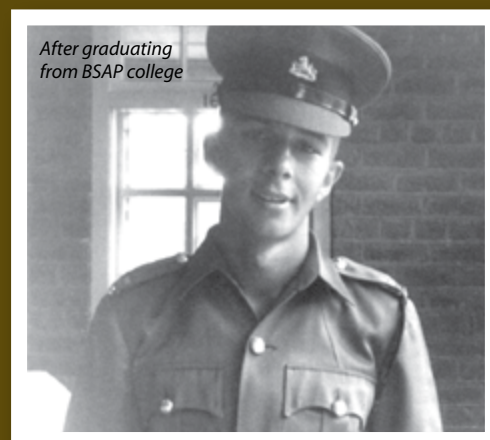
Known as micro filtration reverse osmosis (MFRO) water treatment systems, the units are an advance in both technology and capability for the NZ Army.

MFROs can transform saline or contaminated fresh-water sources to drinking water.

Transportable in two shipping containers, each self-contained unit can be deployed by truck and trailer, HMNZS Canterbury or RNZAF C-130 Hercules.

Mention the term 'double agent' to many people and they'll immediately conjure up thoughts of Jason Bourne or James Bond. One man who really has lived that life has come in from the cold to tell CONTACT about the pain and the tragic human cost of his double life in one of the World's worst hot spots.

WORDS ANDREW MCALLEY



IN THE SHADOWS OF MUGABE'S GALLOWES

I was sitting in Bamian Province Afghanistan in July 2006 when I heard news of Kevin Woods' release after living at the pleasure of Robert Mugabe since January 1988. I remember the emails coming in from NZ, Ozzie, UK and Africa from various ex Rhodie and SADF chat-rooms and thinking it a miracle he had survived the long wait for freedom.

Recovering from heart surgery long denied him when a guest of the Zimbabwean dictator, Woods tells an amazing tale and of his narrow escape from the noose.

He was born in Bulawayo, Rhodesia on 5 November 1952, completed M-levels at Northlea High School in 1969 and entered the British South Africa Police (BSAP) at age 18 in 1970.

At the time, the white minority Rhodesian government of president Ian Smith was fighting the communist insurgents of Robert Mugabe's ZANLA and Joshua Nkomo's ZIPRA.

"ZANLA was the armed wing of the Shona-dominated ZANU Political Party which today, under Mugabe, is known as ZANU PF. ZIPRA was the equivalent of the Matabele ZAPU party," Woods says.

"ZIPRA was backed by the Russians while the Chinese supported ZANLA."

The 'Bush War', as it became known, was comprised of three distinct phases.

Phase one, 1966-1972, saw armed incursions into Rhodesia from across the Zambezi by both insurgent groups.

The second phase, 1972-1975, saw a change in guerrilla tactics – having sustained heavy losses in engagement with Rhodesian security forces the insurgents switched their attentions to terrorising and subverting local tribes people, which necessitated a change

in Rhodesian tactics that saw the creation of the now world-renowned 'Fireforce' concept as part of Operation Hurricane. But in 1975, almost overnight, security-force incentives amounted to nothing and the Portuguese abandoned neighbouring Mozambique, creating a 1000km-long hostile border.

Phase three, 1976-1980, saw ZIPRA and ZANLA insurgents flood Rhodesia, while at the same time, South African support for Ian Smith's regime diminished under intense international pressure.

With support dwindling and Rhodesia in dire economic straits, Smith and his black-moderate allies were forced to enter into talks with the communists at Lancaster House, with a cease-fire declared between the Rhodesians and the new 'Patriotic Front' leading to elections and the overwhelming victory of Robert Mugabe in 1980.

New Zealand sent troops as part of the British-led Commonwealth Monitoring Force to oversee the disarmament of the PF insurgents and 'free and fair' elections.

Former Kiwi member of the monitoring force, Mike Subritzky, says it was clear during the buildup to the elections that Mugabe's victory had more to do with intimidation than promotion of any democratic ideals.

"They'd tell the peasants they'd be able to identify who voted for who and afterwards would come back and sort out anyone who didn't follow the ZANU PF line," Subritzky says. "Reports of this and other intimidation were sent in, but the party line was that it was a free and fair election, let's get it done and go home."

During the war years Kevin was originally posted as a junior patrol officer to Matobo in Matabeleland, then transferred to Bulawayo in 1973.

He worked in Bulawayo's SWAT section before transferring to the BSAP Support Unit or 'Black Boots' – the BSAP's counter-insurgency unit – in 1977. In '78 he was appointed commander of Charlie Company and from 1979-82 worked as duty inspector, then officer in charge of the Bulawayo Crime Prevention Unit.

This was during the transition period when Rhodesia became Zimbabwe and the BSAP became the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP). However, a change at the helm meant little on the ground and criminals remained to be caught.

The discovery of a large ZIPRA arms cache, the arrest of two dissident leaders and a number of prominent murderers and armed robbers around Bulawayo saw Kevin awarded a ZRP Commissioner's Commendation in 1981. A year later, he joined the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), the equivalent of ASIO or the NZSIS.

The next two years were to herald a major change in circumstance that would eventually lead to Kevin Woods' life crashing down around him.

"I'd joined the CIO and became commander operations Matabeleland.

"I saw first hand the genocide carried out by Mugabe's new Praetorian Guard, the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade.

"Joshua Nkomo's support base was in Matabeleland and, with Mugabe bent on cementing his place as ruler, something had to give, and anyone perceived to be in his way was labelled a dissident."

During his time in the CIO, Kevin was ostracised by the white community, many fearing his powerful position in the new regime – unaware of the double life he was now living.

"In 1982 I'd been recruited by Gray Branfield to work as a double agent for South African Military Intelligence. Little did I know the price I would have to pay for this decision," he says.

"While in the employ of the CIO, I was well placed and had access to Zimbabwe's ultra secrets while all the time working as a double agent for South Africa's apartheid government.

"I passed intel to the South Africans pertaining to the activities of ANC guerrillas in Zimbabwe – and, to cement my place in Mugabe's world, I was supplying information supplied to me by the South Africans to Mugabe, making me the blue-eyed boy in Harare."

With the ongoing genocide being carried out in western Zimbabwe as a backdrop, Woods worked on an operational plan for Mugabe's assassination following a request from Branfield. At the time, he was tasked with the president's close security.

In 1986 he assisted an SADF team preparing to attack ANC facilities in Zimbabwe's capital, Harare. Part of Operation Barnacle, the team specialised in surgical

strikes at the heart of the ANC insurgency.

Simultaneous operations were carried out at ANC facilities in Mozambique's Maputo and Zambia's capital, Lusaka.

"The destruction of the MK, the ANC's military wing's capability to launch military attacks into South Africa, was our mission. To stop them before they could lay landmines on deserted farm roads or place bombs in crowded streets and shopping centres was my main motivation.

"By this, I don't mean to imply these were the MK's only targets – they did carry out attacks on military targets and government facilities in South Africa as well. I guess, by today's measures, it's a fine line discerning just who is a terrorist and who is a freedom fighter."

Kevin Woods resigned from the CIO in 1987 but continued to assist Operation Barnacle activities.

It was an attack on an ANC facility in Bulawayo that was to lead to his eventual downfall.

Zambian Obert Mwanza was hired by a contact for a covert South African Special Forces team in January 1988 to deliver a car

to an ANC house in Bulawayo. He was to drop the car off, toot the horn then walk home. The horn sounding was the signal for two covert operatives to detonate a bomb hidden in the car, blowing up the ANC.

"Tragically, Mwanza remained behind the wheel of the parked vehicle bomb. A few moments later the operatives detonated the bomb and he was vaporised along with some ANC members who had come outside to investigate."

Some shoddy preparation work, shortfalls in fieldcraft and the ignoring of established warning procedures led to the mission being compromised – and to Kevin's eventual arrest.

"I think everyone was asleep, that's why the established warnings were not made. We were all too complacent.

"They came for me on 17 January 1988. It was a glorious, clear, mid-summer Sunday morning, and I was suffering from a serious hangover.

"They arrested me and my family."

His wife and children were released shortly after. However Kevin Woods, Mike Smith, Barry Bawden, Rory Maguire and Phillip Conjway were detained at the Harare Central Police Station before eventually being remanded on death row at Harare Central Prison.

In June, South African Special Forces attempted a daring rescue, but the mission failed because vital communication equipment had not arrived, leading to the capture of mission leader, Sam Behan.

Prosecutors did not seek the death penalty for Behan on the agreement his lawyers made no mention of his being tortured before his trial. Instead, he received a life sentence for his part in the failed rescue attempt.

"I've spoken to some of those involved since my release," Woods says.

"All I get is finger pointing at the uselessness of a former controller. But, it's clear to me the whole thing collapsed because the vital comms equipment failed to arrive."

Woods, Smith and Conjway were found guilty in December for the Bulawayo bombing. Sentenced to death, they were imprisoned, naked, in the condemned section of the notorious Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison.

During a second trial in 1989, Woods was sentenced to 75 years imprisonment for the 1986 raids of ANC facilities in Harare alongside Smith and Bawden.

He spent five years on death row, narrowly missing an appointment with the hangman. Surprisingly, despite this, he remains a strong proponent of the death penalty.

"Jail time is no deterrent. Murderers, rapists and armed robbers have nothing to fear when they commit their crimes," he says.

Over the years, frequent attempts were made by South African authorities to secure the release of the four who had by now been





declared operatives of the South African security forces.

"On 11 February 1990, Nelson Mandela was released from prison in South Africa. We were told his release was going to be linked with ours but our hopes were dashed again."

Mandela's freedom was not to be the only link Kevin was to have with his former foe, when, as president, Mandela made direct appeals to Mugabe on their behalf.

"I'm very humbled by Nelson Mandela. He didn't have to try and get my release," Woods says.

"When I eventually met with him, he sympathised for the many years lost, but blamed it entirely on Mugabe's hard-heartedness, hate and inferiority complex."

In 1993, Zimbabwe's Supreme Court confirmed the death sentences and repair work began on Chikurubi's gallows – Woods and his cohorts were now living in the shadows of Mugabe's gallows.

While on death row Kevin Woods suffered a heart attack. Denied proper treatment, he was to be troubled by continuous heart problems throughout his imprisonment.

He narrowly avoided an appointment with the hangman in December '93 when the Zimbabwean Supreme Court commuted his death sentence to life imprisonment.

In January 1994 Woods was moved to Chikurubi's general population cells. In the same year, Mandela called on frontline states to release all South African agents. Mugabe promised leniency but reneged on agreements to release the men.

In 1996 President Mandela visited Zimbabwe requesting the men's release – but, again, to no avail.

Things took a positive turn in 1998 when Sam Beahan was released. Petitions to President Mugabe for clemency were again refused. However, the following year Barry Bawden was released.

While in prison Kevin Woods took up drawing and also began formulating plans for a book.

"In prison, the one thing you have plenty of is time. I was able to reflect on years as a para-military policeman in Rhodesia, my time as a senior officer in the CIO and, of course, my double life as an agent for the apartheid-era South African government."

In 2004, Woods was moved to Harare's Central Prison, back to his old haunt, the death-row cells.

"They needed room in Chikurubi for the mercenaries arrested in the aborted Equatorial Guinea coup.

"I don't think they wanted anyone around who could advise them on what goes on in Chikurubi."

When it came, Kevin Woods' release from prison was sudden.

"Smith, Conjwayo and I were all called in to see the big shot and were an apprehensive trio as we mounted the steps leading to the prison's admin block.

"An hour later we floated back down those same steps.

"We'd been told President Mugabe had granted us a full pardon.

"The 30th of June 2006 is a date that will be forever etched into my memory."

The next morning, released through the prison's huge brass doors, Kevin Woods was met by an official.

"He asked if I was a South African citizen and I replied I was. He told me I was to be deported, along with Smith, to South Africa.

"Ironically, Conjwayo, who had been born in Transkei, was free to stay in Zimbabwe.

"I was declared a prohibited immigrant and issued the relevant documentation.

"At 2am on Sunday 2 July 2006, I crossed over into South Africa to be met by Barry and an SABC film crew."

After being so long out of circulation, the new world Kevin Woods emerged into held many surprises.

"So much has changed – cell phones, laptop computers – every day is new for me."

Though his family received an allowance from the South Africans, they struggled

during Kevin's imprisonment and he is now scratching to make a living.

He hopes sales of his book will help as he adjusts to his new surroundings.

"I'm certainly not on the pigs back, but what is the price of freedom after all?"

Kevin believes 2008 will be a year of change in Zimbabwe.

"You can't wish ZANU PF away – they do have a lot of support. However, everyone, except for those on Mugabe's gravy train, have had enough.

"Even though the povo are beaten into submission I think they are at the end of their tether and will take their inspiration from Kenya.

"Mugabe won't leave unless it's on his terms. There won't be any Hague hearing for him.

"I think the best would be to offer him a deal he can't refuse and let the country get on with the job at hand.

"Mugabe could be replaced by a governing council for an interim period after which the MDC will win free and fair elections. Once that corner is turned, Zimbabwe will have incredible opportunity."

Recovering from the heart operation so long denied him, Kevin Woods says he still holds some strong feelings regarding his incarceration.

"I'm seriously bitter that the heart treatment I badly needed was denied me. My condition could probably have been treated by proper medication if the doctors in Zim had treated me properly in the beginning instead of their two-faced state of denial.

"I am quite relieved, however, to have had the surgery now and am getting better by the hour – no thanks to Mugabe!"

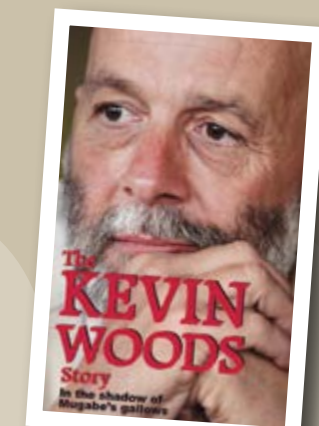
Summing up his experiences, Kevin Woods gives a hint of the fortitude that helped him beat the odds for so long as a prisoner in Mugabe's Zimbabwe.

"Every man has to make decisions in his life. You can sit on the fence and do nothing – or you can act.

"Whether you are right or wrong is of no consequence – one has to make a stand.

"I did and, right or wrong, I paid a heavy penalty. Jail in Zimbabwe is worse than death at times."

Kevin Woods book – *The Kevin Woods Story; In the shadows of Mugabe's gallows* – was published in 2007.



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evacuated by helicopter for treatment for a gunshot wound to the arm. His wound was not life threatening.

On 2 May, Lance Corporal Marks was farewelled by his comrades at Tarin Kowt. Following a memorial service at Camp Russell, an SOTG patrol vehicle bearing his casket passed along a route lined by members of the Australian Reconstruction Task Force and representatives from coalition forces in Oruzgan Province.

On the dusty airstrip close by, the casket was carried by eight of his mates, slow-marching past friends and colleagues, while Dutch Apache helicopters hovered in the background.

In an address at the service, the Commanding Officer of the SOTG said Lance Corporal Marks' death was not in vain.

"Jason fought and died for the enduring values of freedom and justice and above all the ANZAC ethos of service to the nation and loyalty to your mates.

"Our tribute and testament to his passing and how we honour his death, is to demonstrate our unwavering determination and resolve to our operational focus and mission."

Upon arrival at RAAF Base Richmond, Lance Corporal Marks' remains were received from the aircraft and carried to his family by an honour guard and bearer party from 4RAR (Cdo).

Jason's family, closest friends and military leaders were present for the private ceremony.

Chief of Army Lieutenant General Peter Leahy extended heartfelt sympathies to Jason's family during this difficult time.

"We are proud of him and the service he gave to his country. He has made the ultimate sacrifice and we will miss him," Lieutenant General Leahy said.

Special forces commander Major General Tim McOwan described Lance Corporal Marks as a remarkable soldier who was extremely dedicated to his role.

"Jason epitomised what every commando strives for; courage, strength and determination. He certainly had a strength of character that set him apart," Major General McOwan said.

"Jason was an extremely well-liked man and his loss will be keenly felt throughout his unit and the wider army."

Lance Corporal Marks' funeral service was held at Holsworthy Barracks, home of his commando regiment, following a dusk service on 6 May.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Opposition Leader Brendan Nelson, Defence Minister Joel Fitzgibbon and Minister for Defence Science and Personnel Warren Snowden were among the mourners.



