

CONTACT

AIR LAND & SEA

ISSUE 36 | DECEMBER 2012

THE AUSTRALIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

MEAO vets blitz

DOG
GUT

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Corporal Dan Keighran



RAAF's FIRST VC



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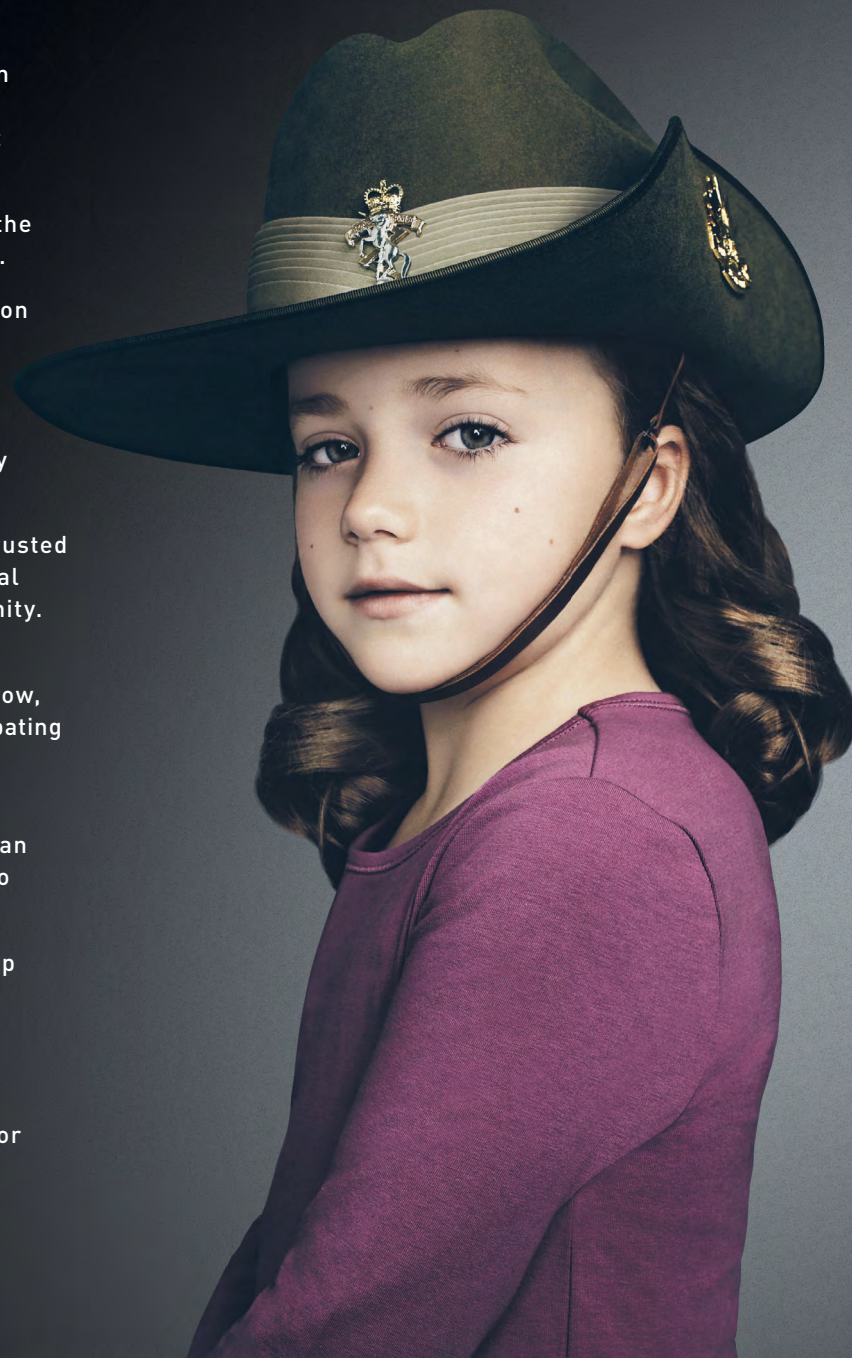
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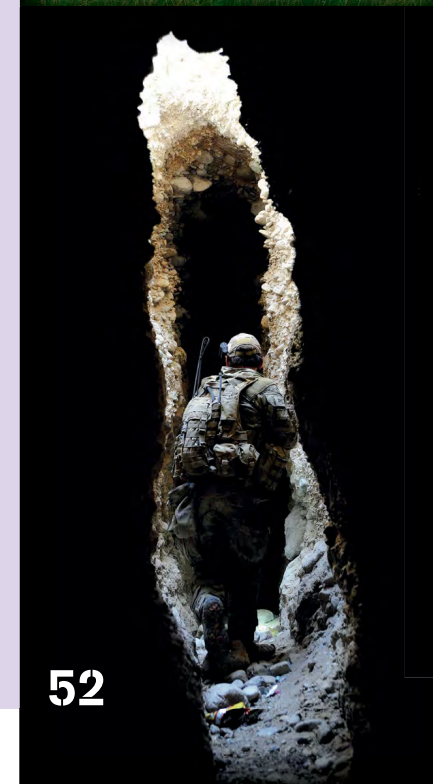
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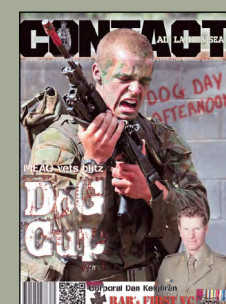
Corporal Daniel Keighran



Issue 36 – December 2012

CONTACT

AIR, LAND & SEA



DOG DAY AFTERNOON

A section from 2RAR, fresh from operations in Afghanistan, take out DoG Cup.

Story p48

Pic Leading Seaman Paul Berry

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I visited Afghanistan in September and, while I went there hoping for patrols outside the wire and telling the Aussie soldiers' story from my observations, it didn't quite pan out that way.

It was nobody's fault, of course – except the Taliban. Three Aussie deaths in a 'green-on-blue' attack, closely followed by worldwide unease over an American anti-Muslim video and an audacious attack on Camp Bastion, brought a temporary halt to soldier-level mentoring patrols, and left me stranded inside the wire for the duration.

Of course, I wasn't confined to my room or prevented from talking to soldiers, sailors or airmen. In fact, I spoke to a wide range of people, most of whom had great stories to tell.

One such story (page 34-40) started with Sergeant Craig Rohse of 3RAR and, as I was talking to Sergeant Rohse, Sergeant Adrian Down, a mortarman, joined us and gave his tuppence worth on one aspect of the same story.

Days later, during an interview with the boss of Australia's Heron Detachment in Kandahar, we got another perspective on the same story – and on it went, building a multi-faceted picture around one incident.

So, while I didn't get out on patrol to observe and report on their activities, the Aussies I met were very forthcoming in telling me their own stories from their own perspective.

So, maybe that was a better outcome after all.

And, of course, the yarn on p34-40 of this issue isn't all of it. There's plenty more left over for next issue.

Another thing I did in Afghanistan was video. Not top-notch professional video, mind you, but very amateur snippets of various things shot on a GoPro (a pocket-sized HD I bought just weeks earlier).

I captured about 20, 10-second 'family shout-outs' and a few one-take interviews, which are proving popular, as well as some snippet-collecting intending to cut them into video news stories.

Bear in mind, I'm so amateur at this that I'm learning how to edit video as I go, putting these snippets together as coherent stories as I find time. But, I'm quite proud of my first effort – a story on how Aussie medic Private Craig Hicks dealt with a gunshot-wound patient at Forward Operating Base Hadrian, which was viewed more than 300 times in its first week on line.

I'd be even more pleased with myself if you check out CONTACT's new You Tube channel at youtube.com/contactpublishing – and leave some honest-yet-kind comments.

On a personal note, I want to thank my 'bodyguard' in Afghanistan – Navy Lieutenant Kara Wansbury (pictured), who ferreted out and facilitated all the interviews I conducted – and kept me sane and smiling and out of trouble for two sometimes very frustrating hurry-up-and-wait weeks.

Brian Hartigan
Managing Editor

PS – the free electronic version of CONTACT will henceforth be delayed by six months, to protect its sales performance in newsagents.

COMBAT Camera has been reinvented as an electronic magazine and will be delivered to electronic subscribers on the same day this magazine goes on sale.



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Got something to say?
E-mail: editor@militarycontact.com

INCOMING

SUSTAINED BURST

I read with disdain the comments in the "Incoming" section of your fantastic magazine regarding the OSM (Operational Service Medal).

To see some persons denigrating other servicepersons' entitlement to yet another medal to be issued by the government is simply disgusting, and not the servicemen/women's fault.

I myself have no entitlement to any gongs other than the shiny trinket known as the ADM for service in an arms corps during that period of mediocrity in the peacetime ARA of the late '80s to mid '90s and again in the ARes in the late '90s, yet I am glad to see that members of border protection, mainly the ADF, will be rewarded in some way for doing an important job monitoring and boarding illegal entry vessels and the like. Doesn't some form of defence of this great country begin at home?

I have mates from my time in the ADF presently in Afghanistan as well as ones who are suffering from PTSD and other war-induced problems/injuries, as well as a close mate who served as a gunner with me in the '90s and who is now back from his sixth tour of Afghanistan as a RAAF high-ranking officer (as well as past tours of Iraq, East Timor and other places) who are disgusted about disgruntled people (some who haven't even had the guts to serve in our ADF) belittling others who do valuable services such as border protection.