FALLEN COMMANDO

Lance Corporal Jason Marks, aged 27, serving with the Special Operations Task Group (SOTG) in Afghanistan was killed by Taliban extremists in Oruzgan Province, approximately 25km south east of Tarin Kowt, on 28 April.



He was killed during a gun-battle in the early morning when Australian soldiers came under fire from small arms and rocket-propelled grenades.

Four other soldiers were seriously wounded during the contact with gunshot and fragment wounds to their limbs. The wounded soldiers and the body of Lance Corporal Marks were evacuated by helicopter to a medical facility at Tarin Kowt.

The Australian operation was a deliberate, company-level clearance of an area suspected to contain a Taliban extremist group.

During the course of the clearance, the lead platoon in the company was engaged by up to 20 individuals in three to four groups, armed with small arms and rocket propelled grenades.

The enemy was operating from well-prepared positions with overhead protection. They fired from numerous locations, including from higher ground, in a battle that continued for more than three hours.

> In a separate incident two nights later, another Australian soldier was wounded during clearance operations. He was

Cassandra Marks:

"There are no words to express how we are feeling. Our family is devastated at the tragic loss of Jason in Afghanistan today.

Jason was a devoted father to our two beautiful children and a loving husband to me. All Jason ever wanted to do was join the army. He was the type of man who knew what he wanted. Even from the age of 12, all Jason ever wanted to be was a soldier.

Becoming a commando was a dream of Jason's. He was proud of who he was and proud of what he did.

Jason loved to be active, whether it was through playing Union, League or rock climbing. He even became a combat fitness leader in the army, he loved it so much.

Jason always strived to be the best he could be. He loved the army, he loved his mates and he loved his family."



KEY FIGURES IN THE
AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCENEW
LEADERSHIP

Chief of the Defence Force (CDF)
Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston
AC, AFC

Air Chief Marshal Allan Grant (Angus) Houston joined the RAAF as a cadet pilot in 1970.

He spent the early part of his career flying Iroquois helicopters in various parts of Australia, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia.

He is a qualified flight instructor and completed several instructional tours on Macchi, BAC Strikemaster and Iroquois in the late 1970s.

He served on exchange with the Republic of Singapore Air Force and with a USAF helicopter unit.

His principal command appointments include No 9 Squadron, during the introduction of the Black Hawk, the unit's relocation from Amberley to Townsville and the Black Hawks' transfer to Army's 5 Aviation Regiment in 1989.

He commanded No 86 Wing in 1994-'95. He was also the commander of the Integrated Air Defence System in 199-2000.

He is a graduate of the Flying Instructors Course, RAAF Staff College, Joint Services Staff College and the Royal College of Defence Studies, London.

In 2008, he was made a Companion of the Order of Australia, having previously been appointed a Member in 1990 and advanced as an Officer in 2003. In 1980 he was awarded the Air Force Cross.

He assumed command of the ADF on 4 July 2005 after four years as Chief of Air Force and is reappointed for another three years.

Air Chief Marshal Houston is the third RAAF officer to be appointed CDF.



Vice Chief of the Defence Force (VCDF)
Major General David Hurley
AO, DSC

Lieutenant General David Hurley was born in Wollongong, NSW in 1953. He graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon in December 1975 into the Infantry Corps and posted to 1RAR.

After an exchange to the UK, he served with 5/7RAR before attending Command and Staff College, Queenscliff in 1986.

Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in 1990 he was posted as Senior Career Adviser (Armour, Artillery, Engineers, Infantry) in the Office of Military Secretary.

In November 1991 he assumed command of 1RAR and led them on Op Solace (Somalia) in '93. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for this.

Several staff appointments preceded his attendance at the US Army War College, before a posting as Military Secretary to Chief of Army. In December 1997 he was posted to the ADF HQ as Director Preparedness and Mobilisation.

In January 1999 he assumed command of 1 Brigade, Darwin as a brigadier.

In January 2001 he was posted as the Director General Land Development, Capability Systems in the Office of the Vice Chief of the Defence Force. In July 2001 he was promoted to Major General and appointed Head, Capability Systems.

In December 2002 he was appointed Land Commander Australia. In December 2003 he was promoted to Lieutenant General. He was appointed Chief, Joint Operations Command in October 2007.

He holds the academic qualifications of Bachelor of Arts and Graduate Diploma in Defence Studies. He is married to Linda and has three children.



Chief of Navy
Rear Admiral Russell Crane
CSM

Rear Admiral Russell Crane began his career as a recruit at HMAS Leeuwin in 1970 and training as an electrical mechanic in aircraft communications. He served on the aircraft carrier, HMAS Melbourne.

He was selected for officer training in 1972 and, as an officer, served on HMA Ships Derwent, Curlew, Melbourne, Torrens, Anzac, Duchess, Sydney, Stalwart and Brisbane.

He has completed mine warfare and clearance diving officers courses.

In 1981, after a short period in charge of the RAN Experimental Diving Unit, Clearance Diving Team 2, Lieutenant Crane was posted to HMS Vernon on a two-year exchange with the Royal Navy.

Following several important staff and intelligence postings, then Captain Crane assumed command of HMAS Success. During this command Success served on Operation Stabilise in support of peacekeeping operations in East Timor.

He was awarded the Conspicuous Service Medal for his time on Success.

After promotion to Commodore, Crane was posted to ADF HQ as Director General Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Electronic Warfare and later as the Commander Australian Naval Systems Command.

Promoted to Rear Admiral in 2004, he served as Director General Coastwatch and was the inaugural commander of the newly formed Joint Offshore Protection Command in 2005.

Rear Admiral Crane became the Deputy Chief of Navy in 2006.

With the leadership of the ADF and its branches due for renewal this year new Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced in March that Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston would be reappointed and continue as the Chief of the Defence Force for another three years while all three services would see new men in their top offices.

Mr Rudd said the CDF's reappointment would ensure continuity of leadership for Australia's military during a high operational tempo.

The new appointments will take effect on 4 July this year.

While making the announcement, the Prime Minister also thanked the outgoing service chiefs, who will all be retiring.



Chief of Army
Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie
AO, DSC, CSM

Lieutenant General Kenneth (Ken) James Gillespie enlisted in the Australian Army as an apprentice in 1968. He graduated from Officer Cadet School, Portsea in 1972 and was commissioned into the Royal Australian Engineers.

He has held a range of regimental and staff appointments including instructor appointments at the School of Military Engineering and 1st Recruit Training Battalion; regimental appointments at 2nd, 5th and 2nd/3rd Field Engineer Regiments and the 1st Construction Regiment; Company Commander at the Army Apprentices School; Senior Instructor at the School of Military Engineering; and, as Australian Exchange Instructor at the Royal School of Military Engineering, UK.

In 1989 he raised, and then deployed as the 2IC and operations officer, the 2nd Australian Contingent to the UN Transition Assistance Group in Namibia.

He is a graduate of the Australian Command and Staff College, Queenscliff, Australian Joint Services Staff College and Royal College of Defence Studies, UK.

For his service as the Commander Australian Contingent, Operation Slipper, he was advanced to Officer of the Order of Australia in the Military Division, having previously been a Member. He was also awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for command and leadership in East Timor in 2000/2001 and the Conspicuous Service Medal for his work in Namibia.

He was appointed Land Commander Australia in 2004 and, after promotion, Vice Chief of the Defence Force in 2005.



Chief of Air Force
Air Vice-Marshal Mark Binskin
AM

Air Vice-Marshal Mark Binskin joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1978 and flew Skyhawk aircraft. He served in VC724 and VF805 Squadrons and, in 1982 was the first RAN pilot to undergo an exchange with the RAAF, flying Mirage jets, after which he joined the RAAF.

Air Vice-Marshal Binskin's other flying tours include No 2 Operational Conversion Unit and No 77 Squadron at Williamstown, flying Mirage and F/A-18 Hornet aircraft; with the US Navy on F/A-18s; with the US Air Force instructing on F-16C; and, No 75 Squadron at Tindal flying F/A-18. He has more than 3500 hours in single-seat fighter aircraft.

He commanded No 77 Squadron at Williamstown and the Air Combat Group.

He was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for his performance as a Fighter Combat Instructor and an RAAF F/A-18 display pilot.

Air Vice-Marshal Binskin has served in various joint and single-service staff positions including HQ ADF, DMO, Air Force HQ and HQ Australian Theatre.

He also served as the first non-USAF director of the US Central Air Force Combined Air and Space Operations Centre, responsible for the conduct of all coalition air operations in the MEAO.

He is a graduate of the Harvard Business School Advanced Management Program, Australian Institute of Company Directors and RAAF Command and Staff Course.

He was appointed Air Commander Australia in July 2007 where he provides specialist air advice on raise, train and sustain issues to the joint environment.

OTHER SENIOR
DEFENCE FIGURES

Minister for Defence

Joel Fitzgibbon

Elected member for Hunter in March 1996. Served on the Labor front bench in a number of portfolios including Small Business, Tourism, Banking and Financial Services, Forestry, Mining and Energy, and as Assistant Treasurer. He is an automotive electrician by trade and spent 10 years running his own business.

Minister for Defence Science
and Personnel

Warren Snowden

Federal member for Lingiari and previously member for NT, since 1987. Before politics worked as a researcher at the ANU, as a school teacher and as a policy officer at the Central Land Council. Served on three parliamentary committees, including Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. Served as parliamentary secretary to three ministers.

Parliamentary Secretary for
Defence Procurement

Greg Combet, AM

Elected member for Charlton in 2007. Former Secretary of the Australian Council of Trade Unions. Studied engineering, economics and labour relations in university. Noted for his involvement in 1998 Australian waterfront dispute.

Parliamentary Secretary for
Defence Support

Dr Mike Kelly AM

Former solicitor, joined the ADF in 1987 as legal officer. Deployed to Somalia '93. Seconded to the Red Cross in Bosnia '96. Chief legal adviser to UNTAET commander in Timor-Leste 2001. Legal adviser in Coalition Provisional Authority Iraq from May 2003 to July 2004. Widely regarded as a leading expert on operations law and international law of occupation.

Secretary of Defence

Nick Warner

Appointed SECDEF December 2006. Senior international adviser to PM from July 2005. After working in the Joint Intelligence Organisation and Office of National Assessments, held several senior Foreign Affairs and Trade positions. Served as Special Coordinator RAMSI, High Commissioner Port Moresby, Ambassador Tehran, Deputy Head of Mission Cambodia and Head of Australian Liaison Office Namibia.

NAVY CONCENTRATES ON CORE SKILLS

PICS ABLE SEAMAN ANDREW DAKIN

Core maritime skills were honed by hundreds of RAN personnel from 22 ships during February and March during the annual fleet concentration period (ACP-08) off Australia's east coast.

The comprehensive six-week program aimed to regenerate fleet mariner and war-fighting skills.

Naval assets from the New Zealand and French navies stationed in the Pacific also participated.

During the period, a number of separate exercises were conducted in waters off north Queensland and southern New South Wales.

ACP-08 is the largest Australian domestic maritime exercise of its type.

Task Group Commander Captain Peter Laver said hundreds of Royal Australian Navy personnel who started the exercise are now more proficient and confident in their duties.

"Overall we performed a huge range of activities, both in a geographical sense and in the evolutions we are now skilled up to do," Captain Laver said.

"Some of the things we did were exceptionally complex, probably the first time many crews have conducted some of these tasks."

ACP-08 featured a graduated training program starting with basic activities within individual ships that are relatively easy to conduct – allowing crews to practice their core jobs the right way in a safe environment.

Building on that experience, more advanced activities were attempted in phase two, still in an environment where each activity was conducted as a discreet mission.

Amphibious exercises *Squadex* and *Sea Lion* were conducted in waters off Townsville with five RAN landing craft heavy, as well as HMNZS Canterbury and the French landing ship Jacques Cartier taking part in the latter.

Assets from the RAAF and Australian Army also participated.

Further south, in waters in and around Jervis Bay on the south coast of NSW, RAN mine-countermeasure skills were practiced in exercise *Mulgogger*. Five Huon-class mine hunters alongside Australian Clearance Diving Teams One and Four swept for and neutralised mock enemy mines in realistic scenarios.

Captain Laver said the last stage of the concentration period was to integrate everything learned to that point and incorporate it within the context of a scenario that required people to conduct more complex tasks at short notice within a notional operational environment.

He said this recent experience had prepared RAN ships and personnel well to go on to even more complex exercises such as Croix du Sud in Noumea and RIMPAC off Hawaii.





SYDNEY FOUND!

ENDURING MYSTERY NEARER RESOLUTION

An historic day for the Royal Australian Navy, Finding Sydney Foundation and indeed the nation dawned on 16 March 2007 as the first traces of the wreck of HMAS *Sydney II* resolved upon computer screens on a search vessel off the Western Australian coast.



Sixty-six years after the ship and its entire crew disappeared, almost without trace, the final resting place of the pride of Australia's wartime naval fleet has been disclosed.

HMAS Sydney II was found days after the wreck of her nemesis, the HSK Kormoran, was located in 2560 metres of water, approximately 112 nautical miles off Steep Point, mainland Australia's western-most tip.

While her discovery lays to rest one key aspect of Australia's most enduring maritime mysteries and identifies a final resting place for the families of the 645 members of her crew, speculation around the circumstances of her final battle and the mystery of her total loss still remain.

A new Commission of Inquiry, headed by former judge Terrance Cole, has been tasked to delve deeper into this enduring mystery than any previous inquiry.

It won't be easy though, with more than 20km of shelf space said to be covered

with documents pertaining to Sydney's disappearance to trawl through and with the only eye witnesses to her final battle either dead or elderly – and all from the enemy ship that sank her.

But what of the search that took 66 years to furnish the result Australians craved?

Despite intense air and sea searches in the days and weeks after the fateful battle, the vast seas off Western Australia yielded just one life raft, one life jacket (now preserved at the Australian War Memorial) and no other trace from HMAS Sydney II.

However, 317 men from the Kormoran survived to eventual rescue, adding to the mystery and fueling speculation and conspiracy theories through the intervening years.

But the memory and mystery of Sydney never went away.

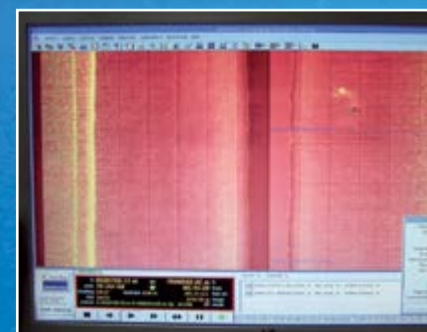
In 2001, the Finding Sydney Foundation was established as a not-for-profit organisation run by five volunteer directors.