Not everyone had, or has the chance to serve on operations in a war zone, and to me the criticism is a joke.

Many of us who haven't been on operational service still carried out valuable service such as bush-fire fighting, drought relief, and so on, and are carrying injuries from our service (even in peacetime service – myself injured in a truck rollover on deployment in Malaysia with RCB at the beginning of the '90s) and find it disgraceful that some people would detract from the recognition of others doing some important work along our borders.

I apologise for the lengthy email and just wanted to point out that all service is important to this fine country of ours and if the government wants to recognise the ADF for some challenging and sometimes dangerous work protecting this country, I am all for it.

As my mate, a warrant officer in artillery who got back from service in Afghanistan with the British Army said, "get what you can out of the government because they take away a lot from you" (in terms of entitlements and compensation and so on).

As a footnote I would gladly hand back the ADM if the money it cost to make it would be spent on true veterans of the ADF. I wouldn't want to wear it anymore after reading those comments, even on that one day of the year when it comes out of the closet. Makes us feel like we are "grabbing gongs" and imposters as well.

I still enjoy your fantastic magazine, and keep up the good work.

All the best.

Dave R, via email

HAND GRENADE

In the absence of sufficient letters to the editor this issue, I'd like to take this opportunity to write one from the editor.

When a VIP is invited to someone else's event as a guest – to add 'weight' or prestige to the event – and that VIP then uses the opportunity to his own advantage, that irks me.

A classic example was the official announcement of Corporal Mark Donaldson VC as patron-in-chief of the charity Soldier On.

On 4 October, the Office of the Minister for Defence published a MEDIA ALERT to announce that "...Stephen Smith will be in Canberra today and attend an announcement by the Soldier On charity ... about Australians coming together to show their support for our physically and psychologically wounded".

That's fair enough in so far as the event got extra exposure it may not have been able to achieve on its own.

However, the bit that irked me was after the event – in fact, less than four hours after (significant in terms of cost) – the minister's office published a transcript of what the minister said at the event – but not what anybody else said.

The minister's transcript included a thank you to former Chief of Army Peter Leahy for his speech, and an invitation to Mark Donaldson VC – "...I'd like you to make some remarks. Thank you." – and that's where it ended.

I asked the minister's office if, in light of the cost and in light of Soldier On being a charity whose money is better spent on recuperating soldiers rather than media product, they could provide a transcript of Mark Donaldson VC's remarks or at least a copy of the audio recording so I could transcribe it myself.

After toing and froing on why I thought they should provide the transcript, I was told, "I will see if a transcript is available" – and never heard from them again.

Brian Hartigan
Managing Editor, Contact Publishing

TARGETS UP!

This letters page is a valuable outlet for CONTACT fans to vent or to praise. It is also valuable for us to feel the pulse of our audience and make adjustments to the magazine as required to deliver what our fans want. However, we don't actually get enough feedback – as evidenced by the fact I had to write one this issue. So, please, put pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard, and let us know what you like and dislike about CONTACT. Thanks in anticipation – Editor

PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR – UK

This year's British Army Photographic Competition winners were announced in London on 10 October.

Winning entries on display at the event included amateur and professional categories for best operational image, best portrait and best sport and adventure-training image.

The portrait reproduced here is from the portfolio of Professional Photographer of the Year Staff Sergeant Mark Nesbit.

"Having spent most of the last 12 months working with video, my stills portfolio isn't as extensive as I would like, but my camera and 50mm manual lens went everywhere with me, looking for the opportunist shot," Staff Sergeant Nesbit said.

"I am very happy to have been recognised for my photographic work."

As in Australia (see story page 52 this issue), British Army photographers deploy as soldiers with rifle and camera, taking the same risks as other soldiers, but also giving the public a unique, up-close view of the realities of conflict.

Away from operations, they capture the day-to-day life of the Army to which they belong.

Amateur photographers, who fit their hobby around their normal day jobs were also recognised for the quality and creativity of their work, with Captain Dave Scammell taking out three of the four amateur categories.

Chief of the General Staff General Sir Peter Wall handed out the prizes during a function at the Imperial War Museum, which holds an archive of the Army's photographs from WWII to today.

HEADS UP

CANBERRA DELIVERED TO MELBOURNE

Australia's largest ever warship arrived in Australia on 17 October.

The hull of the first of two Landing Helicopter Dock ships was transported from Spain to Australia by heavy-lift ship MV Blue Marlin.

Construction of LHD01 began in September 2008 with the first three blocks laid down in September 2010 and the hull launched in February 2011.

Constructed in Spain by Navantia, the ship took about nine weeks to complete the 13,000 nautical mile voyage to Australia.

Shortly after arrival, the hull was unloaded and moved by tug to the BAE Systems' Williamstown dockyard for consolidation of the superstructure and other critical fit-out work.

LHD01, to be commissioned HMAS Canberra, is the first of two LHDs being built for the Royal Australian Navy and is expected to be introduced into RAN service in 2014 followed by LHD02 in 2016.

Each ship will have a crew of around 300 with the capacity to carry a combined-arms battlegroup of more than 1100 personnel, 100 armoured vehicles and 12 helicopters.

BAE Systems is the prime contractor for the LHD project with subcontractors Navantia, Saab and L-3 Communications.



INDOOR SKYDIVE CENTRE

Two former SAS members are building Australia's first major indoor skydiving facility at Penrith Panthers entertainment complex in western Sydney.

Indoor Skydive Australia (ISA), founded by SAS Sergeants Wayne Jones and Danny Hogan, launched a float on the Australian

Stock Exchange in November to raise \$12 million to build an 11m-high vertical wind tunnel at Panthers.

The tunnel, which is planned to open late next year, will be one of the largest in the world, able to lift eight skydivers in simulated freefall at one time.

It will be used to train military parachutists and civilian skydiving teams, as well as providing an exciting adrenaline ride to the general public.

Wayne and Danny were helped in setting up their dream by SAS Sergeant Blaine Diddams, who was killed in combat in Afghanistan earlier this year. Blaine's uncle John Diddams is on the company's board, with former Chief of Army Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie as chairman.



AUSSIE KIDS WIN F1

Aussie teams blitzed the F1 in Schools™ Technology Challenge World Finals in Abu Dhabi with placings confirmed on 1 November.

Cold Fusion from Brighton Secondary School Adelaide took out first place overall, as well as the fastest car, best engineered car and the race award.

Rapid Motion, a collaboration between Engadine High School, NSW, and Sachsenwaldschule Gymnasium Reinbeck, Germany, took fourth overall as well as best international collaboration.

Team Spectra, a collaboration between Victoria's Trinity Grammar, Kew, and Kyabram P-12 College, came fifth.

F1 in Schools™ Technology Challenge is the world's largest secondary-school technology program, involving more than nine million students from 31 countries.

WINCH RESCUE AT SEA

A Seahawk helicopter from HMAS Toowoomba conducted an evacuation of a sick passenger from the cruise liner MV Sea Princess on 3 November 71 nautical miles off the Western Australian coast.

Toowoomba, which was conducting MEAO workups off Fremantle at the time, dispatched her helicopter at first light after receiving the request for assistance.

The mission was complicated by the fact that MV Sea Princess doesn't have a helicopter

landing pad, so the patient had to be winched off the deck.

10-TONNE AIR DROP

A RAAF C-130H Hercules made a mammoth airborne delivery in October when it airdropped a 10-tonne John Deere bulldozer near Sydney as part of the bulldozer's certification for aerial delivery to remote locations.

It was also the final heavy airdrop for a H-model Hercules before the fleet formally retired on 30 November.

Extraction parachutes pulled the load out of the Hercules' cargo bay, at an altitude of 350m, before five 30m descent parachutes deployed to land the load safely.

Air Movements Training and Development Unit (AMTDU)

– a joint Air Force and Army establishment at RAAF Base Richmond – spent months planning the drop.

IAPF ON 60 MINUTES

Wildlife warrior and CONTACT contributor Damien Mander appeared on Australia's 60 Minutes in October – this time to highlight the plight of African elephants.

As founder of the International Anti Poaching Foundation, Damien, a former Australian commando, now lives in Africa and is dedicated to saving the Dark Continent's endangered animals from poachers.

His latest 60 Minutes appearance can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0yxeQYca-U

ROTARY-WING GIRLS DO IT FOR LEGACY

Australia's rotary Wing Group in Afghanistan found a unique way to raise funds for Legacy – and raise morale among its members at the same time.

Christening each of its helicopters with a unique name and adding WWII-inspired nose art to their aircraft is the basis of the project.

Funds for Legacy are then raised through the sale of commemorative and collectable patches reflecting that art.

The full collection of patches currently stands at six, with at least one new

Chinook expected in theatre next year to replace one lost in a heavy-landing incident earlier this year.

"Rough n Reddy" adorns the helicopter currently in Kandahar, which is undergoing a major servicing.

Among the previous 'girls' in the fleet – and the patch collection – were "Good as Gold", "Life's a Beach" and "Dusty Blonde" – while "Dark n Stormy" and "Naughty n Nice" are now lovingly referred to as 'the girls who are no longer with us', both having been written off in accidents.

Sergeant Christopher Payne, serving with the Rotary Wing Group, said that most units did something to collect money for one charity or another while they were deployed in the Middle East Area of Operations.

"I think Legacy was a good choice for us – and obviously the nose-art connection is a very good fit for the group too," Sergeant Payne said.

"Everyone gets right behind this as a worthwhile project, and we all love our girls."

CONTACT's Legacy pledge

Left: Rosie Hartigan, Business Manager for CONTACT magazine, presents a cheque for \$5000 to Legacy Australia Council Chairman Charles Wright. The cheque represents a pledge (and a little extra) from the sale of our one-off special issue of CONTACT to mark the 60th anniversary of the Infantry Corps and the Royal Australian Regiment. Copies of this Infantry-only special issue are still available through www.militarycontact.com

Right: CONTACT editor Brian Hartigan happily pays Sergeant Christopher Payne the US\$30 necessary to secure a full set of RWG patches – and was even happier knowing that a sizeable portion of his cash was headed Legacy's way.



THALES UNVEILS EF88

Thales unveiled an Enhanced F88 – EF88 – Austeyr rifle during centenary celebrations at the former Commonwealth Small Arms Factory at Lithgow on 26 October.

Major features of the upgrade

are that it is 500g lighter, the barrel cannot be removed and the grenade launcher (one of many accessories) does not need specialist tools or expertise to attach/remove and fitting it does not affect the rifle's zero.



PIC CORPORAL NICK WISEMAN

VETS VISIT MEAO

Australian WWII veterans spent time with ADF troops at Al Minhad Air Base in the Middle East on 22 October.

The veterans, on their way home following 70th anniversary commemorations of the North Africa Campaigns and the Battle of El Alamein, toured the base and got a chance to see what Australia's modern soldiers look like.

They also joined ADF personnel in an informal commemorative service for the young men who have lost their lives in Afghanistan and the MEAO in the current conflict, especially Corporal Scott Smith who was killed in action just 24 hours before they arrived.

M113 UPGRADE COMPLETE

BAE Systems' Kim Scott handed Major General Grant Cavenagh a set of keys on 24 October to symbolise the completion of upgrades to the last M113 production vehicle at Bandiana.

The decade-long project saw 431 M113s upgraded to M113AS4 configuration.

More than a million manhours went into the project, which included cutting and stretching the hulls and designing and integrating new sub-systems into seven variants.

The project began in 2002 with the first completed vehicle delivered to the Army in January 2007.



The Royal Navy's fleet of Viking BVS10 all-terrain vehicles is scheduled for upgrade and life extension to 2030 under a £37million contract with BAE Systems. BVS10 is the third generation of articulated vehicles produced by BAE Systems Hagglunds of Sweden. The Royal Marines use 99 of the vehicles, 19 of which will be fitted with roof-mounted weapons and nine will be adapted to fire 81mm mortars. All will receive new v-shaped hulls, new armoured bodywork as well as upgrades to their suspension and brakes. A sample of the vehicle in Auscam colours (inset) was unveiled by BAE Systems at Australia's Land Warfare Conference in October.

VIKING CHARGE

INTERNATIONAL FLEET REVIEW

The Royal Australian Navy announced that it will host an International Fleet Review in Sydney from 3-11 October 2013, which will offer a spectacular program of naval events to celebrate the centenary of the RAN's fleet arrival in Sydney Harbour on 4 October 1913.

On that day, the flagship HMAS Australia led the new Australian fleet of seven cruisers and destroyers – HMA Ships Melbourne, Sydney, Encounter, Warrego, Parramatta and Yarra – into Sydney Harbour for the first time.

The review will include a tall ships parade, warships arrival, ceremonial fleet review, naval gun salutes, flypasts, fireworks, ship tours and a range of ceremonial and entertainment activities.

At least 17 Australian and several foreign military ships and submarines will be joined in Sydney by up to 16 tall ships from around Australia and the world.

More information can be found at www.navy.gov.au/IFR

NEW HEAVY RIGID TRUCKS

CONTACT magazine became the first Australian media outlet to clap eyes on and photograph the ADF's new MAN heavy rigid trucks painted in AusCam and working on operations in Tarin Kot, Afghanistan.

In December last year, the government announced that Rheinmetall MAN Military Vehicles Australia had been selected as preferred tenderer to provide up to 2700 protected and unprotected medium and heavy vehicles under Project LAND 121 Phase 3B.

However, the two MAN SX45 heavy rigid trucks in Tarin Kot were actually delivered as part of the Giraffe-based

counter rocket, artillery and mortar radar warning system.

Both trucks had bolt-on armour fitted in Sweden before they were delivered to TK in two C-17 sorties – the Giraffe module alone weighing about 30 tonnes.

Once delivered, complete with their Giraffe radar systems, they were driven on site, their radar towers erected and the C-RAM capability up and running within the hour.

Exactly two weeks after arrival, the Australian-owned and operated C-RAM successfully detected the first incoming rocket fired at the base since it was switched on and gave sufficient warning to the base for everyone to dive for cover.

After the attack, several Australians who heard the rocket go over their heads and land less than 50m away, later thanked the C-RAM crew for potentially saving their lives.

Australia's recent procurement of three Giraffe radars was the final stage of Project LAND 19 Phase 7A under an \$86.2 million contract, which included support services – including the MAN trucks.



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HMNZ Ships Te Kaha and Endeavour conduct a replenishment-at-sea.

MASSIVE DEPLOYMENT ENDS

The Royal New Zealand Navy Anzac-class frigate HMNZS Te Kaha and replenishment tanker HMNZS Endeavour conducted joint exercises with the Republic of Singapore Navy's Frigate RSS Stalwart in October off the east coast of the North Island.

Exercise Lion Zeal, conducted annually since 2004, is a bilateral exercise designed to strengthening close working relations between the two navies.

Te Kaha's Commanding Officer Commander Jon Beadsmoore said this was also the last major exercise before Te Kaha was upgraded next year.

HMNZ Ships Te Kaha and Endeavour had a massive four months mid year, with Lion Zeal being the last in a long line of exercises conducted far and wide.

In late August, Te Kaha and Endeavour successfully completed a

tri-lateral exercise with Japan's Maritime Self-Defence Force and the Royal Australian Navy during a passage between Guam and Darwin.

After arrival in Darwin, they participated in Exercise Kakadu off the Northern Territory coast, where Te Kaha led a task force of ships from other navies.

The passage from Guam was one leg of the pair's return journey from Exercise Rim of the Pacific – RIMPAC – 2012, where they worked alongside the navies of 22 other countries, including Australia and Japan (p16 CONTACT #35).

It was the first time in 28 years that New Zealand ships had been invited to take part in RIMPAC.

In all, the pair were deployed for four months and set many records along the way.

MEDALS FIND SECURE HOME

A new interactive Medal Repository at the National Army Museum was formally opened in August to house the museum's full medal collection and allow families of soldiers and the public to see more than 10,000 icons of New Zealand's military history.

Museum Director Colonel (retired) Ray Seymour said that for many families, medals remained

the only tangible link to their departed relatives and viewing the medals could be a highly emotional experience.

"With the new repository, the museum has broken down the barriers between visitors and the medals and successfully achieved a haven to honour those remembered," Colonel Seymour said.

THREE KIWIS FLY WARSHIP

Three Royal New Zealand Navy sailors successfully completed a six-month deployment aboard Australia's HMAS Melbourne in August.

The Kiwi sailors were seconded to Melbourne for her mission supporting Combined Task Force 150, a multi-national maritime counter-terrorism task force operating in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman.

The trio deployed to Australia in September 2011 to take part in the ship's work-up program, with their mission proper commencing in March this year.

The ship arrived back in Sydney on 21 August where the Kiwis' families and friends were among the throngs waiting on the wharf.

Able Seaman Dylan Thomas said it was a pleasure working beside his ANZAC counterparts.

"I made a lot of new Australian mates, but of course, nothing beats the mates I have back home," he said.

"My main job was to act as one of the crew of a rigid hull inflatable boat for the boarding team.

"We regularly conducted two to three boardings a day on dhows – traditional sailing vessels."

Leading Seaman Joshua Tatana said it was a great experience and opportunity.

"The ship was constantly busy, conducting operations to support the deployment or carrying out regular maintenance," he said.

"But, I wouldn't change the experience for anything."



Able Seaman Dylan Thomas presents a small token of appreciation to Commander Richard Boulton, Commanding Officer HMAS Melbourne, after disembarking in Sydney. [See a pic of all three Kiwis on p43].

SAMOA SEES TROPIC TWILIGHT

Approximately 2700 Samoans benefited from a range of health-care services delivered by the NZ Defence Force as part of Exercise Tropic Twilight – a three-week humanitarian-aid and disaster-relief exercise held in August.

The 100-strong specialist healthcare contingent conducted a total of 61 minor surgeries, 153 dental treatments, 834 primary health-care checks and 845 childhood vaccinations, with a further 604 schoolchildren briefed on the importance of oral hygiene.

Contingent commander Lieutenant Colonel Bill Twiss, 2 Health Support Battalion, said the contingent accomplished much more than they set out to.

"It was a big challenge to project into another country, set up and run a forward surgical team out of tented accommodation, and deliver a range of health-care services in a short timeframe," he said.