Kedge anchor

Lifeboats

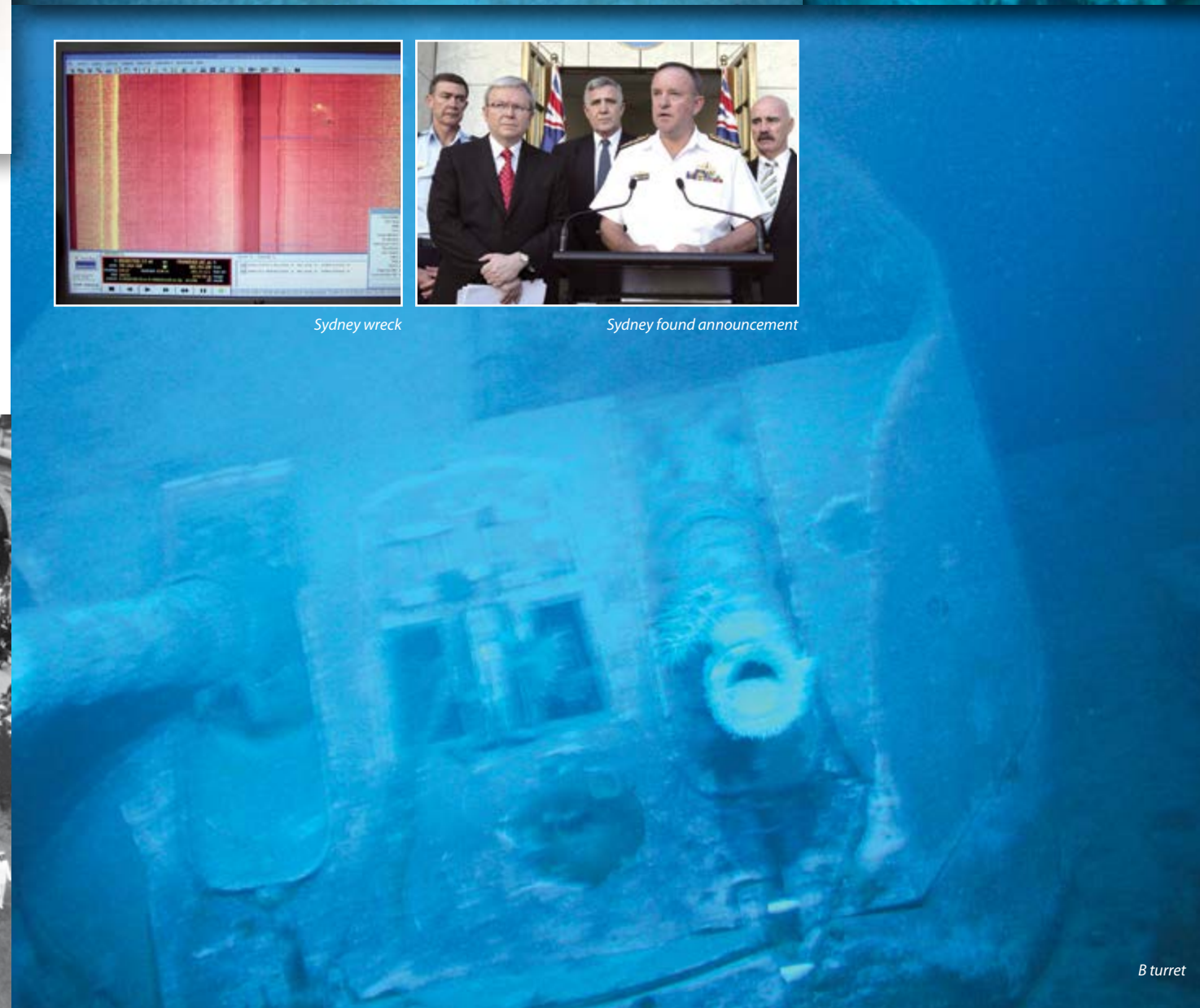
Searchlight mount



Sydney wreck



Sydney found announcement



B turret

Over the years, they raised funds and canvassed support from many quarters, and tirelessly pieced together what evidence they could muster to eventually come up with a best-guess fix on the battle scene.

Their fruitful search was started at the end of February, with sufficient funds to continue for little more than a month.

Less than two weeks later, the years of painstaking research and nautical detective work paid dividends when the sonar array they were trailing behind and far below the survey ship Geosounder began to ping what later proved to be the Kormoran.

From that point on, finding the Sydney was almost assured.

The discovery of the main battle site, less than four nautical miles south of Kormoran's position, was further evidence that the team's research had them on the right bearing.

Details furnished by the German survivors in 1941 were proving surprisingly accurate and, indeed, even before the Kormoran discovery was officially announced to the public, Sydney had also been found.

The wreck of HMAS Sydney II was confirmed approximately 12 nautical miles from where Kormoran lay, 8 nautical miles from the scene of the principal battle site, and at a depth of 2468 metres.

Initial sonar surveys of the wreck show Sydney resting on the bottom, largely intact and sitting upright.

Finding the historic wrecks so efficiently meant the Finding Sydney Foundation was left with sufficient time and resources to conduct detailed photographic and video surveys of both ships and their battle site which should, in theory, greatly assist the inquiry into the event.

After the find, both ships were immediately placed under legal protection orders and will be respected and managed in the future with the same reverence as war graves, for indeed, they do harbour the souls of more than 700 fighting men.



HMAS SYDNEY II

Type	Modified Leander Class Light Cruiser
Displacement	6830 tons
Length	562 feet 3 inches
Beam	56 feet 8 inches
Builder	Swan, Hunter and Wigham Richardson Ltd, Wallsend on Tyne, England
Laid Down	8 July 1933 (as Phaeton)
Launched	22 September 1934 (as Sydney) by Mrs Bruce, wife of the Australian High Commissioner to the UK
Power	72,000 horsepower
Speed	32.5 knots
Armament	8 x 6-inch guns, 4 x 4-inch guns, 3 x .50 (inch) machine guns, 12 x .303 (inch) Lewis Guns, 8 x 21 inch torpedo tubes
Complement	645

THE BATTLE

Reconstruction of the events leading to HMAS Sydney II's disappearance relies primarily on information gathered from interrogations of German survivors from the raider HSK Kormoran.

Returning from a convoy task to Java, Sydney was headed for Fremantle when she sighted what appeared to be a Dutch merchant vessel at about 1600hrs on 19 November 1941.

Sydney challenged the stranger using searchlight and flag signals, while closing the range between the two ships. Merchant vessels were known to be less efficient at visual signalling and the Germans exploited this through slow responses and, later, also feigned a cry for help.

The delaying tactics resulted in the range between the ship closing to a point where Sydney lost the advantage of her superior armament.

About 1730hrs, with separation at less than a mile and with his options running out, Commander Theodor Detmers on the Kormoran took the advantage of surprise and opened fire with all his armament.

It is likely that the raider's first salvo destroyed Sydney's bridge, effectively eliminating her primary control.

Sydney's own guns opened fire almost simultaneously with a full salvo that passed over Kormoran without inflicting damage.

Kormoran scored further hits on Sydney with two salvos again hitting her bridge and midships. For a few seconds Sydney did not reply.

It appeared that her forward A and B turrets were out of action leaving only her aft turrets X and Y to respond.

Sydney's X turret eventually opened fast and accurate fire, hitting the raider in the funnel and engine room, while Y turret is said to have fired only two or three salvos, all of which went over.

At about the same time, Sydney was struck by two torpedoes under A and B turrets – with the top of B turret blowing off soon after and flying overboard.

Sydney then passed astern of Kormoran and, despite being masked from view by heavy smoke from fires raging in the raider's engine room, was kept under heavy fire.

At about 1745hrs Sydney fired four torpedoes – all missed.

While both ships were all but crippled and on fire by now and drifting further apart, Sydney continued to receive steady hits from Kormoran's port broadside but could only return sporadic fire from her own secondary armament.

Although this fierce action was over in half an hour, both ships were mortally wounded.

As night fell, only a distant glare and occasional flickerings marked Sydney's position, until about midnight when all trace disappeared.

Detmers ordered the Kormoran be abandoned and he scuttled his ship.

A total of 315 Germans and two Chinese survived from the Kormoran.

All on the Sydney were lost – with the possible exception of one body washed ashore on Christmas Island in February 1942. Attempts to identify the remains using modern forensic techniques continue.



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Cadet James Stefanovich takes notes at 'O group'



Cadet Sergeant Bruce Donaldson takes aim on the range

WORDS CAPTAIN BEN ROBINSON (AAC)
PICS TROOPER MICHAEL FRANCHI

WITH THE PRIDE OF THEIR UNITS AND THEIR STATES ON THE LINE, 80 CADETS FROM ALL OVER AUSTRALIA CONVERGED ON SYDNEY TO TAKE UP THE...

CHIEF OF ARMY

CHALLENGE

Not mud, water, obstacle courses, night insertion and navigation, not weariness and fatigue nor rations on the run could stop 80 Australian Army Cadets from accepting the Chief of Army's Challenge.

They came from all over Australia to Holsworthy, forming up in teams of 10, each representing one of the eight Australian Army Cadet regions across the country.

The only thing on their minds was winning the CA's Challenge for their unit and their state.

"It's a prestigious award," Cadet Warrant Officer Class 2 Travis Grundell said before the contest. "I'm expecting to be really challenged, but I want to have some fun along the way too."

The cadets were required to assist in a mock UN mission conducting surveillance operations – starting with a night insertion. Each section was to night navigate to an area of operations and, from there, begin their operations.

In the early hours of the morning the sections had to find cached rebel stores.

They were then directed to a range-fire activity.

"It was a great opportunity to fire under the supervision of professional soldiers," Cadet Lance Corporal Laura Bailey said. "I really enjoyed the range activity."

Assessment of the cadets had begun at the moment of their insertion into the challenge and they were watched closely as they reconnoitered a ransacked food distribution centre and were given instructions that brought them, through the night, to the Holsworthy obstacle course.

Aaron Hopgood & Nicholas
Winners scale an obstacle



Cadet Corporal Katilin Champion



Cadet James Stefanovich prepares for night patrol



Cadet Corporal Everyn Deutscher is coached by Corporal Justin Powell on the range

According to cadet unit officer Craig Stephens, the obstacle course was a highlight of the weekend.

"It pushed each of the individuals to test their limits and also brought them together as teams, as they had to understand each other's strengths and weaknesses to achieve their goals," he said.

In the end, the winners of the CA Challenge was the team from Western Australia, with the South Queensland team taking out the RSM-A Trophy for Drill.

Presenting the awards, Chief of Army Lieutenant General Peter Leahy said he was particularly interested to see that the

activity could readily fit both its military context through its realistic portrayal of Army training and wider community values in providing cadets with a valuable experience in teamwork, persistence and goal achievement.

"It was impressive to see the dedication of the cadets and the determination put in by all of the teams," Lieutenant General Leahy said.

"It's important for the Army to continue to support Army Cadets, as these young people are the future leaders of Australia – not only in the ADF, but also in the wider community."



Winners

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE CADETS

Adding value to the ADF

- ADFC provides a talented, cost effective, intelligent and well-educated recruitment pool for Defence.
- The Australian Army Cadet Corps is currently the second largest formation in the Australian Army with only Land Command being larger.
- Cadets comprise 0.76 per cent of the total Australian population in their age group but, between 2004 and 2006 made up 17.6 per cent of ADF enlistments.
- Cadets represented between 35 and 40 per cent of new entrants to ADFA between 2002 and 2006.
- According to the 2007 Defence census, 21.7 per cent of permanent ADF members and 26 per cent of Reservists had previously been Cadets.
- Cadets promote Defence's reputation in the community, particularly in remote, regional and Indigenous areas. In some communities they provide the only uniformed contribution to ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day events.

* Data sourced from Australian Defence Force Cadet Data, December 2007 Report.

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AIR WARFARE DESTROYERS BEING BUILT IN NSW

WORDS AND PICS BRIAN HARTIGAN

On a beaut little property 10 miles past Tumbabloody-rumba I found a man in a shed who knows more about Australia's new Air Warfare Destroyers than just about any salty sea dog you might talk to.

With a horse kicking tin outside a window that reveals miles and miles of panoramic Snowy Mountain views all the way to Kosciuszko, he says, "You probably shouldn't look at them too closely" indicating sheets of detailed CAD drawings for the pride of Australia's future naval fleet.

Next to the drawings is a stack of cream-coloured thingymajigs that, on closer inspection, reveal themselves as gun mounts, boat davits, satellite antenna, radar panels, Nulka pods, railings, ladders and countless other bits that, when finished, attached and painted, will add unbelievable detail and authenticity to the 72nd scale model hull standing beside them.

Meet Russ French – master model maker – and former Navy man now building ships in rural New South Wales.

Russ is a model maker from way back. Like many of us, he glued boats, planes, tanks and other shop-bought kits together as a lad. But in Russ' case, the hobby grew a bit beyond the shop-bought.



In his Navy days, while his ship was in refit, Russ decided to build a model of HMAS Arunta – a proper big model, remote control and everything.

Anyway, to cut that part of the longer story short, some guys in suits got to hear about his model – and asked Russ to build another – and another – and then another. The rest, as they say, is history.

Today, Russ is building ships and planes and tanks and other things by the hundred – but one at a time, by hand, individual and incredibly detailed.

By the hundred is probably an exaggeration. As Russ puts it, "I'd get bored doing the same thing over and over."

"I could pump things out like an assembly line – but where would be the fun in that?"

His current project is probably his biggest yet – five copies (initially) of the Air Warfare Destroyer, with each 72nd scale model measuring in at 2.1m long, 260mm wide and 850mm high from keel to mast tip.

So where would you start with a project like that? Well, just like the real thing, with a set of rather large drawings showing every detail and looking at the ship from every elevation. He even gets cross-sectional drawings so that when it comes time for his mate with the fiberglass expertise to make the hull mould, every aspect of the sleek design is an exact copy of the real thing – only 72 times smaller.

While Russ waits for the hulls to arrive, there's plenty to keep him occupied.

Having built other 72nd scale ships before, he already has moulds made up for many of the common systems and attachments. It's just a case of dusting them off and casting sufficient epoxy copies to cater for this project. His client is happy about this, too, as it helps to keep the considerable cost down a little.

Other elements, though, have not been done before, so he starts from scratch, sculpting and building the first example, from which he can make a mould.

The attention to detail and apparent accuracy of the finished piece attests to one thing – here is an artist at work.

A real surprise with the piece he's working on today, though, is that there are no CAD drawings for this one – just a glossy, trade-show brochure, in the hands of a man who spent more than 20 years working on the decks of real fighting ships.

Russ is not a one-man band, though. His wife is heavily involved on the business side and assists with workshop plans and drawings. Then there's the guy who makes the fiberglass hulls. Even the local police sergeant is in on the act – an engraver in his spare time, he has a very useful laser cutter that can easily and accurately cut windows,



doors and other orifices in the sheet plastic that goes to make walls, roofs and other superstructure panels.

But it all comes back to the master model maker in his tin shed on the side of the hill with the panoramic views where all the pieces are assembled, painted and mounted in a display case (made by yet another man in some far off place).

"It's really like glueing a giant moulded kit together – only in this case, all the bits don't come ready made in a box – I make all the parts myself," Russ says.

"It's really quite satisfying and, naturally, I love doing it and I love being my own boss and I love working here on the side of this hill and in this community."

With sweeping hand gestures, Russ builds a mental picture for me of his (full-scale) plans to build a new house on his hillside property, which, naturally, incorporates a generously sized model-makers workshop and model display/reception area.

I can't wait to visit him again!



OK – that's it – I quit as editor of CONTACT Air Land & Sea. Otherwise, how else can I get my hands on this fantastic prize.

But since I really can't quit, I guess I must give you, the reader, a chance to prove how much you would like to win this one-of-a-kind, individual, hand-made model of an Australian Army ASLAV Type I with 25mm Delco turret.

Master model maker Russ French has constructed this model, valued at more than \$700, especially for CONTACT – and you!

Tell me in exactly 25 words, before 15 July 2008, why you should be selected as the proud new owner of this custom-built prize.

And if you don't win this one, you could buy another, different model from Russ' web site www.defencemodels.com.au

COMpetition TIME



ON OPS

INFANTRY IN THE FIELD

“YOU DON’T JOIN THE ARMY TO HANG OUT IN THE TRAINING AREAS OR THE BACKWATER PARTS OF AUSTRALIA. YOU JOIN THE ARMY TO GO OVERSEAS AND DO THE JOB FOR REAL” – PRIVATE NIK BANBRICK, A 21-YEAR-OLD RIFLEMAN WITH THE OVERWATCH BATTLE GROUP (WEST) 4, ELOQUENTLY SUMS UP THE ATTITUDE OF THE MODERN AUSSIE SOLDIER IN IRAQ

We’ve established that infantry is the basic building block of the army and examined the basic structure and training of an infantry battalion (**CONTACT #16**) and, heard from the boss what the future holds for infantry (**CONTACT #17**). Now it’s time to take a closer look at infantry on operations, applying their skills and knowledge in a complex and dangerous environment.

WORDS AND PICS BRIAN HARTIGAN

All soldiers are trained for a job, whether they are infantry, cavalry, artillery, transport, mechanic, postman or cook. Like any other profession, they train to do a job – they don’t train for training’s sake.

Deploying on operations is the job – going overseas (or, God forbid, defending the homeland), applying the skills and knowledge one has accumulated over years or, more commonly, months of training.

A good analogy, spelt out to me by a sport-loving soldier in Tallil, is that it’s a bit like training for a football match – you can do all the training and practice all the drills and scenarios you want, but it counts for little until you actually play the game and get tested on the field. Carrying the analogy one step further he adds that the match-day experience will ultimately leave the team in much better shape for the next big game.

Everyone agrees the ‘game’ in Iraq is complex, demanding and dangerous.