"The contingent certainly proved it can deliver."

A small team of Army engineers also carried out a number of minor tasks including plumbing at a primary school and building a kitchen and shower block at the community hall in an area badly damaged by a tsunami in 2009.



Major Martin James, oral surgeon, performs a dental procedure in Samoa during Exercise Tropic Twilight 2012, with Private Sarah Hughes assisting.

For the first time, the New Zealand Defence Force co-hosted the international working group behind Exercise Pacific Partnership, which delivers a humanitarian-aid program throughout the south-west Pacific.

Around 60 personnel from the Australian Defence Force, French Armed Forces New Caledonia (FANC), the United States and Japan, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and a number of non-governmental organisations, took

A NZ Army sniper team engage targets during a 'rural stress shoot'.



PIC SHANNON RANDALL, CANADIAN FORCES

SNIPERS SHOT IN CANADA

Four personnel from 2nd/1st Royal NZ Infantry Regiment attended the 16th Canadian International Sniper Concentration from 24 September to 4 October.

The 16th CISC was the largest yet, with six of 33 teams coming from countries other than Canada – the Netherlands, Italy, United States, Ireland and New Zealand.

Police tactical as well as military units made up the Canadian teams.

New Zealand's Captain Aaron Soppet said the aim of the concentration was to disseminate general knowledge and ideas within the sniping community, with more

emphasis put on that aspect than the competition element of the event.

He said the training and general fitness of the New Zealand sniper's was excellent, with range officers having difficulty keeping up with them and civilian target operators struggling to get targets up in time for them.

"The NZ team did particularly well in the pistol shoot coming fifth overall – a significant achievement considering many of the competing police teams consider the pistol their primary weapon in the field," Captain Soppet said.

Teams competed in eight different events with two others cancelled because of poor weather.

NZ came 14th overall.

NZ HOSTS PP13 PLANNING

part in the international planning conference from 28 to 30 August.

Exercise Pacific Partnership 2013 is a US Navy-led annual multinational humanitarian relief exercise, which will conduct medical, dental and engineering civic-aid projects in the Asia-Pacific region.

New Zealand has participated for a number of years in the exercise conducted as a partnership with nations from across the Pacific.

Commander Joint Forces New Zealand Major General Dave Gawn said it was significant that the NZDF was co-hosting an international working group for Pacific Partnership 2013.

"The NZ Defence Force has a great team of planners who are playing a key role in preparations," he said.

"Activities like Pacific Partnership and the recent Exercise Tropic Twilight not only contribute to development in the Pacific, but they are key to ensuring the NZ Defence Force is capable, prepared and well rehearsed to conduct actual disaster-response missions.

Pacific Partnership 2013 will be conducted in Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Samoa and Marshall Islands.

NZDF is planning to contribute HMNZS Canterbury, as well as medical, dental and engineer teams.

A mixed team of Navy divers and Army engineers may also dispose of WWII explosive remnants in South Tarawa, Kiribati.

New Zealand's Minister of Defence Jonathan Coleman and Chief of Army Major General Tim Keating lay a wreath at the El Alamein War Cemetery during a service to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the battle. Veterans John Wills and Eric Wilson also laid a wreath on behalf of all New Zealand veterans.



PIC SERGEANT NANCY COX

EL ALAMEIN REMEMBERED

Twenty-two New Zealand veterans of the North Africa campaign attended commemorations in Egypt to mark the 70th anniversary of the Battle of El Alamein in October.

Aged between 88 and 96, the veterans attended a New Zealand service to mark the anniversary on 19 October 2012, followed by an international service on 20 October.

Both ceremonies took place at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in El Alamein.

The international Service of Thanksgiving involved a Catafalque Party drawn from New Zealand and Australian service personnel from the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai.

Alan Peart, 90, whose father-in-law also fought at El Alamein and who has family buried in the El Alamein

Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery, said the New Zealand National Service was very humbling.

"I found my cousin, Lieutenant Colonel Jan Peart's grave. He commanded 18 Battalion, and someone who served with 18 Battalion was paying respects at his grave at the same time," Mr Peart said.

Then Flight Lieutenant Peart's role in the North Africa campaign was air-to-air combat and strafing enemy assets.

During the North African campaign almost 10,000 New Zealanders were killed or wounded, and more than 4000 became prisoners of war.

More than 1100 New Zealanders are buried in the El Alamein Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery – the largest number of New Zealanders buried in one cemetery outside New Zealand.

Veterans of the Battle of El Alamein, Egypt, with their New Zealand Defence Force escorts gather for a photo before leaving New Zealand.



PIC CORPORAL JUDITH WATTS



PIC CORPORAL SAM SHEPHERD

Coastwatcher John Jones and Governor-General of New Zealand Lieutenant General Sir Jerry Mateparae mark the 70th anniversary of the deaths of 17 NZ coastwatchers on Tarawa Atoll, Kiribati, at the New Zealand National War Memorial.

WORLD WAR TWO COASTWATCHERS COMMEMORATED

New Zealand coastwatchers who served throughout the Pacific in WWII were commemorated at a wreath-laying ceremony at the National War Memorial in Wellington in October.

On 15 October 1942, 17 New Zealand coastwatchers were executed by the Japanese military in what is now Kiribati.

The last surviving member, John Jones, was among those to pay his respects at the ceremony, also attended by Lieutenant General Sir Jerry Mateparae, Governor-General of New Zealand, and other VIPs.

During WWII, New Zealand established up to 62 coastwatching stations on various islands throughout the Pacific, in order to track enemy movements and report them back to Allied forces.

Chief of Defence Force Lieutenant General Rhys Jones said the coastwatcher story was one of heroism, sacrifice and suffering, and it was one that was not widely known.

"As a result of their dedication to duty, a number were killed and many of the remainder endured years of captivity as prisoners of war," he said.

"We are committed to paying tribute to all New Zealand coastwatchers and, in particular, honouring the memory of those who died.

"This recognition is overdue."

A real CONTACT sport

Beginning in 1973 with just eight teams, the Kiama Rugby Sevens has evolved into Australia's largest one-day rugby sevens tournament with 54 teams already registered for 2013.

Held at the picturesque beachside Showgrounds in beautiful Kiama, just south of Wollongong, it's little wonder this growing tournament won the South Coast Tourism 'Festival and Events' Award in 2012.

With the 41st annual Kiama Rugby Sevens scheduled to be held in the same beautiful spot on Saturday 23 February 2013, there's really only one thing missing, as far as CONTACT is concerned – an ADF team or three.

So, if you love playing rugby at a fast pace and would like a shot at collecting some of the \$25,000 prize pool on offer – not to mention the glory, or just the fun of competing – then get your team organised and put your entry in ASAP.

Brian and Rosie Hartigan from CONTACT magazine watched several games at this year's tournament and loved the excitement and the very high quality of rugby, and we'll certainly be there again next year – and we'd love to be there because we had a Defence team or teams to support and photograph for the magazine.

See you in Kiama.

Brian Hartigan
Managing Editor
CONTACT Air Land & Sea

Emmerson Bryant, James and Sam Davis, and Jeremy Blue accepted delivery of the 2012 trophies from HMAS Albatross' 723 Squadron.

Don't let Navy's trophy delivery be the only ADF involvement at the Kiama Rugby Sevens 2013 – enter your ADF team today.

Pics Linda Faiers



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Corporal Luke Douglas Tamatea



Lance Corporal Jacinda Francis Elyse Baker



Private Richard Lee Harris

NEW ZEALAND'S TRIPLE TRAGEDY

Three soldiers serving with the New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan were killed in an improvised explosive device (IED) incident in the north-east of Bamiyan province on Sunday 19 August.

They were travelling in the last vehicle in a convoy, and were hit by an IED north west of Do Abe, on the road to Romero, when the bomb detonated. All three were killed instantly.

The loss was a huge shock to the New Zealand Defence Force coming hot on the heels of another incident in which two soldiers were killed on 4 August.

The three soldiers were named as Corporal Luke Tamatea, aged 31, Lance Corporal Jacinda Baker, 26, and Private Richard Harris, 21.

All three were from the 2nd/1st Battalion, Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment (2/1RNZIR) based in Burnham, and had deployed with the NZ Provincial Reconstruction Team in April.

Chief of Defence Force Lieutenant General Rhys Jones said, "Ours is a dangerous profession and, while we accept these risks,

the death of colleagues and friends is always difficult to take."

Senior Military Advisor to the NZPRT Lieutenant Colonel Pete Hall said he was a better man for having known them, during a farewell ramp ceremony at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan on 21 August.

An RAAF C-130 Hercules, with escorts from the NZ Provincial Reconstruction Team, transported the soldiers from Afghanistan to meet up with an Australian A-340 for the journey to Australia, from where a Royal New Zealand Air Force C-130, with escorts from 2/1RNZIR, 1RNZIR, and 2nd Health Support Battalion, took the trio on the last leg of their journey home.

A memorial service for the three was held at Burnham Military Camp, before the families held separate and private funeral services.



Luke Douglas Tamatea joined the New Zealand Army in February 2000 and was posted to 1st Battalion Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment (1RNZIR) in Linton.

He deployed to Timor-Leste in 2001, to Solomon Islands in 2003 and to Sumatra to help with the Tsunami in 2005.

Corporal Tamatea had also previously deployed to Afghanistan in 2007 after being posted to the unit the same year.

He was promoted to Lance Corporal in September 2005 and to Corporal in June 2008.

Statement on behalf of Tamatea family:

There is no statement that could describe how saddened we are by the passing of Luke. This is a difficult time for our family, Luke's friends and his brothers in the battalion.

Luke took his job in the Army extremely seriously and was very proud of his service.

When he went to Banda Aceh in response to the tsunami, he really wanted to be on the first flight in as this meant he could make the most difference in people's lives.

The Army provided Luke with so many opportunities and it really changed his life around. He was a natural leader and was able to use his skills and experience helping others.

We are immensely proud of what Luke achieved in 31 short years.

Luke was a consummate professional as a soldier as his accomplishments show, but his proudest achievement is in his family he is leaving behind who will miss him most, particularly his four beautiful daughters who will remain his legacy.

The loss of Luke, the father, son, grandson, partner, brother, nephew, cousin and friend is difficult for us and our wider friends and family.



Jacinda Francis Elyse Baker

joined the New Zealand Army as a medic and was posted to Burnham Regional Support Company in April 2007.

She was posted to 2/1RNZIR in December 2007, and was deployed to the Solomon Islands in 2010.

Lance Corporal Baker received a Chief of Army Commendation in 2011 for her professionalism and courage during Exercise Southern Warrior in June 2008.

She was promoted to Lance Corporal in July 2008.

Statement on behalf of Baker family:

Jacinda was and will always be remembered as an amazing daughter, partner, sister, granddaughter, great granddaughter, cousin, niece, friend and soldier in the New Zealand Army.

We are still coming to grips with what has happened and words cannot express what we are feeling.

We feel forever blessed to have known her in her short 26 years. She was only nine days away from her 27th birthday on August 28th.

Jacinda was a girl full of spirit, always ready for her next adventure. She was fearless and would give anything a go.

Jacinda was loyal and our rock. She was the one to turn to if you needed someone calm, with practical help to get you through whatever it was you were going through.

Jacinda was professional. She was proud to be a medic in the New Zealand Army, proud of the work she carried out, and we in turn were and are so incredibly proud of her.

We know that she is in an amazing place with her Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, however, we will miss her more than she ever will know. She leaves behind a hole in our family that can never be filled.

We realise that we are not alone in this – there are two other families also grieving with the loss of their loved ones – and all of our sincere best wishes and condolences go to those families. Our love and prayers are with them.

We also wish to give thanks for the amazing love and support we have experienced from so many different people.

Richard Lee Harris joined the New Zealand Army in February 2009 and was posted to 2/1RNZIR.

Private Harris had previously deployed to Timor-Leste in 2009/2010.

Statement on behalf of Harris family:

Richard Lee Harris Iwi affiliation Ngapuhi/Ngati Maru, 30 September 1990 - 19 August 2012

Richard was our pride and joy. He was such a good boy who loved his whanau dearly, and loved life.

Rich was a laid-back, quiet, fun-loving, mischievous guy who would light up the room with his smile.

He had a passion for rugby, playing junior boys for Patumahoe, then the First XV for three years while at Pukekohe high school.

In his free time he liked chilling with the bros.

Richard, the youngest son of Sandra and the late Harry Harris, grew and matured into a really cool young man who we are all so proud of.

He travelled back to his kainga Hokianga in April this year prior to being deployed to Afghanistan and spent time with his extended whanau.

Richard loved the Army and was looking forward to going to Afghanistan.

Richard's tangi will be held at Piki Te Aroha Marae, Rahiri, Hokianga and he will be laid to rest beside his father, the late Harry Harris in the Hutoia Urupa, Rahiri Settlement.



RIP LANCE CORPORAL MERVYN JOHN McDONALD

TWO OF THE BEST KILLED IN A HELICOPTER CRASH

Two soldiers from Australia's 2nd Commando Regiment were killed when an ISAF helicopter crashed in Helmand province on 30 August. Australian Special Operations Task Group and their partnered Afghan National Security Force unit were participating in a targeted mission at the time.

Acting Chief of the Defence Force Air Marshal Mark Binskin said the soldiers were en route to the mission area when their aircraft crashed.

The cause of the crash was not known, but specialist aircraft recovery personnel were quickly sent to the site to ensure information required for an air-crash investigation was appropriately recorded.

Insurgent action was not suspected to have been a factor in the crash.



Lance Corporal Mervyn John McDonald

Lance Corporal McDonald, 32, is survived by his fiancée Rachael, his mother Myrna and stepfather Bernie, and brothers Percy, Roger and Gary.

Mervyn McDonald was born in Carnarvon, Western Australia, in 1982. He joined the Army on 31 May 1999 and was posted to the 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment.

He was posted to the then 4th Battalion (Commando), The Royal Australian Regiment, now the 2nd Commando Regiment, in August 2008 on completion of his selection and training course and reinforcement cycle.

Lance Corporal McDonald was on his sixth tour to Afghanistan.

Lance Corporal McDonald was quick witted and brought a positive energy to both his unit comrades and all those who served with him. A dedicated and enthusiastic professional soldier, he was always willing to come forward with ideas and solutions. He was a highly professional soldier, but his quiet nature and humility meant he always deflected credit on to fellow members of his company.

Statement from Lance Corporal McDonald's fiancée Rachael Sprigg-McKinnie

Merv was the warmest guy you'd ever meet. You could see it in his eyes, they had a special sparkle. He was a real Aussie bloke with a passion for his country, especially its natural splendour. Merv could often be found four-wheel driving and going for bushwalks, but really his favourite place was the ocean. Merv just loved being in the water and the beach was his second home, where he could often be found swimming, spearing or barbecuing. They were simple pleasures which filled his soul.

But no place brought out Merv's magnificent smile like the west coast of Australia. He had a nomadic childhood in Western Australia and crossing the border into his home state was always a special moment for Merv. His affection for WA was passionately extended to the West Coast Eagles footy club.

Unfortunately Merv's last visit to Carnarvon a couple of months ago was bittersweet, as he made the trek home to farewell his father who recently passed. What gave Merv strength though was his gratitude to be home and with his family.

Merv was the sort of man who always stayed connected with his family. There was never any doubt of the love he had for them and Merv certainly received plenty of love in return. He was also a fantastic uncle who adored his nieces and nephews. Clowning around with the kids, taking them down the beach and simply throwing a ball around gave him joy.

The other side of Merv was the soldier. He loved the Army and being a digger.



Even after several tours, he felt a real sense of duty to return to Afghanistan and he was committed to sharing his experience with his team and 2nd Commando Regiment.

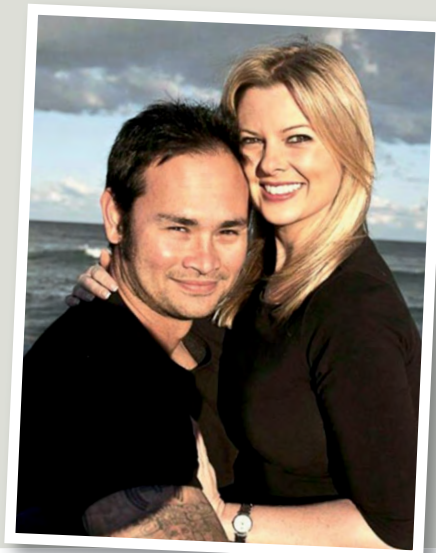
Words cannot express just how proud I am of the service he has given his mates and his country. Merv would be deeply touched by how the Army family has rallied around to support those he loved.

When I first met Merv I was struck by his smile. It was a beautiful, illuminating smile that betrayed his tough-guy exterior.

Merv had an infectious personality and he was simply amazing, on a natural high and unlike anyone else I'd ever known. He had old-fashioned principles and was an absolute gentleman who knew how to treat a lady.

My fiancée changed my world by showing me new ways to think about things and by teaching me how to really experience life and believe in myself. We jammed so much into our 18 months together. Merv never missed a moment. He would stop to look at a rainbow or to smell the coffee.

We were due to be married in Bendigo next Easter Saturday and we were hoping to start a family soon after. Merv would have been a fantastic husband and a wonderful dad.



RIP PRIVATE NATHANAEL JOHN AUBREY GALAGHER

Private Nathanael John Aubrey Gallagher

Private Gallagher, 23, is survived by his partner Jessie, parents Wayne and Sally and sister Elanor.

John Gallagher was born in Wee Waa, New South Wales, in 1989. He joined the Army on 22 October 2007 and was posted to the 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment. He was posted to the 2nd Commando

Regiment in November 2011 on completion of a selection and training course and reinforcement cycle.

Private Gallagher was on his second tour to Afghanistan.

Private Gallagher always put in 110% in every thing he did. He had a 'can-do' attitude, always wanting to get the job done and taking everything in his stride. He was an enthusiastic young soldier who was very-well respected by his mates.



Statement from Private Gallagher's parents Sally and Wayne, sister Elanor and partner Jessie Feeney

Our dear Nathanael, who was also known as Nate, loved the Army, but it was only one part of what made the man.

Nate was a country boy at heart. The earth surrounding Narrabri was where he was truly at home. He'd grown up in that region, and even though the Army took him from Townsville to metropolitan Sydney, Narrabri was where he truly belonged.