Returning to base from a night-patrol mission with 1 Platoon, 6RAR, the Bushmaster infantry mobility vehicle in front of us is engulfed in a flash of light, smoke and debris. The thump of the explosion follows in a second or so.

In unison, more than one soldier yells out “IED – IED” and automatically commence defensive manoeuvres. Quickly, however, word comes through that it’s not a roadside bomb that’s gone off but electricity from a low-slung power line going to earth with enough force to blow the right rear wheel off the vehicle and damage the spare in the process.

While no one is hurt, the incident not only serves as a reminder of the unpredictable and dangerous nature of the environment in which our soldiers operate daily, but the speed of information flow in its wake highlights the advances in communication flow since I last held a radio transceiver. But, more on the technology later.

Combat Team Heeler – so called because 6RAR’s mascot is a blue-heeler dog – is focused primarily on counter IDF (indirect fire) for the moment. They ‘op their quarter’ daily, going out on patrols to protect the base and the coalition forces within it from indirect fire – showing a strong presence outside the wire to keep the enemy on the back foot.

CT Heeler has also conducted many other tasks over the past five months, including ambushes, VCPs (vehicle check points) and humanitarian missions such as providing first aid to the locals or handing out food and water.

Simple things like talking to villagers, kicking a ball or generally mucking about with kids are also important tools in fighting the enemy – keeping the locals on side.

In this vein, CMIC (civil military cooperation) projects also help relations with the locals and give the bad guys no room to manoeuvre, because a village in receipt of a CMIC-sponsored project such as a new school or kids’ playground is far less likely to harbour insurgents lest the community lose the project that brings work, money and the prospect of a better future to the neighbourhood.

Despite the danger and complexity of the mission in Iraq, though, soldiers such as Private Banbrick are in their element.





This young soldier rates job satisfaction at “eight or nine out of 10”.
“It’s pretty hot here at the moment and in the winter it can be really cold – plus you always miss home – but other than that, job satisfaction is very high,” he says.
“Joining the army is a really good life experience – it opens your eyes to a lot of things.
“I’d highly recommend that everyone spend the first couple of years of adult life in the army. It definitely broadens your horizons and gives you a different perspective.”
He says camaraderie among his colleagues is very high as well – and it’s very important that it stays that way.
Infantry, probably more so than any other corps, relies on the bond between men. Camaraderie and group dynamics are indispensable ingredients, essential to accomplishing any mission.
“In an eight- or 10-man section, that team spirit is probably greater than anywhere else in the army. That’s because we are living in each other’s pockets and, while that can be a little trying at times, on balance it is more rewarding than not.
“We are all honest with each other – we talk about pretty much everything, and if we have a problem we usually talk about it openly and sort it out.
“If you don’t, it can bring the team down and affect morale adversely.”
Team dynamics are very important – the glue that binds a group together. These guys, more than most, ultimately depend on each other for their lives in a worst-case scenario, so they need to know that their mates will look after them.
Being Aussie soldiers there’s definitely a larrikin spirit here too.
“They like playing jokes on each other. They like playing jokes on me,” platoon commander 1 Platoon Lieutenant John Crockett says.
“Any chance they get they’ll slip something in. And it’s usually pretty funny.
“But, while that kind of thing definitely enhances team spirit, these guys also know when to switch on.”
“Switching on” is a subconscious thought a soldier has. He knows the situation has

changed and he now needs to concentrate on his duties as a rifleman because there could be a threat or a task that requires his full concentration.
That ability to switch on and switch off is enhanced by training that starts at Kapooka, continues at the School of Infantry and is honed, like any other skill, every day. But it is an ability that all soldiers must have.
And it is very impressive to watch in its application.
While travelling in an ASLAV with Combat Team Waler (named in honour of the horses that served the Light Brigade in WWII), I was allowed to stand up through an open hatch in the roof of the vehicle, with a Steyr-armed soldier in the hatch next to me. Somewhat distracted by my own mission to take as many photos as possible in a short timeframe, I thought this soldier was being rudely hot and cold towards my riveting conversation (!) until I realised that at key points in the road, such as when we approached a flyover or a parked car, his attention and his rifle aim were 100 per cent focused on the possibility of a threat. And, with the likely threat passed, he was 50 per cent back with me – but still watchful for the slightest sign that something was out of place.
Every soldier in the platoon must be switched on to what’s happening. Every soldier in the team has a role to play and if he doesn’t play his part in the section or the platoon, even a momentary weakness could lead to disaster for the team.
The shape of the team is changing rapidly also.
Lieutenant Crockett says that the Australian Army is sitting between the old infantry model and a new model that is slated to be introduced in the next few years, but that his platoon structure is already heavily (if not fully) based on the new model.
Lieutenant Crockett heads up a motorised platoon, which he says is pretty rare in the army as it is.
There are 35 soldiers in his platoon, doctrinally, including himself. There’s the lieutenant and a sergeant, a platoon signaller plus a driver and motorised corporal in platoon headquarters. Then he has three sections with 10 men in each (nine

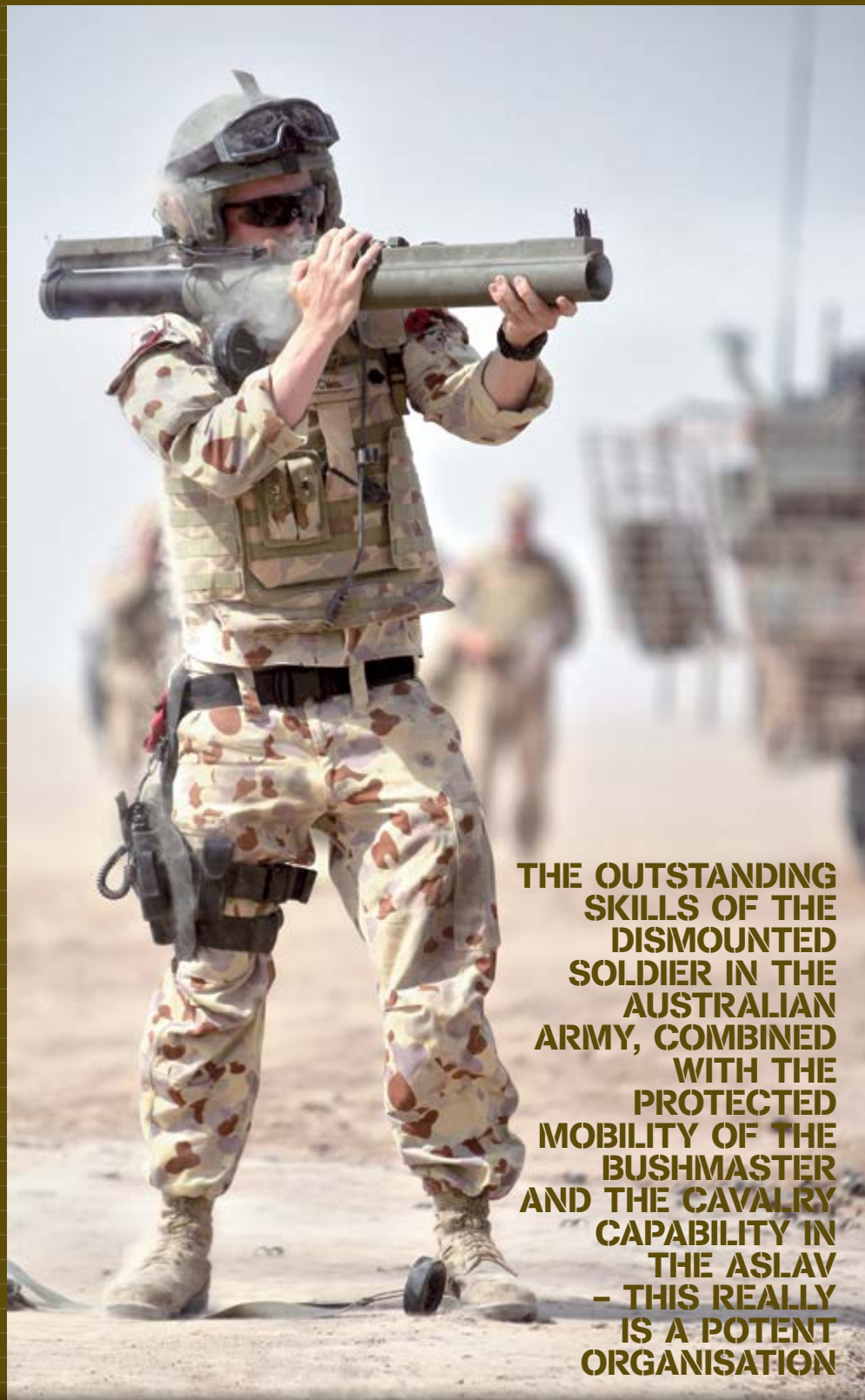


INFANTRY ON OPS

Also enhancing the team’s operating effectiveness is modern equipment such as enhanced combat body armour, SPR (soldier personal radio), MBITR (multi-band inter team) radios, Aimpoint weapon sights, GPS-based networking, night-vision goggles, sights and aiming devices and, of course, the armoured vehicles.
> Enhanced combat body armour is a heavy, hot, cumbersome pain in the butt that has saved numerous lives. What a soldier loses in mobility and endurance, is more than made up for by the confidence and reassurance of having it on.
> SPR is a radio system that allows every soldier in a section to talk (or whisper) to each other – just like in the movies – negating the need to shout over distances and allowing them to spread out over a wider area without losing contact.
> MBITR allows the platoon commander, sergeant and section commander to communicate down his chain of command on one frequency or, with the opposite toggle of the switch, to talk to his next highest command (or anyone else) on a different frequency.
> Aimpoint red-dot sights allow a soldier to acquire a sight picture on a target much faster than conventional sights. Because of its design, the shooter only needs to bring a simple red dot to bear on the target as opposed to lining up two apertures or worrying about having his eye perfectly aligned with the sight.
> A GPS-based tracking system in each vehicle connects it to a network that tracks friendly forces on the battlefield.
> The night-vision suite of fighting aids means the Aussie soldier is as effective at night as he is in daylight – even more so according to some soldiers.
> ASLAV and Bushmaster really are as good or better than any vehicle in their class. Lieutenant Crockett says the suite of communications equipment makes for much better situational awareness and the other equipment makes for much more effective soldiers.
“When the guys get out on the ground, they are able to move out into whatever their task may be and they are able to

in the ‘traditional’ model). The section is made up of a driver and a supervisor of the vehicle and then eight soldiers in two bricks, one led by the section commander and the other led by the section 2IC.
“The brick concept is new. The old model infantry had three groups in a section – gun group, scout group and assault group,” he says.
“Now, with the new model, we are moving towards building the capacity of the small team.
“In each team or brick you should have a grenadier, a marksman, a gunner and a scout. That produces highly effective small teams that can achieve higher tasks than a three-man or a two-man group.”





THE OUTSTANDING SKILLS OF THE DISMOUNTED SOLDIER IN THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY, COMBINED WITH THE PROTECTED MOBILITY OF THE BUSHMASTER AND THE CAVALRY CAPABILITY IN THE ASLAV – THIS REALLY IS A POTENT ORGANISATION

keep feeds coming back to me. So, as the commander, I have a much better understanding of what they can see at their end and what's going on overall.

"Consequently I can employ the rest of the platoon much more effectively, or request assistance if required.

"In turn, I can feed what I know up to my boss so that he has a higher understanding of what's happening in his area of operations."

Such enhanced situational awareness and control translates into a much greater capability on the ground. The better a commander understands what's going on, the better he can employ his soldiers to combat the threat or accomplish the task.

Commander OBG(W)4 Lieutenant Colonel Chris Websdane agrees that the battle group he leads is a much more potent force than in the past.

Looking back at his time with B Squadron 3/4 Cavalry Regiment and the 1RAR Battalion Group in Somalia, he says they did the grass-roots stuff really really well – mounted and dismounted offensive patrolling, day in and day out.

"Here, we are still doing the basics, but we are able to achieve so much more because of the enabling capabilities the Hardened and Networked Army concept brings us.

"The networking capability we have in the vehicles, the enhanced communications suites, the video feeds we get from the UAV, the feeds we get from JTAC (joint terminal attack controller) aircraft into our vehicles, platoon and combat teams, is really that key component of the HNA."

"We are living the Hardened Networked Army right now."

Combined-arms operations are not new but, for an 'old soldier' like Lieutenant Colonel Websdane, the equipment his men have at their disposal impresses even him.

"Even down to section level, we are far more capable," he says.

"I know that the junior NCO, with his eight men on the ground and two in the vehicle, and with the feeds that are going into that vehicle, is far more enabled, far better able to make decisions, to understand the situation and to pass information back, than he was 10 years ago."

He says that, as a cavalry man, he has worked with every infantry battalion in the army over the past 21 years, but the relationship between the infantry and the cavalry in this battlegroup is such that he can barely discern a difference between the two.

"The fighting ethos and the offensive spirit of both of those elements is outstanding.

"For what it's worth, although 2/14 is armoured corps and cavalry, we are really just another form of infantry. There's good reason why my unit has the 'Queensland Mounted Infantry' in brackets in its title.

"At the end of the day, 2/14 Light Horse is mounted infantry and 6RAR is mounted infantry, albeit with more dismounted capability.

"Together, the outstanding skills of the dismounted soldier in the Australian Army, combined with the protected mobility of the Bushmaster and the cavalry capability in the ASLAV – this really is a potent organisation.

"And when we add the enablers and equipment we have here, it really is a potent battlegroup."

He says that summing up a day in the life of a soldier in Iraq is very hard – the job and the routine is so diverse.

"It's like a mini city," he says. "Everybody has a part to play in it – from the infantryman or the cavalryman going outside the wire day in and day out conducting security patrols to defeat the enemy, to the postal clerk who keeps the mail flowing, to the mechanics in particular who work tirelessly to ensure that our equipment is always serviceable and mission capable."

He says there is a routine on the mission. And the enemy has his routine. And sometimes the routine or the environment changes – so, the battlegroup changes its routine to suit.

It is a dynamic, complex operating environment. It is a challenging and complex mission. But, Lieutenant Colonel Websdane says, the strength of the OBG(W)4 battlegroup is the commitment of the individuals within it and their versatility and flexibility in adjusting to changing circumstances.

"More than anything, this deployment has reinforced what I've always known – the innate ability of the army to get together, task organise, forge a team and build the esprit de corps necessary to be a potent force and achieve a mission, is very strong.

"The Australian public should be very proud every time an Australian soldier puts on a uniform and does the job the Australian government asks him to do."

He says Australian infantry is rated with the best in the world and it is his great fortune and privilege to have the

infantrymen from the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, under his command.

"What we have demonstrated in this environment is that the cavalry and infantry capability and the integration of the ASLAV and the protected mobility vehicle is an outstanding capability and it has been a strong factor in allowing us to achieve so much with such a small force in southern Iraq.

"We are just doing basic, traditional soldiering, applying it to a complex and dangerous environment and it is working really well."



PRE-DEPLOYMENT TRAINING

PICS CORPORAL NEIL RUSKIN

Soldiers from the fourth rotation of the Reconstruction Task Force (RTF4) came together in March to commence training for their tour of duty in Afghanistan.

Starting their training at Wide Bay Training Area in Queensland, the soldiers were put through highly realistic and demanding scenario-based mission rehearsal exercises to help the disparate elements come together as a cohesive unit.

RTF4 is formed around the Brisbane-based 6th Engineer Support Regiment (6ESR) with security elements from the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (6RAR), also based in Brisbane, Sydney-based 3RAR and a handful of their Dutch counterparts.

Around 400 soldiers deployed with RTF4 at the start of the Northern Hemisphere's spring – and the start of what is traditionally the fighting season in southern Afghanistan – as part of Operation Slipper, the ADF's contribution to the NATO-led ISAF mission in Oruzgan Province.

The soldiers will be equipped with an array of engineering plant as well as Bushmaster and ASLAV armoured vehicles and a suite of modern weapons and support equipment to carry out reconstruction projects in the towns and villages of Oruzgan.



Anzac Day in Tallil, southern Iraq was very Australian, except for the fact it was a working day just like any other – almost

It starts with a traditional 'gunfire breakfast' – hot coffee to start the heart, reinforced with a shot of rum to make sure you're awake.

Then, as the first hint of a new day appears in the east, the traditional Dawn Service reminds us why we are here and where we have come from.

As Anzac Day becomes more and more popular with Australia's younger generation, its significance and importance is in danger of being diluted by that very success, the meaning of the day is certainly not lost among Aussie soldiers young or old, especially those on operations.

Today's soldier knows he walks in big footsteps. And for many of the soldiers here in Iraq, that analogy could almost literally be true – with the troopers of 2/14 Light Horse Regiment (Queensland Mounted Infantry) daily pounding almost the same desert sands as their forebears 92 years earlier.

Today, soldiers from many corps gather in the darkness, encircle Camp Terendak's cenotaph with its gas-fired eternal flame,

upturned, bayoneted and helmeted rifle stuck in the ground and a catafalque party rested on arms reversed.

Candlelight reflects on soldiers' faces. They are quiet, reflective, yet obviously happy.

The usual prayers, odes and moments of silence are punctuated by a bugle and a lone bagpipe (both played by British-contingent members). Wreaths are laid.

And then, something unusual and very, very special – for the recipients. A Commander's Commendation is awarded and several soldiers are promoted. Now that's something they won't forget in a hurry.

After the Dawn Service and mingling with mates, comes a very Aussie BBQ breakfast – and two up, of course.

But, while some soldiers have the 'luxury' of a few spare hours to make this Anzac Day a little more memorable, others must get back to work, preparing vehicles, checking stores and getting their head back in the game before heading out on an early afternoon patrol that will last through the night.

Yet other soldiers slip away quietly for a

few hours sleep, having returned to base from the previous night's patrol just in time for a quick shave and freshen-up before the Dawn Service.

Though their mounts, equipment, circumstances and even their basic conditions may be vastly different today, the soldiers of Queensland's 2/14 LHR (QMI) and the other units represented at Camp Terendak are almost exact carbon copies of their forebears. They are Aussie through and through – the same larrikin spirit, the same laid-back, she'll-be-right attitude and the same lovers of beer (though today was the only day they got any – and just two at that).

Speaking to them on the day, it's actually very hard to get many of them to admit that spending Anzac Day on operations with their mates is anything out of the ordinary – "Anzac Day is Anzac Day where ever you are," one infantryman tells me, "The only difference here is that we can't go in to town for a beer" – but most admit the significance will probably hit them sometime in the future.



THAT ONE DAY OF THE YEAR

WORDS AND PICS BRIAN HARTIGAN



Sergeant Matt Julian, 6RAR, says Anzac Day is about what we are not where we are.

"But it does feel pretty special knowing that we are on the job over here and knowing that not too far from here our forefathers walked this land as well," he says with obvious pride.

"This isn't the first Anzac Day celebrated on operations and I don't think it will be the last for Aussie soldiers"

Listening to others and observing, however, there's little doubt that today really is special to all of them.

After the moving, candle-lit dawn service, when breakfast is called, the very long queue proves to be a prime opportunity to chat, laugh and swap stories.

Across the way I see two men approach each other in the same gravel car park they traverse daily, swing arms in a wide arch to further emphasise an ultimately powerful handshake, then pull each other chest to chest for thunderous backslaps.

And then it was over to the two-up ring, very professionally run by a crusty, old-school sergeant who could almost have been bred for just this occasion, where a lot of money eventually changes hands.

The house makes no money this day, however, but a whip-around – appropriately with a slouch hat – nets a tidy sum for Legacy.

Before too long, one digger tells me he's already lost all of the \$100 he set aside for this event, having won the stake earlier in a dare to drink a bottle of Tabasco sauce.

The two-up ring is also where hapless Yanks and Poms are (willingly?) suckered in to adding to the collective wealth of the Aussie contingent.

Sport, being such an important part of Australian culture, also plays a big role in making this Anzac Day special – and affords those Aussies who are not out on patrol or asleep yet another opportunity to thrash the Poms on the cricket oval.

On another sporting field, in what is thought to be a first, Aussie Rules football was also played on operations for Anzac Day, albeit actually played two days earlier so that it could be televised back home on the 25th.

It was quite unusual for such a physical sport to be allowed on operations where an injury could not only take the player out of the game, but out of theatre as well, disrupting team dynamics on the bigger, more important mission.

Warrant Officer Class 2 Brad Clarke, regimental sergeant major of Overwatch Battle Group West 4, with the approval of the commanding officer, was a driving force behind the game.

With Essendon and Collingwood 'traditionally' playing an Anzac Day game in Melbourne in front of massive crowds each year, it wasn't too hard to stir up interest in a 'real' Anzac test on foreign soil.

An Essendon Football Club member, WO2 Clarke, with the help of a few others, secured full sets of genuine team jerseys for both teams for the heat-shortened game.

Played over two 20-minute halves and with the temperature nudging 40 degrees at 9am, the mostly friendly clash saw little more than skin being lost on the rolled gravel pitch before 'Essendon' emerged one-point victors, 9-9-63 over 'Collingwood' 9-8-62.

Back to Anzac Day and, in the afternoon, I have the honour of travelling with members of Combat Team Waler as they head out on another patrol through the desolate desert landscape around Tallil, led by Major Chris McKay in an ASLAV appropriately named 'ANZAC'.

But, more on that patrol in the next issue...



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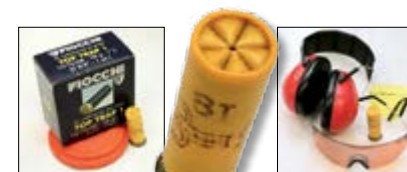
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Saturday 18 October	
Event 3	50 Target Single Barrel
Event 4	50 Target Double Barrel
Sunday 19 October	
Event 5	50 Target Pointscore
Event 6	50 Target Champion-of-Champions (20 target double barrel, 20 target single barrel and 20 target pointscore)
This is a proposed program and the organising committee reserves the right to alter it	

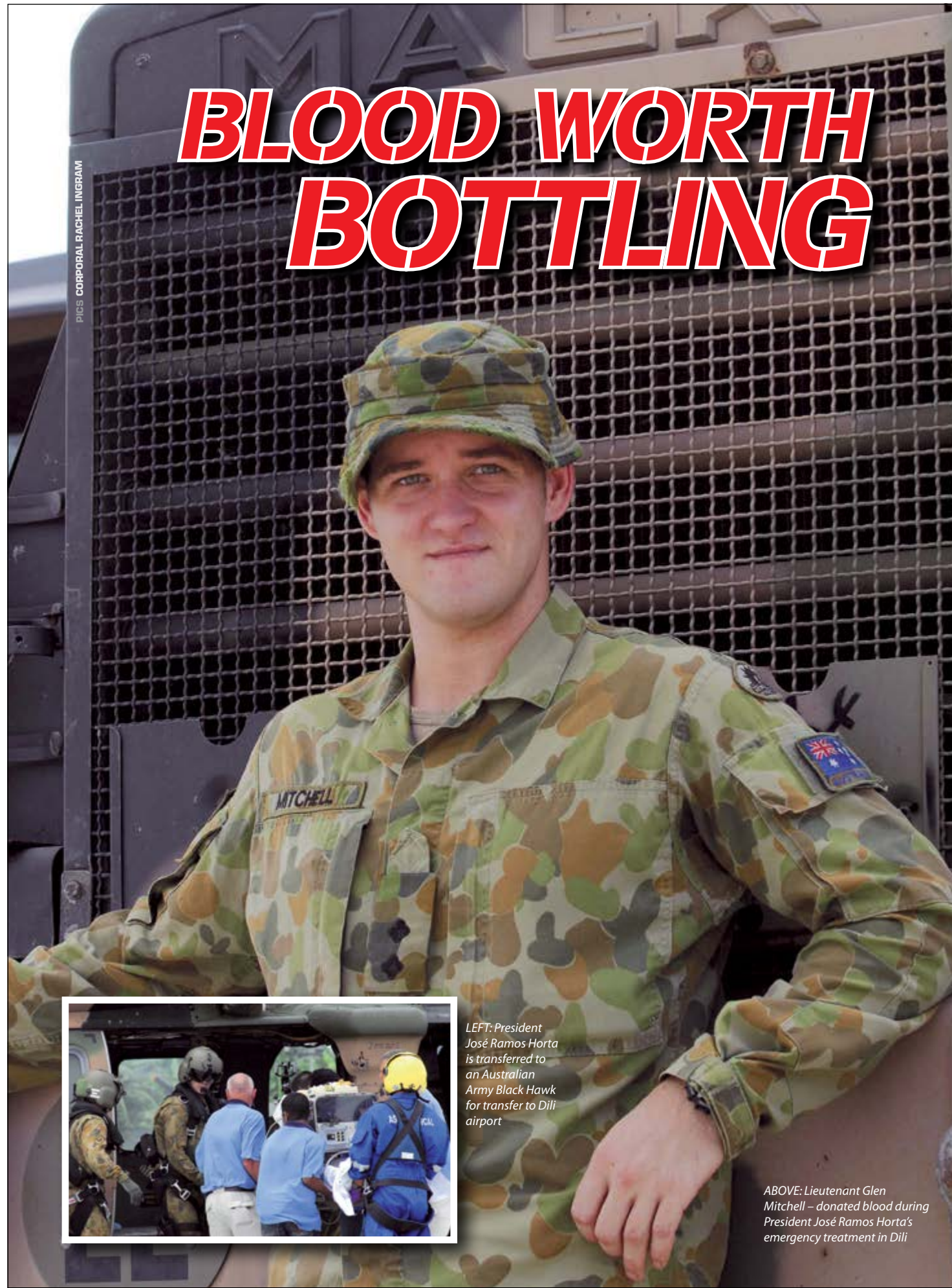


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LEFT: President José Ramos Horta is transferred to an Australian Army Black Hawk for transfer to Dili airport

ABOVE: Lieutenant Glen Mitchell – donated blood during President José Ramos Horta's emergency treatment in Dili

It may be an old cliché, but in the case of eight Australian soldiers on Operation Astute in Timor-Leste their blood truly is worth bottling.

The soldiers provided blood for immediate transfusion during President José Ramos Horta's emergency treatment at the civilian-run mission medical facility in Dili, following his serious wounding by rebels on 11 February.

Having previously consented to be part of an emergency donor register, the soldiers made themselves available for blood donations in the event that their blood type was required urgently and Red Cross supplies were not available.

One of the donors was Lieutenant Glen Mitchell from Townsville's 3rd Combat Service Support Battalion, currently working as an operations officer at the hospital at Dili heliport base (H-POD).

Glen knew very quickly after the shooting that President Horta would undergo emergency surgery and quickly rounded up other registered donors of the president's blood type.

"As a donor you feel good no matter who you're helping to save, but the fact that we were helping someone who means so much to the future of this country, plus the fact that it was Aussies showing this compassion, was great," Lieutenant Mitchell says.

"I feel like I have a very strong connection to this country now."

Another of the emergency donors was Corporal Paul Faulkner, based in Townsville with 2RAR, who is also a Red Cross blood donor back home in Australia.

"I'd encourage everyone to consider donating blood. It's a really worthy cause back home, but here I'm simply doing my bit as well," Corporal Faulkner says.



Reinforcements arrive in Dili



Making their presence felt on the streets

"I guess it did feel a bit special, though, being able to help President Horta, who's so important to Timor-Leste."

The emergency blood donor register – believed to be the first of its kind in the Australian Defence Force – lists more than 40 fully-screened and tested potential donors at the H-POD and Camp Phoenix in Dili.

President Horta's treatment is the first time the register has been activated.



President José Ramos Horta is removed from an ambulance in Dili

Emergency response

The response to the attempted assassination of both the president and prime minister of Timor-Leste in Dili on 11 February went much further than just the immediate medical needs of the president.

While Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão escaped injury, President José Ramos Horta was shot twice and gravely wounded, requiring emergency medical treatment in Dili before evacuation for life-saving surgery in Darwin.

As soon as civilian medical staff at H-POD had the president sufficiently stabilised for transport, an army ambulance took him the short distance to a waiting 171 Aviation Squadron Black Hawk helicopter. From there, it was a short hop to Dili International Airport where a Careflight aircraft and crew were on standby for the final transfer to Darwin.

In the mean time, extra troops and police were being mobilised in Australia, heading to Dili to bolster the International Stabilisation Force in Timor-Leste in anticipation of civil unrest.

By nightfall on the same night as the attempted assassinations, troops were already gathering in Darwin for final briefings and supplies before the short hop to Dili.

Within days, about 200 extra Aussie soldiers, built predominantly on a rifle company drawn from Sydney-based 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, were in place and conducting patrols and vehicle checks in and around Dili.

Currently designated the Ready Battalion Group, 3RAR has responsibility to provide on-line, deployable short-notice force for just such emergencies. It stands ready to deploy a company-plus sized group as in this case, or a much larger force if necessary.

C-17 and C-130 aircraft from the Royal Australian Air Force provided the necessary strategic and operational airlift capabilities for the surge, while HMAS Perth, already positioned in the vicinity of Dili Harbour, was fully prepared to support the new mission.

On 15 February, Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd visited Timor-Leste to make his own assessment of the situation of the needs of our near neighbour and, while there, thanked the newly arrived Australian soldiers for being ready, willing and able to deploy at such short notice.

The surge brings the numbers of Australian military in Timor-Leste to approximately 1000 ADF personnel. This force is expected to remain in the country for some time, providing a robust response capability to support the local government and the United Nations police force.

There are also approximately 70 Australian Federal Police among more than 1400 international police from 40 countries on duty in Timor-Leste as part of the UN and other missions there.



Australian Reconstruction Task Force (RTF) soldiers in southern Afghanistan fought off a number of Taliban attacks on a new construction project during the last days of February.

For 35 days, in extreme mid-winter conditions, Australian soldiers and their Afghan National Army (ANA) allies were responsible for the construction of an ANA forward operating base (FOB) and provision of security in Afghanistan's strategic Chora Pass.

During the construction, Australian infantry, cavalry and combat engineers successfully fought off repeated insurgent attacks in the Dorafshan area. The action happened near the mouth of the contested Baluchi Valley where the Australian Army engineers are building the patrol base as part of Operation Shar Markaz.

The Australians responded swiftly with ASLAV vehicles, small-arms fire and aggressive follow-up patrolling.

Normally based in Townsville, 2RAR's mortar detachment also fired in support.

While the enemy tried to box in the Aussie troops with simultaneous attacks from mutually supporting fire teams, the Digger's defensive tactics prevailed.

"The immediate and aggressive response by RTF soldiers caused the enemy to break off their attack and abandon their weapons in hastily prepared caches," Chief of the Defence Force Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston said.

"These weapons were recovered through aggressive follow-up patrolling, which was sustained for a number of days.

"Importantly, the effectiveness of RTF force protection measures caused the Taliban to launch their attacks from the extreme range of their weapons systems in low-light conditions, which degraded their ability to target Australian troops effectively."

He said our troops in Oruzgan Province were performing magnificently in difficult and demanding operational conditions and all Australians could be justifiably proud of their professionalism and their ability to respond quickly and aggressively when attacked.

AUSSIES REPEL ATTACKS



WORDS CAPTAIN AL GREEN
PICS CORPORAL HAMISH PATERSON



AFTER THE BATTLES

After putting the Taliban to flight during skirmishes near the Baluchi Pass in Afghanistan earlier in the year, Australian troops have wasted no time in getting to know the locals, assessing their needs and winning their trust.

Special engagement teams from the Reconstruction Task Force, operating from a newly constructed patrol base, quickly proved that friendly communication was the best way to break the ice with cautious locals. With a shared sense of fun, if not language, the diggers have become particularly popular with local children who run out to greet frequent patrols moving through the former Taliban stronghold.

Infantryman Private Matt Filippie says that the kids soon became pretty cheeky.

"We saw that as a very good sign, because it means they feel comfortable around us," he says.

In recent operations, the Australians have found that the best way to displace Taliban influence is to listen and respond to local needs, in stark contrast to the brutal tactics and demands of the insurgents.

Engagement team member Lieutenant Andrew Wegener believes this point of difference gives the Australians a competitive edge.

"We became closer to the population than the Taliban, which traditionally had been their advantage," he says.



AFGHANISTAN

"Now the Taliban are becoming the outsiders, not us."

Engagement team leader Major Jim Kmet says that through active dialogue the team is able to gauge local priorities.