Nate wasn't a 'showy' kind of guy, but rather one who would demonstrate his love through the little things, which meant the world. He was so loving and grateful.

We never heard Nate say a bad thing about anyone. His love for his family was apparent to all.

Easygoing is the perfect word to describe Nate. Nothing was a problem to him. Perhaps it was because he understood what the important things in life were – so little dramas were like water off a duck's back.

Becoming a father was so important to Nate. You've never seen a man so happy to hear the news that he had a baby on the way. We all knew about it well before the traditional three-month wait. Nate's next

great thrill arrived at an ultrasound, where the baby was revealed to be a boy who could carry on his name.

It speaks volumes about Nate that he'd reached his ultimate career goal of joining the 2nd Commando Regiment at such a young age.

Marching out of his training in December last year was one of the proudest moments of his life. We all attended the parade together. Nate was so thrilled to place the green beret on his head for the first time. In fact, he was so caught up in that moment of placing the beret perfectly on his head, we were worried for a couple of seconds that he might forget to salute. But, vigilant to the honour of the occasion, Nate demonstrated his respect in the appropriate way.

We will miss Nate's caring, loving ways and he will always be a hero to all of our family, including his unborn son.

Additional words from Nate's partner, Jessie Feeney

Nate idolised Lance Corporal Mervyn McDonald, who was also killed in the crash. Merv was generous with his experience and shared it with the other boys in the team, especially Nate.

I last saw Nate at the airport when he departed Australia in July. As they were about to walk off to the gate together, Merv turned to me and said, "don't worry Jess, I'll bring him home." While it's under the most tragic of circumstances, Merv is honouring his promise.

My pledge to Nate is that his son will understand the wonderful man who his dad was.

There's no trait of Nate's that I wouldn't want his son to inherit.



THE LONG ROAD HOME



Lance Corporal McDonald and Private Gallagher from the Special Operations Task Group were farewelled by their comrades in Tarin Kot, Afghanistan, on 1 September.

The moving ceremony and procession to the waiting aircraft was also a farewell for Lance Corporal Stjepan 'Rick' Milosevic, Sapper James Martin and Private Robert Poate, who were killed in a separate and unrelated incident.

The poignant refrain of a lone piper playing a lament for the fallen set a solemn tone as many of those assembled were moved to tears.

At the ceremony, commanders paid homage and soldiers remembered fallen mates with heartfelt words.

Then, hundreds of Australian soldiers and their coalition partners lined the route and saluted as a convoy of five vehicles slowly carried the soldiers to a waiting Hercules to begin their final journey home.

The five were returned to their families and comrades on 5 September with moving ceremonies at RAAF Base Richmond in Sydney and RAAF Base Amberley in Brisbane.

At RAAF Base Richmond, Lance Corporal McDonald and Private Gallagher were received by their families as well as members of the Australian Army, led by Chief of the Defence Force General David Hurley and Special Operations Commander Australia Major General Gus Gilmore.

On 13 September, Private Gallagher was farewelled with a large funeral service at St John's Anglican Church, Pilliga, NSW, followed by a private burial.

Lance Corporal McDonald was farewelled in Perth, with a funeral service at Saint Benedict's Catholic Church, Applecross, followed by a private service at the Fremantle Cemetery on 18 September.

RIP SAPPER JAMES THOMAS MARTIN

KILLED BY AN 'ALLY'

Three Australian soldiers were killed and two wounded following an insider attack at Patrol Base Wahab in the Baluchi Valley region of Uruzgan province on 29 August. The attack occurred during the evening inside the confines of their patrol base.

Acting Chief of the Defence Force Air Marshal Mark Binskin said a lone individual wearing an Afghan National Army uniform fired a weapon into a group of Australian soldiers from close range before fleeing on foot.

"Five soldiers were hit in the burst of automatic fire," he said.

"Their comrades made every effort to revive the three soldiers, but their wounds were fatal.

"I cannot begin to describe the overwhelming grief that their families are experiencing but I want them to know that Army and the ADF community share their anguish and we will continue to support them and care for them.

"This is a terrible day for all and our thoughts and prayers are with all those who have been affected by this incident."

Of the two soldiers who were wounded, one wound was described as serious and the other minor, though no other details were given.

While all five soldiers were members of the 3RAR Task Group, all five were normally based at Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera.

Lance Corporal Stjepan 'Rick' Milosevic was 40 years old from the 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment (Queensland Mounted Infantry). He was on his second tour to Afghanistan and had previously deployed to Iraq.

Private Robert Poate was 23 years old and from the 6th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment and 21-year-old Sapper James Martin was from the 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment – both on their first operational deployments.



Sapper James Thomas Martin

Sapper James Thomas Martin is survived by his mother Suzanne Thomas, his younger brother and sister, Angus and Holly, and his grandparents Lucille and Ralph Thomas.

James Martin was born in Perth, Western Australia, on 1 June 1991. He enlisted into the Australian Army on 24 January 2011 and completed recruit training at the 1st Recruit Training Battalion at Kapooka, near Wagga Wagga, in April 2011.

In May that year, he attended the School of Military Engineering in Sydney and began initial employment training as a combat engineer.

On completion in August, he was posted to the 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment in Brisbane.

On arrival at the 2CER, Sapper Martin became a member of the 7th Combat Engineer Squadron. He completed a number of additional courses including Combat Engineer High-Threat Search, communications and weapon courses.

Sapper Martin, along with the rest of his squadron, force-concentrated in Townsville with 3RAR in early 2012, in preparation for their deployment to Afghanistan.

Sapper Martin was an intellectual soldier who was a quick learner and adapted well to the Army environment. He was respected by his mates and was considered a loyal friend and comrade.

A musically talented individual, he often played base guitar for his mates. He was also an avid follower of Aussie Rules.

Statement on behalf of Sapper Martin's family

James was a very loving son, brother and grandson who, even as he matured, remained very affectionate to those he loved. He was a fantastic big brother and role model to Angus, whom he took to from birth and spent much time together with as they were growing up.

He had a witty sense of humour and a great sense of fun.

RIP LANCE CORPORAL STJEPAN 'RICK' MILOSEVIC

James took pleasure in playing the guitar, he liked to read books regularly and was also an avid gamer. He enjoyed playing cricket growing up and liked to watch a game of AFL with friends or family.

He was very thoughtful, caring and considerate of others. This really showed when selecting gifts for family members on special occasions. James always seemed to be able to choose something perfect, even if it was something totally unexpected by the recipient at the time. The family's bookshelves are peppered with books gifted by James – and Holly's iPod filled with music selected by him.

James was a great communicator and he used every opportunity to transfer new skills and facts on to his family and friends. He never shied away from an intellectual discussion and when opinions were in conflict, he ended up being right most of the time. But he made you like him in the process.

Once James had made his decision to enlist in the Army as a combat engineer, he remained very determined and focused on this goal. He researched his new job and the training required meticulously, raising his level of fitness while waiting to attend basic training.

In his first letter home from Kapooka, when some of his section mates were homesick and discussing pulling out of the training, James wrote to his family, saying, "I would not give up this opportunity for anything" and that, "I will be an Australian Soldier."

James was a wonderful person and he will be sorely missed by his family and anyone who knew him.

We would like to thank everyone who has and will provide support to our family during this difficult time.

Lance Corporal Stjepan 'Rick' Milosevic

Lance Corporal Milosevic, known as Rick to his family and Milo to his comrades, deployed to Afghanistan with the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment Task Group but was from the 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment, Queensland Mounted Infantry based in Brisbane, Queensland.

He is survived by his wife and their two children.

Stjepan Milosevic was born in Penrith, New South Wales, in 1972. He enlisted in the Army in 2008. He was posted as a cavalryman to 2/14LHR (QMI) in Brisbane in 2009 on completion of basic training and initial employment training.

His potential was quickly identified and he achieved outstanding results on courses. He was promoted to lance corporal in 2011 and became an ASLAV crew commander. He was a highly qualified soldier with a strong future.

Lance Corporal Milosevic was a much-liked and respected member of his regiment. His leadership and professional abilities stood out in the unit, on the rugby field and on operations.

He was also a devoted family man who will be sorely missed by his family and comrades.

Statement on behalf of the Milosevic family

Rick was a courageous, committed, immensely proud soldier. His desire to serve his country and honour his family saw him join the army at 36.

At Kapooka, Rick was awarded Most Outstanding Soldier, and during his junior leaders' course, he was presented with the award for the Trainee of Merit.



His passion and commitment saw him rapidly promoted to lance corporal.

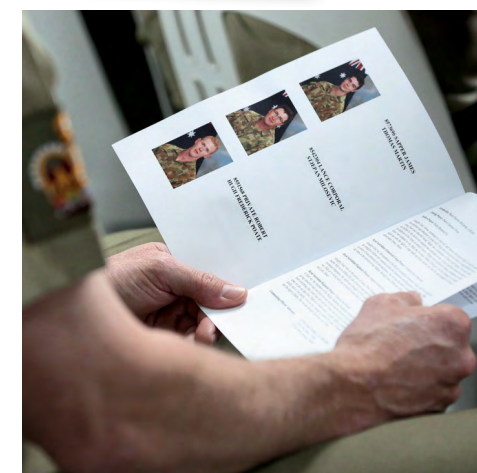
In his four short years of service he would serve honourably in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Rick was a typical Australian bloke – friendly, with a dry sense of humour and a natural charm. He had a comfortable ease. He would show respect to everyone he met.

We are all proud of what Rick was able to achieve – not only as a soldier, but as a loving partner, devoted father, son and brother.

Our family is now united by grief as we try to come to terms with the loss of Rick. We thank everyone for their heartfelt wishes and messages of condolences.

Rick is survived by his partner, Kelly, daughters, Sarah (8) and Kate (6), mother, brothers and sisters.



RIP PRIVATE ROBERT HUGH FREDERICK POATE



Private Robert Hugh Frederick Poate

Private Robert Poate was a member of the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment Task Group but was from the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, based in Brisbane, Queensland.

He is survived by his parents Hugh and Janny, and his sister Nicola.

Robert Poate was born in Canberra, in 1988. He enlisted in the Army in 2009. On completion of his basic and initial employment training, he was posted as a rifleman to 6RAR.

Private Poate was a highly qualified soldier, having completed specialist training as a Protected Mobility Vehicle driver in 2010 and commander in 2011.

Private Poate was known for having outstanding leadership potential, which led to him completing a promotion course for corporal in 2011.

He will be fondly remembered by his 'brothers by choice' in 6RAR as a larrikin and an incredibly professional soldier.

Private Poate had a reputation for creating mischief without getting caught, and was proud of his family, his military service, his Canberra origins and his red hair, which he vehemently defended as being 'strawberry blonde'.



What the public doesn't see

In Tarin Kot there's a small team of just five RAAF members who look after all the loading and unloading of Australian and charter aircraft that fly in to the base.

One member of this small team is Leading Aircraftman Rodger Ward, who said loading the five caskets on the Hercules was one task he hoped he never had to do again.

"When the bearer parties carried the caskets on to the aircraft and set them down I could see on their faces that those guys were shattered, they were in agony – and I had to go out there and do my job as quickly but as carefully as possible, with all those lads watching me.

"What the crowd doesn't see is that after the aircraft ramp closes, we have to come from behind a curtain and turn the caskets around and strap them in for the journey.

"For ceremonial reasons, the caskets are brought on to the aircraft feet first, and we have to turn them around so that they can also leave feet first at the other end."

LAC Ward said that even though he never actually knew those soldiers, it was very hard not to feel emotional while he was doing his job.

"There's a lot of planning and thought that goes into the task, because the last thing you want is for something to go wrong.

"The aircraft is marked out, so that everything is perfectly symmetrical. The caskets are laid down on lacquered oak shoring and we always use brand new straps to tie them down, just so they look crisp and new and perfect and nothing dirty touches the casket or the flag.

"Even though 99 per cent of people will never see all that, we take a lot of care and pay a lot of attention to detail so that it looks perfect for their mates and their families."

THE LONG ROAD HOME

Lance Corporal Milosevic, Sapper Martin and Private Poate were farewelled by their comrades from Tarin Kot, Afghanistan, on 1 September.

The moving ceremony and procession to the waiting aircraft was also a farewell for two other soldiers killed in a separate and unrelated incident – Lance Corporal Mervyn McDonald and Private Nathanael Galagher from the Special Operations Task Group, who died in a helicopter crash in Helmand province in the early hours of 30 August.

The poignant refrain of a lone piper playing a lament for the fallen set a solemn tone as many of those assembled were moved to tears.

At the ceremony, commanders paid homage and soldiers remembered fallen mates with heartfelt words.

Then, hundreds of Australian soldiers and their coalition partners lined the route and saluted as a convoy of five vehicles slowly carried the soldiers to a waiting Hercules to begin their final journey home.

The five were returned to their families and comrades on 5 September with moving ceremonies at RAAF Base Richmond in Sydney and RAAF Base Amberley in Brisbane.

At RAAF Base Amberley, the three soldiers killed in the insider attack were received by their families and members of the Australian Army, led by Chief of Army Lieutenant General David Morrison and Commander 7th Brigade Brigadier Greg Bilton.

Lance Corporal Milosevic, Sapper Martin and Private Poate were received by an honour guard and bearer party formed by members of their respective units before their caskets were carried from a RAAF C-17 to their loved ones.

Two military funerals on 12 September saw Lance Corporal Milosevic laid to rest at Mount Gravatt, Brisbane, and Private Poate at the Chapel of Christ the King at his old school, Canberra Grammar.

Sapper Martin was laid to rest in Perth's Karrakatta Cemetery on 18 September.



RIP CORPORAL SCOTT JAMES SMITH

THE HEAVIEST CASKET

Corporal Scott James Smith, from the Special Operations Engineer Regiment working as a member of the Special Operations Task Group was killed by an IED in northern Helmand province on 21 October 2012.

Corporal Smith was part of a small team tasked with clearing a suspected insurgent compound and, on entering buildings within the compound, his team identified several rooms stacked with functional IEDs and associated components.

The commander on the ground ordered his men to get out and, during the withdrawal, an IED detonated, killing Corporal Smith instantly.

The buildings – containing more than an estimated 100 IEDs and components – were subsequently destroyed in what Chief of Joint Operations Lieutenant General Ash Power described as a very bittersweet result.

Australian forces farewelled Corporal Smith from Afghanistan on 26 October in a moving memorial service and ramp ceremony at Multi-National Base Tarin Kot.

Special Operations Task Group commander Lieutenant Colonel I said the 24-year-old soldier exemplified what it took to be a special-forces combat engineer.

"Scott's sense of obligation, his sense of loyalty and his sense of purpose made him the epitome of the calling of a combat engineer," he said.

"The type of physical and moral courage required of our special-forces combat engineers is what we all hope for ourselves, but in the case of this man he displayed it every time he deployed on missions and tasks."

Scott's mates remembered a dedicated professional soldier and the type of bloke everybody wanted as a mate.

Corporal Smith was returned to his family and comrades at another solemn ceremony at RAAF Base Richmond on 28 October.

Members of the Special Operations Engineer Regiment formed an honour guard and bearer party to escort Corporal Smith's casket to his grieving family.

Perhaps the most moving and poignant statement of all came from Corporal Smith's commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Scott Corrigan.

"Our soldiers deploy with free spirit ready to walk into the face of danger for their country and their mates.

"And, sometimes, when they've given all they have to give, we get the privilege of carrying them home again.

"The greater the soldier, the heavier the load.

"Today the casket is solid stone."

Corporal Smith was finally laid to rest with a funeral service in Lyndoch, South Australia, on 7 November.

He is survived by his partner Liv, his parents Katrina Paterson and Murray Smith and sister Roxanne.



Statement from Corporal Smith's family

Scott was a tremendous soldier. It is openly acknowledged that he was well respected within his workplace and by those who knew him. We knew the Army was Scott's second family, his home away from home.

Scott truly believed his actions made a difference. He was a truly dedicated soldier, who also knew how to relax in his time away from work.

Scott lived life to the fullest. He was born in the Barossa Valley and was water skiing as soon as he could stand – it was one of his great loves. Scott attended school in the local area and used his school holidays to learn to barefoot water ski.

Liv, Scott's German princess, met him when she was an exchange student in Australia. After that, the pair could be found in all sorts of mischief together.

Scott loved being outdoors and keeping fit throughout his lifetime and pursued many sports – from long

distance running, to cricket and any sort of competition he could be involved in.

Scott had a great sense of humour and was very much into practical jokes. He could also be very relaxed when not at work, becoming renowned for his cheeky smile and kind words.

But mostly, Scott will always be renowned for being the loveable character that held the family together.

Scott had a lot of time for those who had time for him, and his generosity in all things was often spoken about. One of the things you could rely on Scott for was calling whenever he was able and was thinking of you, at midday, midnight, or anywhere in between.

Scott had a larrikin charm that endeared him to all those around him, and these qualities ensure he will always be held in the hearts of those who knew him.

Our family is united in grief as we try to come to terms with our loss.

We thank everyone for their heartfelt wishes and messages of condolences.

Soldier combat ensemble

PICS ANDREW HOOPER, ARMY LEARNING PRODUCTION CENTRE

Ballistic protection sunglasses – the ballistic and laser ocular protection system (BLOPS) provides eye protection against a range of physical and environmental threats.

Combat application tourniquet – every soldier in the Middle East carries a C-A-T® tourniquet to stop arm or leg blood flow if wounded. It is a simple but effective tool that has played a significant role in saving lives.

Magazine pouches – for quick access to front-line ammo.

Enhanced combat helmet – the enhanced combat helmet (ECH) provides ballistic protection. It is lightweight and camouflaged to reduce visual signature and is fitted with the VAS shroud, which integrates with the night vision equipment. The internal padding and harness system ensures the ECH provides maximum protection.

Headset and microphone – for instant battlefield communications.

Personal role radio (PRR) – all front-line soldiers are connected to their immediate hierarchy on the battlefield.

Water tube – for water on the go.

ACOG sight – Trijicon 6 x 48 advanced combat optical gunsights with ruggedised miniature reflex (RMR), is able to magnify four times more than most infantrymen are used to.

HK417 – the Heckler and Koch HK417 weapon system is used by specialist marksmen to observe and engage targets at extended ranges. Issue only to designated marksmen. See CONTACT #34 for specs.