"Water and its management, for example, is a key issue in this area," Major Kmet says.

"They also wanted a road fixed, and we were able to action that right away.

"That certainly made an impression."

The engagement teams achieved further success when 50 local elders agreed to meet Reconstruction Task Force commander Lieutenant Colonel David Wainwright in a traditional Shura, the local word for meeting.

There, in the shadows of the new patrol base, they also met with members of the provincial government, and were able to provide input into future plans, which will include health, education and security infrastructure and support.

"The intent is that people here have real input into their own future," Lieutenant Colonel Wainwright says.

In line with the aim for local empowerment, the Afghan Army now commands the patrol base and will continue to provide security and local engagement in partnership with coalition-force mentoring teams.

In recognition of the Australian contribution to the base's construction, the Afghan Army were happy that it has been named Patrol Base Worsley.

During the patrol base's dedication ceremony, Major General Mike Hindmarsh paid tribute to Private Luke Worsley, 4RAR (Cdo), who died in action in Afghanistan late last year.

He said that Private Worsley's philosophy towards life well reflected what was now being achieved in the area.

"Luke felt there could be a better life for the Afghan people – he firmly believed in what he was doing here," Major General Hindmarsh said.

"We should regard this base symbolic of Luke's fortitude and courage."

SOLDIER INSIGHT

Australian soldiers provide insights on their experiences 'outside the wire' while working with Afghan National Army allies in bitter mid-winter conditions in southern Afghanistan.

ON WORKING IN THE EXTREME CONDITIONS

Private Matthew Filippe
(Infantry rifleman):

"On the coldest patrol we had a temperature of minus 17."

"Our water and food froze up, which was a challenge."

ON MATESHIP AND COPING

Corporal Craig Reedman:

"You can always rely on your mates to be there when you're struggling."

"Everybody has down days, when they're just not coping with it."

"The other lads in the section give them a bit of a ribbing and they soon realise that they're not the only one suffering – and then just pull out of it."

ON SECURITY

Private Kevin Stephens
(Rifleman, Security Task Group):

"The role of the Security Task Group (STG) is about eliminating the threat for the engineers so that they can get on with construction unimpeded. It also allows Afghans to look after themselves and not live in fear of all the awful things that can happen to them through the Taliban."

ON RECONSTRUCTION

Lieutenant Damian Stubbs:

"The reason we're here is to construct a forward operating base so the Afghan National Army can assume responsibility over security in the Chora region."

"It's very much a joint effort – the project is designed and managed by the Aussies and we provide trade and plant support. We have carpenters, plumbers and electricians fitting out the buildings and installing showers and ablutions."

ON WORKING WITH THE AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY

Lieutenant Ben Watson:

"We've involved ANA in missions including vehicle check points and mounted patrols – they enjoy it and their morale always improves when we're around."



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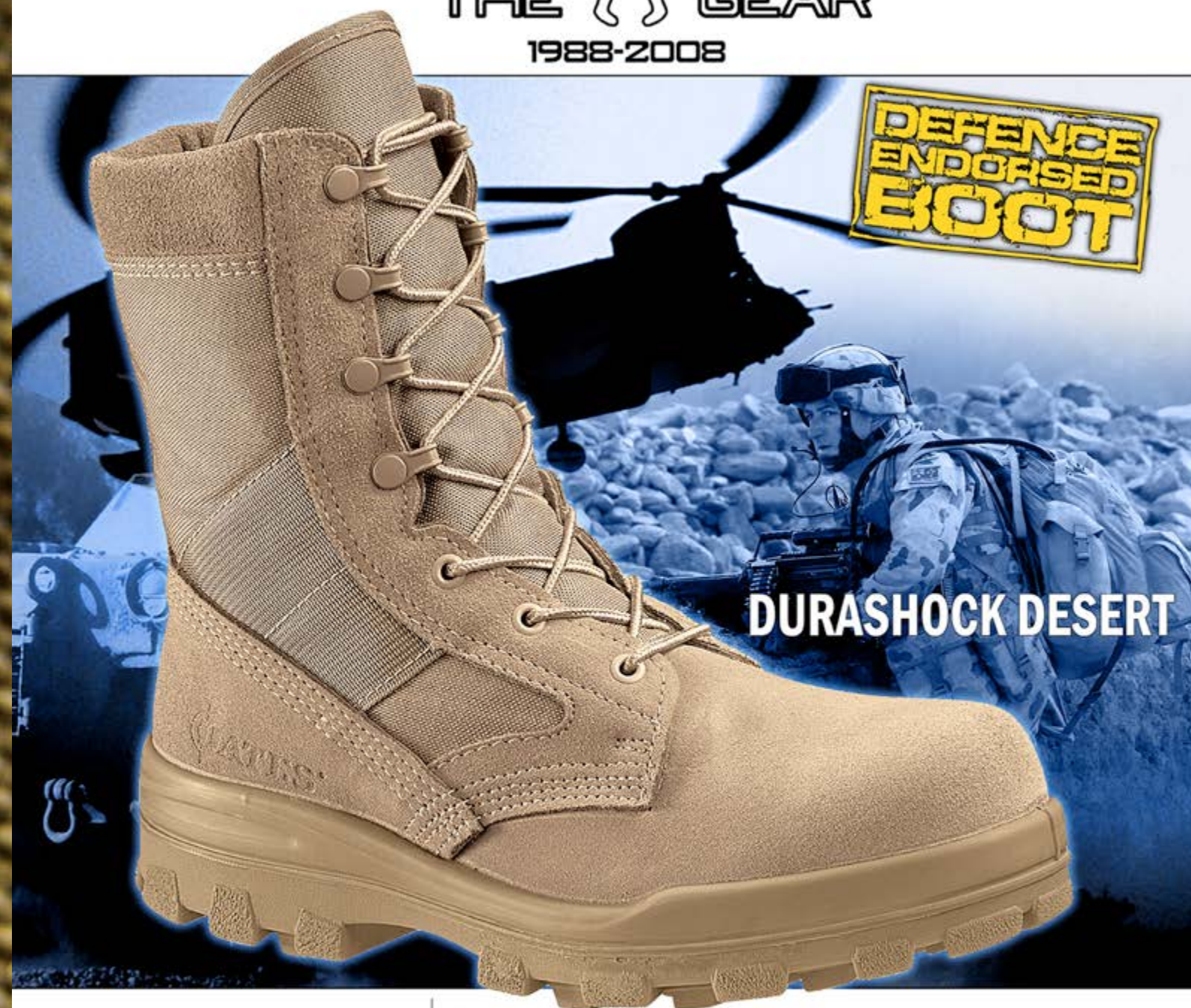
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Corporal Gavin Baker, C Company, 1 RAR, on patrol in Baidoa
Pic Corporal Gary Ramage

Recently, with the help of technology, I finally got to revisit Somalia. This time, thankfully, it was with a cold beer beside me in my air-conditioned lounge room while seated in front of a laptop.

If you're ever inclined to take the journey yourself, the process is very easy. Enter Google Maps into your nerd box, hit satellite image, then simply type in 'Somalia'.

After a brief pause, the familiar coastline of the Horn of Africa will pop onto the screen along with a single dot with the word Muqdishu (Mogadishu) next to it. I instantly smiled. I've always been amused that you will rarely find any Somali town name or words spelt the same way twice.

Then you need to zoom in on Mogadishu and follow the yellow line denoting the main road west-south-west, which eventually hooks north-west to Buur Hakaba.

The dark blob which is the shadow of the rock monolith, christened by us as Ayers Rock, is easily visible.

From there, the road shoots off in a perfectly straight line north-west up onto the escarpment to Baidoa and, in typical Somali style, misses it by a kilometre or two, then doubles back.

For those of us who remember that part of the world, the first thing you will notice looking down at Baidoa is the absolute lack of progress or change since 1993.

The Coke factory still lies abandoned at the northern end of town. There's no aircraft on the tarmacs at the airfield and very few vehicles on the streets.

As far as I can tell, there's no new buildings, let alone new roofing on the ones that are there and, sadly, no evidence what so ever of the wire, towers or gun pits we sweated over, and in, 15 years ago.

Of course, there are a million things that can't be shown or imagined from a satellite image. The smell of the open sewerage pits and burning rubbish – the feel of the heat which attacked you from every angle and even seemed to radiate from the earth itself – and how, while out on the roads around Baidoa, you could look east and see the landscape of Mars, look west and see the Australian Outback and to look north you'd swear you were in a David Attenborough documentary studying lions or some such thing.

For a country such as Somalia, so close to the birthplace of mankind, I guess it's fitting that the only still-lasting physical signs of our passing would be the random pieces of graffiti on the inside of abandoned buildings scattered around places like Baidoa, Dinsor, Bardera and Buur Hakaba.

As proud as I am of my service with the 1st Battalion, I'd be very naive to think the Somali youth of today know about or care of our presence or efforts back then.

But it's still pretty cool to think that maybe in an old abandoned warehouse, in a far off land, a group of children may still look up in fascination at faded and worn pieces of wisdom, scratched so long ago...

This rock show was proudly brought to you by the ADF, Shasta Softdrinks and the Mt Kilimanjaro Water Company

AUSTRALIA OR BUST

WORDS AJ SHINNER PICS ADF AND SHINNER COLLECTION

Half way through our deployment, still bleary eyed from a three-day R&R in Mombasa, and literally still hearing the hum in our ears from the Kiwi Hawker Andover that returned us to Baidoa, our platoon was introduced to one of the more interesting tactics cooked up by the brass during Op Solace.

I'm not sure who came up with night vehicle counter ambush patrolling. I guess one of the officers probably read about the Soviets trying something similar in Afghanistan or the French doing it in Indochina or some such thing. If so, the fact that both got their asses handed to them on a platter must have escaped him at the time.

The theory was simple enough though – in section-plus and platoon-sized groups we would drive up and down the main roads at night in Mogs and 6X Rovers with one headlight out, drivers crunching the gears

and forcing the vehicles to do their best imitation of rundown Somali trucks.

In the pitch black of night, with no night vision devices, and thinking the approaching truck was easy prey, the clansmen would try and stop the vehicle to rob the occupants, steal the truck or, if the mood moved them, simply ambush to kill.

Ideally, if the opportunity arose, we would creep along blacked out, 200 metres behind a local truck foolish enough to travel at night and, if it was ambushed, we would charge forward, bayonets fixed, to fight off the foe and save the day like the brave sons of Anzac we were.

To understand how dodgy us bottom feeders thought this was, you have to appreciate the number of RPGs, recoilless rifles, mines and heavy machineguns we'd found hidden and confiscated in the months previously.

We were sometimes 50 to 100 kilometres from Biadoa, in small numbers, with no readily available air support, little or no backup and literally hours away from reinforcement from our vehicle borne-QRF (quick reaction force). To make matters worse, you also have to remember that in 1993, we were still operating with only one second-generation night scope per section and a borrowed set of goggles off the Cav boys, both of which had seen better days and rarely worked well.

To top it off was the fact that working on a true reverse night-operations cycle was next to impossible because you just couldn't sleep in an 11X11 tent during the scorching heat of the day.

Like happy little vegemites we received our orders, attempted to keep down dinner and, as the sun set in the west, we loaded

Smurf takes 5 while Mog gets fixed



road in the nothingness south-west towards Dinsoor.

Photos of inland Somalia rarely do it justice – it must surely rate as some of the harshest land man has learnt to survive in without the aid of technology. The terrain south-west of Biadoa is particularly flat and empty, somehow in parts resembling the scrubland of the Northern Territory.

I remember marvelling many times back then at the willpower needed by the Somali people to survive here on a permanent basis.

It was about three-quarter way through the tour, lethargy was starting to take hold of us and we were all in our own way creeping toward insanity and our individual breaking points.

Don't get me wrong – none of us were about to flip out and go postal, but task repetition, the miles travelled, isolation from the outside world, as well as the simple lack

detach and find a bit of private time while still maintaining our vigilance.

As nerdy as it sounds, I was picturing how to make an M113 APC model I wanted to build on my return to Townsville and how I would paint it to depict one of the buckets used by us in Somalia, as we raced past an old man and a donkey cart.

I nodded to the old man while, in a non-threatening way, covering him with the Minimi which sat across my lap, as he vanished into the dust and distance.

About an hour-and-a-half later I was mentally debating with myself the pros and cons of getting a tattoo when I heard a distinct, metallic 'tink, tink, tink' noise and watched a fist-sized thingamabob bounce out from under the Mog and roll to the side of the road.

I looked over my shoulder to see everybody still blankly looking off to

Message in the dust



Boarding New Zealand Airforce Andover for Kenya on R&R



On the road towards Dinsoor



Author in Mog capola



up on that first night with hangovers, no sleep and little-to-no enthusiasm.

That first night on counter-ambush patrolling for our platoon was incredibly painful and very long. We all spent the entire night head butting air while having no idea where we were or what was going on.

Several guys threw up on our truck and a couple even attached themselves and their weapons to the centre seating with snap locks to stop themselves from falling off into the darkness if they dozed off – or passed out.

Although the patrols were fruitless for us, another platoon in the company did actually hit paydirt while discreetly following a local truck one night.

During the melee that followed the de-bus and initial counter-ambush drill, Macka stepped onto the road in front of the Mog he'd been travelling in to put up an illumination round with a 84mm Karl Gustav.

In great Infantry 'she'll-be-right' style he raised the weapon in the text-book manner

and fired – as the horrified driver in the Mog looked on.

Anybody who has seen the crap kicked up in the BBDA (back-blast danger area) from an 84 firing an illumination round will easily picture the windscreen of the Mog shattering and caving in on the poor driver along with more than a handful of gravel.

It would have been hilarious to watch the driver and Macka standing toe to toe in the middle of the road exchanging words under the light of the new man-made Sun, as the boys raced towards the bandits in a hasty skirmish line.

We were gob smacked to hear later that the Green Machine had deducted the cost of the windscreen from Macka's pay.

On another memorable day on the roads we were screaming along back to Biadoa as fast as the surface conditions allowed. Don't ask me what task we had been on that morning or where we'd been, but it was somewhere along the

of luxury items, privacy and decent sleep were all starting to take their toll on us.

At this stage of the game no one spoke much during the food runs and vehicle patrols unless it was a heads up or an indication to a possible target. The wise cracks, movie quotes and general banter was long gone – it had all been said a thousand times before.

The fact was that our platoon had been very lucky.

We had had very few ring-ins before deploying and we had all been together and working well for two or three years before Somalia.

Our platoon was packed into a 6X Land Rover in the lead and a Mog – both with centre seating.

Another machinegunner had the cupola on the Mog for a change, so I was seated at the back, facing to the rear.

Even when out on the roads, while you could still feel your mates shoulder resting against your own, we all learned to semi-

each side in their own private worlds. Bigger it.

Thinking it must have been something we ran over, I went back to mentally designing a tattoo, smiling to myself and wondering how my mum would react.

Fifteen minutes or so later, I was snapped out of my thoughts as the Mog started to splutter, shake and finally roll to a stop.

After a quick powwow, the 6X Rover was placed facing back the way we'd come and



Steve with captured RPG rounds after a village search

the two drivers set about finding the cause of the problem.

During the afternoon, everybody who had ever tinkered with or owned a Datsun 180B stuck their heads in the Mog's engine bay and, to bug the two drivers even more, gave their own verdicts on the situation.

Not being terribly mechanically minded myself, Gus put it in layman's terms for me – "The donk's busted, mate".

While the section in the Rover covered our rear and set up a random VCP (vehicle check point), I took the opportunity to take a leak, stretch my legs and snap a few photos.

Blakey had voiced everybody's opinion of the day by writing in the dust on the tailgate of the Rover – "AUSTRALIA OR BUST"

Easily 4 or 5 hours after spluttering to a stop and still waiting for the recovery vehicle to arrive, a dot appeared on the horizon to our rear.

We watched the donkey cart's agonisingly slow approach for 30 or 40 minutes before he finally stopped at the VCP.

I again marvelled at the fortitude of the Somali people.

The old man seemed good spirited and not even a bit perturbed that he had been on the road all day and wasn't even remotely halfway from anywhere that we could tell.

As I watched from the shade of the back of the Mog, I saw the old man hand something to one of the guys who smiled and then called over the by-now obviously filthy and pissed-off drivers. As a group formed around them, curiosity got the better of me and I wandered over.

Sure enough, there in his hand was the thingamabob that I had watched fall off and bounce to the side of the road almost six hours earlier.

I opened my mouth to speak but then thought better of it. The thought of being lynched or beaten to a pulp by two angry drivers was one thing, but having the whole platoon join in, simply to stem the boredom, was quite another.

POWER

– the missing component of fitness

When most people start a fitness program, the focus is generally on reducing body fat, increasing muscle mass and improving strength, aerobic endurance and flexibility.

While there is nothing wrong with this for the average person who is looking to improve their health and appearance, focusing on such a narrow range of fitness attributes is a critical mistake for athletes and military personnel.

If you've been reading these articles for a while you'll already know that I believe muscle mass and body shape to be fairly unimportant aspects of fitness for military personnel, quite simply, because the enemy doesn't care what you look like!

On the other hand, strength, endurance and flexibility are critical to developing good operational fitness. There is, however, one aspect of fitness that is often overlooked in military-fitness programs – and that's power.

Strength and power

Before we look at how best to develop power, there are a few things that need to be clarified, as strength and power are often confused.

Strength is the ability to produce a high level of force, regardless of the time taken to apply that force.

A heavy dead-lift or bench-press that takes several seconds to complete is an example of strength.

Strength is an important part of power development, however there are few situations in combat that require pure strength.

Power is the ability to generate a high level of force over a very short period. Power is best demonstrated through movements such as jumping, throwing and sprinting and, as it should be fairly obvious, these are very common in combat.



Rock jump

Strength v power

Although it may seem counter intuitive, greater strength doesn't necessarily mean greater power and the pursuit of greater maximal strength is a very common mistake in fitness programs for athletes and military personnel.

The problem is that during a power movement, the time available to apply force is limited by the movement (for example the ground-contact time of the foot during sprinting and jumping) and thus an extremely strong individual may not have time to apply their massive strength.

Developing power

Developing power for sports and combat applications is a three-step process.

Step one – build strength

Despite what I've just said, strength is critically important to power development. The key is to figure out where the point of diminishing return lies and develop your strength up to that point before moving on to the next phase of training.

For example, being able to squat bodyweight is ok but, for maximal power, being able to squat 1.5 to 2-times bodyweight is a lot better. After that, the pursuit of a bigger squat is probably not going to lead to improved jumping and sprinting ability in combat athletes.

Step two – convert strength to power in the gym

Once you've developed a base of strength, it's time to add power exercises to your program in the gym.

The best exercises for learning to generate power in the gym are the Olympic lifts and their variations.

Research shows that Olympic weightlifters are among the strongest and most powerful athletes on Earth.

It's not necessary to become a full-blown Olympic lifter to realise the benefits of Olympic lifting – all you need to do is add a couple of exercises, like power clean or power snatch, to your program.

If you don't have access to somewhere to do Olympic lifting, then the next best thing is to perform one-arm snatches

with a dumbbell or kettlebell. The aim here is to learn to move significant weights at maximal speed.

After you've built strength and power with Olympic lifting, it can also be very useful to incorporate some plyometric movements such as depth jumps into your program. These will teach your body to react and apply force quickly, and this is a critical aspect of power production in real-world situations.

Step three – apply power to the real world

Once you've built a solid base in the gym, it's time to take it outside and learn to apply your new levels of power to the sorts of situations you might encounter in combat.

For military personnel, I suggest training for power on the obstacle course.

The obs course is an ideal way to demonstrate and train for powerful movement. Running, jumping and negotiating obstacles is about as functional and real-world as it gets!

Instead of just running the whole obs course though, you may want to break it down into short sections of two to three obstacles and run a few repeats of the same section with short breaks in between so that you remain relatively fresh and can apply maximal power to each movement – because, our aim with these sessions is to maximise power and not necessarily to improve aerobic fitness.



Olympic lift

Don Stevenson is running a series of kettlebell and Olympic-lifting workshops all around Australia in 2008. For details of these workshops or for personalised training plans, email fitness@octogen.com.au



THE 'LESS IS BEST' APPROACH

Information regarding all topics is available through the Internet. If one conducts a search through Google and YouTube for self-defence training drills, thousands of sites will be available. The techniques, training drills and tips are all available to most people to learn. However, the issue is one of quantity. Often there is too much information and not enough time to filter through and sort it.

Military self defence (MSD) bases its training on the 'less is best' approach – far better to master a few techniques and be able to apply these techniques in any given situation.

MSD is based on concepts and not techniques. There are so many ways to strike and defend oneself that the student can become confused.

Geoff Thompson, a well known self-defence author, has coined the term 'log jam' to describe what happens to students when they have too many decisions to make and cannot make any decision. He argues that for every extra training strategy you instruct a student, it will slow them down by the number of options they have.

For example, if you only know one method of defence, you will execute that method every time without hesitation. But, if you are taught two methods of defence, you now have to think about which one to use. This will take extra time. Three methods will increase the decision time even further. Hunter Armstrong, the world's leading hoplologist (one who studies the evolution and development of human combative behaviour) has only one approach, and this approach is used for all situations.

By adopting a program that has fewer approaches, it means there is more time to spend on practising the techniques and truly becoming proficient at the drill. This creates, as John Will,

At no other time in history has there been so much information at the finger tips of individuals. King Henry V owned 12 books, today most people own at least 100 books and probably read more in a week than someone from the 15th Century read in a lifetime.

one of Australia's leading martial artists would say, 'real ownership' of the technique.

MSD focuses on instructing fewer techniques and then applying these techniques to various situations and scenarios that soldiers may find themselves in. This increases the soldiers' time spent on practising the techniques, plus, these techniques are reinforced during scenario training. The basic approach is, we teach a technique and then we place the students in as many different environments as time permits for them to apply that technique.

Training systems start off simple but, over time, they evolve in degrees of complexity. It is important to realise the term, 'training creep'. That is, the addition of techniques to programs over time, in the belief that students need to know these techniques.

Self defence is a broad area and, although it would be nice to have one training concept, it cannot always be achieved.

Students are at different physical levels, ages and capabilities and are not always in the right frame of mind to learn just one drill.

Tradeoffs are made to ensure the training is safe and is able to be replicated to instruct large numbers of students.

Some students at the end of an MSD course often say, 'I've completed the course, what now?'

The answer is to go away and train the techniques under various scenarios and situations – the students have learnt the techniques, now they need to mix them up and place them in drills.

Drills, drills and more drills – this is the secret to technique retention and ownership.



MILITARY SELF DEFENCE (MSD) BASES ITS TRAINING ON THE 'LESS IS BEST' APPROACH – FAR BETTER TO MASTER A FEW TECHNIQUES AND BE ABLE TO APPLY THESE TECHNIQUES IN ANY GIVEN SITUATION



Setting the Standard

Many military and tactical response teams throughout the world are finally recognising that push-ups and sit-ups have little, if anything to do with operational ability.

For decades, military and public safety agencies have resorted to a single, standardised battery of fitness tests to judge whether an operator meets the physical requirements of their employment. To date, rarely has the test varied from one unit (or even corps) to another, despite the obvious differing physical demands of each job.

In recent months, we have been approached by numerous agencies to assist in the design and implementation of more role-specific 'operational readiness assessments' that relate directly to the physical responsibilities of each individual unit member.

SWAT Commander Paul Zuber, of the Longmont Police Department in Colorado expressed to me that, "For years, agencies used tests such as press-ups, sit-ups and chin-ups to assess a unit member's job readiness, despite the fact they will never use those specific movements while executing unit orders. We need an assessment that can quite clearly tell us whether a team member is up to the job or not, not whether he can do hundreds of press-ups with perfect form."

As a result, Commander Zuber's team have now implemented a far more practical assessment, incorporating many of the individual tasks set out in the example to follow.

But not all unit leaders are as forward thinking as Commander Zuber. We still see plenty of selection tests and regular unit assessments incorporating activities such as rope climbs, despite not even having a rope as part of the unit's inventory.

We were recently asked to design and implement a unit-specific assessment for a US-based special response team specialising in urban-based anti-terrorism operations.

This is what we created for them...

SRT Operational Readiness Assessment

- > 1600m run carrying their individually assigned, unloaded primary weapon system, while wearing full operational patrol order, including body armour, helmet and boots. If an operator happens to be the unit sniper, and carries an SR-98 on operations, then that is what they should carry on the run. Unit requirement – under 10 minutes.

- > 100m fire and movement course, again in full patrol order and gas mask. The course consists of precisely positioned markers signifying favourable cover. There are three different coloured markers, each representing a different firing position (white – prone, yellow – kneeling, orange – standing). Each marker is numbered, and the operator must stop at each marker in order, assuming the appropriate firing position and dry-firing twice, before moving on to the next marker. The operator must maintain tactical stance, with weapon at the ready while moving between markers. Unit requirement – under 2 minutes.

- > 25m leopard crawl. Again, the crawl should be performed in full patrol order and gas mask. Unit requirement – under 50 seconds.
- > Fence clearance, consisting of a 10m sprint to a 6ft fence, which the operator must then climb over before sprinting 10m to a turnaround point before clearing the fence for a second time and sprinting 10m to the original starting point. Unit requirement – under 25 seconds.
- > Muscle up. Standing in front of a 6ft high, horizontal bar, the operator must grip the bar in an over-hand grip and lift themselves up until they are supporting themselves by their arms, with straight elbows, and their hips in line with the bar for two counts. The operator must complete a minimum number of repetitions in one minute. Unit requirement – minimum eight reps.
- > Team-member drag. The operator must drag the heaviest member of their unit (or an equivalent rescue dummy) 20m. If the operator happens to be the heaviest member of the team, they must then drag the next heaviest member. Unit requirement – under 30 seconds.

The unit now uses this assessment, as part of its selection course, and also as a quarterly guide of how its current members are managing to maintain operational readiness.

We realise that few units have the autonomy to be able to abandon such stalwart testing programs as the Defence Force's BFA, but this does not mean that individual unit commanders cannot add this type of practical assessment in addition to current assessments.

For more information contact the Institute for Tactical & Operational Conditioning (ITOC) at www.TacticalConditioning.org



SOLDIER ON HELPING OUR WOUNDED WARRIORS



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

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



INSPIRE, ENHANCE AND EMPOWER

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



SoldierOnAustralia

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Australian soldiers share a cigarette with an English soldier in France, December 1916
AWM – E00033



Sorry mother

BY WO1 DARRYL KELLY

Spurred on by a crowd of bystanders, the two soldiers exchanged a flurry of blows. A sergeant forced his way into the inner circle. "Righto, break it up, break it up!" he shouted. As the crowd dispersed, the sergeant held the men at arm's length. "Why don't you save your fight for the Germans, you pommy git?" snarled one of the offenders. "What the hell would you know about fighting Germans?" the young Englishman retorted.

Edwin Cooper Hoare was British, born and bred. He worked hard as a fruit farmer to help support his parents.¹ At the end of a hard day's work, the young lad often wandered through the fields that surrounded his home in Hastings. He would try to imagine the famous battle that had been fought more than 800 years earlier on the very ground where he now sat. It was 1914 and the papers were full of the news of the German offensive across Europe. Britain had issued Germany with a stern warning to withdraw or suffer the consequences. The ultimatum went

unheeded and the British Government had no choice but to declare war on the defiant Huns.

Young Hoare stood red-faced while his proud mother fussed over him as she adjusted his uniform and straightened his tunic. As he boarded the train following an emotional farewell, he promised his parents he would take good care of himself and return safely.

The Rifle Brigade had a long and distinguished history and now 17-year-old Edwin was part of it.¹

The rigours of military life suited the

boy and he thrived on the camaraderie of working and training with men of all trades and professions.

The Western Front was a hell beyond the comprehension of sane men. The soldiers of the British Army were being mowed down in their thousands, while generals with a hunt-club mentality continued to pit flesh and blood against machineguns and artillery.

Young Edwin gave a good account of himself in those dark days of early 1915. Week in and week out, he took his turn in the firing line or lumbered under the weight of stores and ammunition on the late night carrying parties.

Unfortunately, the hardships of life in the trenches soon took their toll on the teenager. Having to contend with bitter cold, lack of sleep, poor rations and disease-carrying rats was more than Edwin's young body could endure. He was evacuated to hospital suffering pneumonia, fatigue and exhaustion.

After treatment at the base hospital in England, Edwin was forced to face a medical board to assess his fitness to remain in the army. The outcome was devastating for the young soldier. To be discharged from

the army as medically unfit, and denied the opportunity to continue to serve his country at its time of greatest need were consequences the lad had not anticipated.

On Edwin's return home following his discharge, his beloved mother met him as he stepped off the train. While Mrs Hoare was grateful to have her son home safe and sound, she made every effort to reassure him that he should shoulder no guilt. He had served England to the best of his ability and done all that could be expected of him.

Edwin tried to go back to his old life, but was unable to settle. Any time he ventured into the local village, the ladies would talk in hushed tones as he passed or simply turn their backs on him rather than greet him. He was treated no differently to the men who refused to go to war. He felt ostracised and unwelcome.

Edwin pondered long and hard on what to do and decided that it would be better if he moved elsewhere. His mother understood his dilemma and suggested that migration to Australia and a warmer climate might be a sensible option.

Edwin took his mother's advice and secured passage on a tramp steamer. However, on his arrival down under, he found the attitude in Melbourne no different to that in England. Like any young man not wearing uniform, no matter what the reason, he was scorned and ridiculed. Often, in the pubs, Edwin overheard men with no military service discussing their 'knowledge' of the war.

"That's not what it's like in battle," Edwin would interject.

All too often Edwin heard the sarcastic reply, "And what would you know about it, young fella?"

"Cause I was there, at the front," Edwin would respond angrily.

"Yeah and pigs might fly."

Edwin was not backward in coming forward, contradicting these barfly experts, often leading to a bar-room brawl. Sometimes Edwin held his own but, more often than not, he came off second-best, spending the following few days nursing the cuts and bruises that covered his face and body.

Fearing that one of his tormentors could cause him real harm, Edwin purchased a small nickel-plated revolver for his own protection.² The young man also decided that the only way to silence his critics was to re-enlist in the military.

"You're a little on the scrawny side, aren't you, lad?" commented the recruiting officer.

"I've served before, sir. Over a year in the British Army. In the Rifle Brigade, sir."¹

Edwin Hoare, now aged 19, was found to be fit to serve and was soon back in uniform. He was sent to the Royal Park Training Depot in central Melbourne.¹

However, trouble seemed to follow the young recruit and he became moody and very much a loner. His platoon sergeant noticed that the lad never seemed to be

happy and carried out his work with an almost perfunctory attitude.³

The other soldiers constantly taunted him about what they regarded as the poor performance of the British Tommies and the pathetic leadership of the British generals. Edwin would retaliate with his fists, but the lad was no match for the more powerfully built local recruits.

Invariably, following these fracas, he was forced to seek treatment at the Regimental Aid Post.

"By God lad, you're a glutton for punishment," the medical officer commented, as he bandaged the soldier's wrist. "Why don't you just ignore them?"

"I'm no-one's fool, sir. I'm as good as any of them," Edwin protested.

The taunting continued and Edwin became more and more withdrawn. His platoon sergeant spoke to him on a number of occasions, but the lad was reluctant to discuss his problems.

Ultimately, it all became too much. One day, when Edwin's morale had reached an all-time low, he sat in his tent and wrote two letters, which he placed in separate envelopes. The first he addressed to his mother, the other envelope he left blank.

He reached into his kit bag and took out a small cloth bundle, which he placed into the pocket of his tunic. He then secured the letters in his uniform pocket and hurried off to the tent that served as the Presbyterian chapel.³

Edwin cut a pathetic and lonely figure as he sat at the table, engrossed in thoughts of his home and parents in faraway England. Slowly and deliberately he withdrew the cloth bundle from his pocket, revealing its contents – the revolver he bought earlier and smuggled into camp. He placed the muzzle of the weapon against his right temple, pulled back the hammer and squeezed the trigger.

At the Board of Inquiry, the letters that Edwin had written on the day of his death came to light and were presented as evidence.⁴ The contents of these brief notes provided some insight into the character of Edwin Hoare and his state of mind when he chose to take his own life.

They read aloud the first letter – meant for the authorities:

I wish to mention that I am an Englishman and that I had 18-months service in the British Army (including three months on active service in France, some time before the first Australians were landed there).

Will the authorities have the courtesy to forward this letter to the address given on the envelope? I should be much obliged if a copy of this letter could be taken and sent by a separate mail-boat to avoid danger of the contents of the letter being lost owing to submarines.

It is a very small favour to ask and perhaps it will be complied with. It will be about the only favour that the military has ever done me in return for my small services.

(Signed) E.C. Hoare⁵

Printed on the back of the envelope was the following:

N.B. Do what you like with the revolver and ammunition, but don't send them home to England on any account. The police are welcome to both.

(Signed) E. Hoare

The other letter was addressed to Edwin's mother:

Dear Mother

I know that this letter will come as a great shock to you all. I have been unhappy for some time. The fact is that I am physically weak, but I have not learned to hold my tongue and do nothing when I hear my country or myself being abused. It is a great mistake to possess more courage than can be backed up by one's physical powers. Unfortunately too, I have a strained hand and shall not be able to do any fighting for at least a fortnight, and there is nothing that worries me more than being thought a coward.

To leave that subject. You know I have always been very self-conscious, and that makes life a misery for one. I am determined to end my life at last. I wish I could see you again before I die. I know I have behaved badly to you sometimes; but my unfortunate temperament was a cause of it.

I have no doubt at all that you forgive me. Please don't you or father worry over me, whatever you do. I shall have peace at last.

My love to you and father and Kathleen. May God bless you all.

*Your affectionate son,
Edwin*

P.S. I would have sent this note privately by post, instead of leaving it in my pocket; but I wanted a copy of it to be made and one sent by this mail and one by the next one so that if one is lost owing to submarines you will get the other.

I sold that portmanteau and my civilian clothes a few weeks ago. They fetched one pound, which I meant to send on to father but I forgot and spent most of it.⁶

Private Edwin Cooper Hoare was laid to rest in Melbourne's Springvale Cemetery.

1 National Archives of Australia: B2455, WW1 Service Records, V60642 Private EC Hoare

2 Captain BD Fethers AAMC, witness statement to Board of Inquiry, Royal Park, Melbourne, 12 March 1917

3 Sergeant RL Hall, witness statement to Board of Inquiry, Royal Park, Melbourne, 12 March 1917

4 Board of Inquiry into death of Private EC Hoare, Royal Park, Melbourne, 12 March 1917

5 Edwin Hoare, suicide note to the coroner, 9 March 1917

6 Edwin Hoare, suicide note to his mother, 9 March 1917

Sapper Joshua Webb gets down and dirty as he digs post holes for a water tank in the Oruzgan Province in December 2006. Sapper Webb is wearing non-issued Belleville boots.



IN OUR
OPINION...

Chief of Army's 'Interim Combat Boot Policy' includes...

- **Aim** – to authorise Army personnel to wear privately procured and funded combat boots from an endorsed range
- **Duration** – from 2 June 2008 until the future of issued boot is known (mid '09 at the earliest)
- **CA considered that:**
 - in-service boot has undergone considerable improvement following extensive user feedback
 - majority of soldiers seem satisfied with in-service boot
 - some soldiers wish to exercise choice
 - a small number of soldiers cannot be properly fitted with in-service boot
 - Army operating in range of climates not envisaged when in-service boot designed
 - one boot cannot meet all requirements
 - proper fitting of in-service boots remains a substantial problem
- **Constraints:**
 - Must be at soldier's expense
 - Must be similar colour to in-service boot
 - Can only be worn on operations or on exercise
 - Every soldier who elects to buy own boots must fill out questionnaire on 'Speak to the Chief' web site (commander must enforce)
- **Endorsed boots*:**
 - **Altama** 4158 3LC Hot Weather
 - **Belleville** M590 Hot Weather
 - **Bates** 30501 Durashock Desert
 - **Crossfire** Peacekeeper Plus

* Soldiers or commanders may nominate other boots to be tested, approved and added to the list

BUY YOUR OWN BOOTS

Words **Brian Hartigan**

With the best interests of his soldiers at heart, the Chief of Army has done something positive, proactive and commendable to address longstanding concerns over the quality of combat boots issued to our soldiers in the field.

As a new soldier in Townsville in about 1992 or '93, I participated in an activity whereby the new combat boot people measured thousands of serving members' feet to help them design the best combat boot for the ADF.

Seven or eight years and all that development time later, after the new boot was introduced in 1999, it didn't take long for complaints to start rolling in.

Fast forward nine years and we have already seen five new, presumably improved, versions of the 'best boot ever' come across the Q-store counter – yet the complaints still come. And, there's yet another generational change promised for some time after mid next year.

A logical and workable solution – let soldiers buy their own boots – has long been resisted by the establishment.

But now, amid reassurances that the current boot issued to Defence members is a good product and remains fit for purpose, Chief of Army Lieutenant General Peter Leahy has nonetheless issued a directive authorising soldiers to buy and wear boots other than the issued brand. Well, good on him, I say.

However, while my reaction to this is largely positive, there are just a couple of aspects that make me sigh, "I wish he hadn't done that."

An old sergeant of mine (Hi Tappets!) used to say, "It's easier to get forgiveness than it is to get permission." Until now, the practical application of this simple adage meant soldiers could buy non-issued boots (and other equipment) without the boss' permission – and supervisors largely turned a blind eye.

The problem I see now is that, having made this directive, the CA has put parameters in place that leave his subordinate commanders no alternative but to charge soldiers if they disobey a lawful general order.

The CA's directive also limits the choice of non-issued boot to just four specific models (though more are likely to be

added). Therefore, anyone who already bought boots is out of luck if their boots aren't on the CA's list. Now they face the prospect of spending even more money on new boots or going back to the issued boots they abandoned for their own reasons in the first place.

My opinion – the boss might have been better off to let soldiers continue doing their own thing (as they have done for years) instead of trying to regulate that which would not be necessary if the issued boot was up to the job in the first place. But, having decided to act, I applaud that the CA acted in soldiers' best interests rather than seek to enforce the rules for rules' sake.

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TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX VEGAS 2

Ubisoft

PC – Xbox 360 – Playstation 3

www.rainbowsixgame.com

Just how important is a storyline to a first-person shooter? Some would argue that the greatest benefit in this genre of gaming is multiplayer, so a detailed storyline is simply an impediment to a timely release. Others would argue that, like a good film, no game can truly capture the heart, soul and very being of a gamer unless they are drawn into a virtual world created through a comprehensive storyline.

Vegas 2 poses exactly this question to a gamer the moment they end a stand-off with the game's terrorist-cell leader through the application of a rapid concentration of 9mm projectiles. You see, until that point, the action is so intense, the fights so frantic and the exhilaration of perfectly executing a multiple entry of a tango-occupied room is so great that the storyline gets drowned out. Sure it's there and it sort of links missions, but most of the time, you have your head in the equipment trunk kitting out for the next job to really pay too much attention. And then the final mission occurs...

Think of every possible reason that would cause a former Rainbow operative to turn on his mates and unleash explosive and chemical hell on his own country. Money ... check; Ideology ... check; Sheer frustration in a government that has no qualms about exploiting its troops ... check; Annoyed that your team leader always covered up for your mistakes ... che ... WTF!!!!!! Yep that's it. The great Tom Clancy, a novelist associated with most of

the military-related thrillers of the last decade is in the title of this game for God's sake, and the best you could come up with was, 'he felt annoyed that he wasn't allowed to pay for his mistakes!'

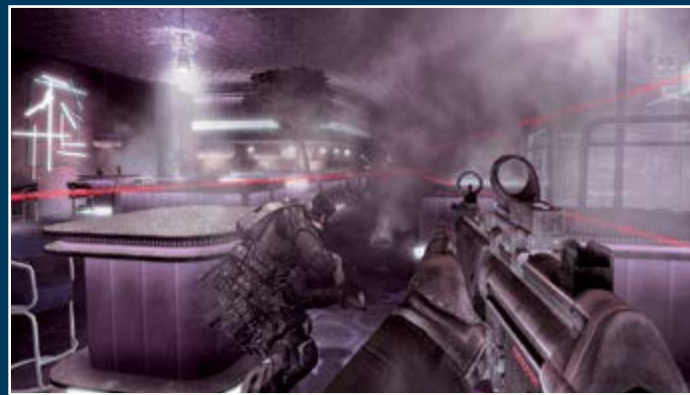
Thankfully, Vegas 2 in some way proves that for first-person shooter titles at least, a storyline is somewhat redundant.

Those who have played the previous Rainbow titles, particularly the first Vegas game, will feel right at home with the environment and gameplay – in fact in the 14-odd months between Vegas and Vegas 2 the only real change has been a tweak of the AI, a swag of new maps and the option to sprint in short bursts. The original (and lacklustre) ending to Vegas with its "To be Continued" couldn't be more appropriate because playing Vegas 2 feels just like playing Vegas. The storylines don't match up (they're parallel rather than a linear link between the two) but the game is so familiar it almost feels like you are playing the maps that weren't quite ready when Vegas was pushed out for Christmas 2006.

Perhaps the greatest improvements in the title aren't the ones that are necessarily that obvious. The graphics look the same, the audio remains great and the swag of weapons and gadgets remains realistic and deadly.

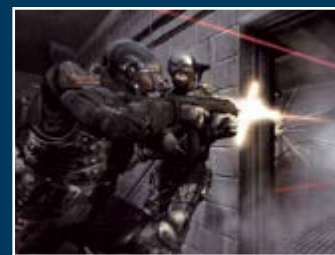
What has changed is the way the game now assesses each and every action of the player and assigns experience across three counter-terrorist-operator disciplines. Considered killers who strive to quickly negate the terrorist threat with headshots or from afar will amass 'marksman' points. Those who relish the up-close fight will increase their 'CQB' skills while those who prefer the destructive force of explosives or the precise application of a three-to-five round burst from belt-fed weapons will accrue 'assault' points.

By the time you have finished the single-player campaign, most players will discover that their playing style leans heavily towards one discipline and the most weapons and materiel to support that discipline have been unlocked through gameplay. It's a thoughtful and interesting addition and allows great play-matching when entering the online



world as others can see your stats as well.

For those not keen on the whole 'community' thing, there's a shed-load of life left in the game beyond the single-player campaign. Terrorist-hunt games can be played on any of the multi-player maps as can lone-wolf missions. There's also the option to play co-op within the single-player story or stand alone. But for most, the multiplayer action with up to 16 players is where the true jewel of the Rainbow series lies and Vegas 2 is no different.



Vegas 2 is finely polished, bloody demanding and highly satisfying – if only the team could have got a better story writer.

Score: 4.5/5

FRONTLINES: FUEL OF WAR

THQ

Xbox 360 – PC

www.frontlines.com

What will happen when the oil runs out? Will the world get clever and find alternatives to the most sought-after commodity, or will we keep up our thirst until there is nothing left. Personally I'm hoping for the former (come on science geeks – now's your time to shine) but this title from the team who provided the Iraq War mod, Desert Combat, to DICE's Battlefield 1942 explores the latter. If their representation of the world squabbling over the last oil reserves is even remotely accurate, those scientists and governments really need to pull their fingers out – it all happens in 2024.

The Frontlines world is anarchy on a global scale executed in a remote part of the former Russian and China divide. The world has aligned into two factions, the Western Alliance and the Red Star Alliance and neither side will



stop until every last drop is in their possession.

And possession is what this game is all about. Tactical battles to secure checkpoints, infrastructure or even single buildings are reflected on a larger operational map showing a moving front as each side gains and loses ground. It is essentially a tactical game so don't think you can apply any of that manoeuvrist approach to seize and hold the vital oil in one decisive move. Nope – Frontlines says 'hooray for attrition warfare' with each side using a range of individual and crew-served weapon and vehicle systems to seize and hold objectives.

ARMY OF TWO

EA

Xbox 360 – Playstation 3

www.ea.com/armyoftwo

Chuck Norris and Jean-Claude Van Damme walk into a war – in hockey masks. That pretty much sums up EA's latest shooter offering, Army of Two.

Based on the concept that two is better than one and three is too many, Army of Two has two hyped-up, 'roid-induced and heat-packing private security contractors unleashing streams of hot lead and quite a bit of invective against seemingly endless waves of Middle-Eastern

and African-looking terrorists/insurgents/bad guys.

The concept is actually great. It is focused on co-op gaming and, with someone on another controller nearby, the obvious flaws in the game can be overlooked. Without a real-life Jean-Claude sitting beside you however, the game's poor AI really comes to the fore.

Firstly, and most obviously, is that the enemy are stupid. There's no other word for AI characters who train smash themselves into the same beaten zone that has reduced their 20 predecessors to a

bloody pulp. This flawed AI becomes really apparent when you try playing the game for two with one. Not only are the enemy stupid but Jean Claude might as well be Dolph Lundgren. You see, Army of Two relies on the principle of fire and movement. Chuck fires while Jean-Claude moves etc. This is all well and good when Jean-Claude is in the game, but when he reverts to Dolph, usually at the point Chuck is horribly exposed, frustration quickly ensues.

This can all be overcome by playing Army of Two with two and then when Dolph appears you can give him a virtual smack around the head in the game at the same time you give your teammate a real clip across the back of the skull. In fact the virtual head slap is so much fun that you will often find yourself just sliding over to Jean-Claude to give him one before Dolph appears.

Army of Two introduces some pretty cool moves to the world of gaming. You can back up into one another and take on a myriad of enemies as they come at your usually horribly exposed position from all sides. You can hoist your partner into the air and



hold him there with your 'roid strength so he can engage targets on the next floor. You can lock together behind a riot shield and waddle up the street engaging targets from behind your mobile cover. And of course, given the AI, you can just keep blazing away with Chuck building up your 'roid rage while Jean-Claude goes and delivers the killing blow from a flank.

Army of Two's online multiplayer games are a more positive experience than the single player storyline. In these games your team of Chuck and Jean-Claude must undertake certain missions across large maps against the same AI enemy. The difference

In fact, this game, despite its more than 60 vehicle types, including attack helos and main battle tanks, quite clearly shows that without boots on the ground holding the vital terrain, wars cannot be won.

The near-future setting does however open up the inventory somewhat with Frontlines employing future generations of technology being introduced today. Can't get past a well-sited sentry position? Simply fire up your inexpensive aerial drone and fly the sucker straight into the bunker's aperture and detonate the internal main charge to remove the threat. Pinned down by effective fire from a nearby building? Simply role out your remotely-operated vehicle and use its onboard cannons to remove the whole façade and force the enemy to withdraw.

At its heart, however, Frontlines is a multiplayer game, and the gameplay is tweaked to support this online style. Pretty early on in the single-player campaign you get locked in a game of duelling wheeled vehicles that just seems completely

pointless and contrary to the objectives of the game up to that point. In reality, though, this battle is the introduction to the vehicle combat system that is employed by many people online – you know the guys, the ones who keep running over you every time you dust off a Battlefront title.

The multiplayer game is well polished (as you would expect for a crew who perfected the modern battles aspect of the Battlefront titles) but very 'gamey'. It is definitely biased towards game action rather than tactical prowess and takes a bit to get used to for those who prefer to clear every door on their advance.

The massive number and type of vehicles also often leave the poor old infantry soldier out of the fight in purely online games. The greatest aspect, though, is the multiplayer coding that the KAOS crew have been able to perfect. 24 players on Xbox Live and up to 32 if there is a dedicated server. 32-player battles, of course, are regular on the PC and a real thrill to be part of.

Unfortunately, though, Frontlines reinforced my love of the next-gen consoles we are currently blessed with. I was into the game within minutes on my 360. On PC I (and judging from the forums, every second PC gamer in the world) was unable to get this one to run. I truly feel sorry for the developers as the massive variety of system components, software drivers and other vagaries that inhabit each and every PC make it almost impossible to code a game that will play on everyone's machine. Having said that, the vitriol delivered to KAOS and THQ from the PC crowd over this one seems to be up another level.

Frontlines is a fantastic example of multiplay tactical gaming actually linking for a larger operational effect as the Red and the Blue belt three sheets out of each other over the oil. The lack of traditional multiplayer modes might annoy some but, to be honest, I was so caught up in the fight to secure and then hold each objective I didn't notice.

Score: 4/5

has a beaut collection of Frontlines: Fuel of War items, including games for PC and X360, posters and other stuff, to give away – thanks to THQ.

Go to our web-site's Competitions page for details.

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