Suppressor – reduces the noise and visual signature of the weapon.

Crye multicam uniform – the Australian Army currently uses three types of camouflage to meet its various needs – the standard disruptive-pattern print, disruptive-pattern desert print and Multicam (now being replaced by the Australian Multicam Pattern or AMP). The operational combat uniform (OCU) (pictured here) is a new style selected at the same time as Multicam to meet Army's current operational requirements for an improved combat uniform. The Australian version is based on Crye Precision's G3 uniform with enhancements based on operational feedback.



Field pack – for living away from base. Carries everything from spare socks, jocks and dry clothes to rations, water, batteries and other essentials.

3l water bladder in carrier – for ready consumption via the water tube at the front.

Tiered body armour system (TBAS) – the tiered body armour system is an integrated protection and load-carriage system that incorporates vests, soft armour plates, hard inserts and pouches. The system can be tailored, making soldiers more agile and responsive to battlefield threats and conditions. TBAS is designed for all Australian soldiers who are likely to be engaged in close combat or who will generally serve in a supporting role. Non-combat soldiers are issued with a much heavier modular combat body armour system – MCBAS.

Assorted pouches – for batteries, compass, rations, weapon cleaning kit and myriad other bit and bobs. Placement of all pouches on the carriage system is up to individual preference with ease of access the key – especially for essential items such as ammunition magazines.

Medical kit – all soldiers carry their own comprehensive emergency medical kit.

Combat boots – soldiers can be reimbursed for purchases made from a range of 10 approved combat boots.



HK417

The soldier combat ensemble is defined by the Defence Materiel Organisation as 'the soldier systems designed to provide protection to individual combatants from physical threats and the environment as well as facilitating an efficient means for individuals to carry mission-essential items in a close-combat environment'.

Development and procurement of the various elements that make up the soldier combat ensemble is managed under Project Land 125, a multi-phase project aimed at delivering successive enhancements to the Soldier Combat System and is responsible for the acquisition of capabilities for the dismounted close-combat force. Capabilities are integrated through a spiral development plan, which allows for incremental acquisition.

Land 125 will provide enhancements to the NATO-defined and inter-related soldier sub-systems of lethality, survivability, sustainment and mobility, and C4I (command, control, communications, computers and information).

The combination of individual combatants, their units and the interfaces with the internal and external battle environment is termed the Soldier Combat System.

Heavier support weapons

Javelin

Type of system	Fire and forget
Missile weight	11.8kg
Warhead weight	8.4kg
Missile length	110cm
Flight time	7sec per 1000m
Effective range	2000m
Min range	65m direct attack

The Javelin weapon system was introduced to the Australian Army to engage and destroy current and anticipated enemy armour at ranges beyond that achievable with previous shoulder-fired anti-armour systems.

The system also offers the capability to destroy fortifications and bunkers, as well as slow-moving or hovering helicopters.

Combat arms units employ Javelin as a dismounted, shoulder-fired weapon, but it can also be fitted to vehicle platforms.

Targets are engaged by locking on to their heat signature and, once fired, there is no further requirement to guide the missile, which allows the firer to get up and go before being counter attacked.

Javelin has two modes – direct attack or top attack. In direct attack, the rocket flies directly to the target, just like a bullet. In selectable top-attack mode, the rocket initially flies a similar path before arching up to about 150m then down in the last seconds to hit the target almost vertically from the top – most vehicles’ (even tanks) most vulnerable aspect.

The missile has two warheads – the first to set off explosive-reactive armour, the second to penetrate base armour.



PIC CORPORAL CHRIS MOORE

F2 Mortar

The mortar 81mm F2 is a crew-served, indirect-fire support weapon. It is distinguished from other indirect-fire systems by its capability to sustain a high rate of fire using a variety of ammunition.

The mortar is primarily a man-portable weapon system that can also be deployed using other agencies such as helicopters, wheeled vehicles or APC mortar vehicles.

In the man-pack mode, additional personnel are required to carry ammunition.

The mortar is easily detectable by its distinctive noise and flash when firing. It is extremely vulnerable to detection by weapon-locating radar because of the long time of flight, high trajectory and relatively slow velocity of its ammunition.

Mortar crews are generally not capable of defending themselves while simultaneously conducting missions. The mortar can fire at ranges from 200m to 4900m depending upon the type of ammunition used.



PIC CORPORAL HAMISH PATTERSON

Calibre	81mm
Weight	36.6kg [without sight]
Barrel length	1280mm
Muzzle velocity	225m/sec
HE shell	4.2kg
Rate of fire	Up to 12 rounds per minute sustained 20 rounds per minute for short period

L119

The L118 light gun is a 105mm towed howitzer. It was originally produced for the British Army in the 1970s and has been widely exported since, including to the United States, where a modified version is known as the M119A1.

The proper military name for this weapon is “Gun, 105mm, Field, L119” but it is almost always just called “the light gun”.

The L119 variant has a different barrel [a slightly shorter L20 ordnance with a percussion firing mechanism] for firing the ubiquitous US M1-type ammunition, giving the gun a max range of 11,400m.

In Australian service, the light gun was usually towed behind a Unimog – though even a Land Rover was capable.

However, the L119 is being phased out of service in Australia – the last reserve unit giving up its guns in June this year [see CONTACT issue #35, p22].

Weight	2130kg
Caliber	105mm
Elevation	-100 to 1244 mils
Traverse	100 mils left or right
Rate of fire	Maximum 8 rounds per minute for 3 minutes Sustained 3 rounds per minute for 30 minutes
Max range	13.7km conventional round; 19.5km rocket assisted



PIC SERGEANT BRIAN HARTIGAN

NOTE: Where [many] statistics and ‘facts’ listed above differ from those of other publically available sources [including relevant manufacturers], we have mainly used the official ADF figures on the grounds that in-service weapons may have been customer-modified. Where ADF information and figures are not available or obviously incorrect [e.g. barrel length of F2 Mortar, listed by Defence as 128mm:-], we used other sources, especially Wikipedia.

From broomsticks to blast gauges

Abridged address to the Land Warfare Conference, Melbourne, by Minister for Defence Materiel Jason Clare

This is an important conference. It's focused on land warfare, where most wars are won. They are won by the people who fight them – and the industry back home that supports them.

This year is the 70th anniversary of some of the most important land battles we have ever fought – Milne Bay, El Alamein, Kokoda, Buna, Gona and Sanananda. All etched into our national consciousness – or they should be.

I am going up to Kokoda for the 70th anniversary of the raising of the Australian flag on that sacred bit of ground. I am going there with eight Kokoda veterans, including a bloke named Len Griffiths.

The preparation, training and equipment men like Len received was very different to today. We all know the stories of enlistees who were given broomsticks to train with instead of rifles. Some weren't issued with rifles until they were about to head overseas.

When Len and his mates first arrived in PNG, they were dressed for the desert – khaki head to toe. They were given one shirt, one singlet, one pair of pants, one pair of underwear, half a blanket and half a towel.

Then, as now, camouflage was a matter of life and death – the Japanese had jungle greens and we had khaki.

The solution – 44-gallon drums of dye were delivered to the track and each man walked up to the drums, took off his only pair of clothes, dipped them in the dye and put them back on. Many men got dermatitis from the dye – but the camouflage worked.

We have come a long way since then. We have come a long way in just the past 13 years.

When we sent troops to East Timor in 1999, each soldier carried about \$3000-worth of equipment. Today, soldiers heading to Afghanistan carry almost \$30,000 worth of kit, including, TBAS body armour, night vision goggles, the new Australian-made Multicam uniform and a range of capabilities we can't talk about here.

In the two years since the last Land Warfare Conference in Brisbane, we have also rolled out ground-penetrating radar trucks and mine rollers to help clear IEDs, the C-RAM early warning system at Tarin Kot, Shadow 200 UAV, new longer-range machine guns, new mortar systems and we have up-armoured the Bushmasters in theatre.

All up, over a \$1-billion in extra force protection.

Thank you to everyone involved in this work. There's nothing more important than the work we do to protect our soldiers.

I also want to thank the Diggerworks team, led by Colonel Jason Blain, who are responsible for rolling out a lot of the new equipment that protects our soldiers. The work they have done has already saved lives. And, they are trialling more new equipment – tier-two combat helmets, gunshot detection systems, water purification systems and blast gauges.



Two Huskey mine detection vehicles with ground-penetrating radar arrays out front, followed by a Buffalo, which Australian engineers are using in Afghanistan to detect and deal with IEDs. Pic Brian Hartigan.

[Our mission in Afghanistan] will draw down over the next 12 to 15 months. But that doesn't mean the challenges end.

As we draw down, we will have to bring equipment home. This is a massive logistical exercise in its own right.

We have around \$2.8-billion-worth of materiel in Afghanistan.

We will also draw down operations in East Timor and the Solomon Islands.

This is a big change. It will be the first time in 13 years that we have not had large numbers of soldiers deployed overseas.

That doesn't mean there are not big challenges ahead. There are. And now is the time to get those strategic decisions right.

Off the back of these strategic decisions there are also important capability decisions to be made. One of the biggest is Land 400 [combat vehicles]. It is currently the third-largest project in the Defence Capability Plan. The biggest capability project Army has ever embarked upon – over \$10 billion.

One of the decisions we made late last year was to select the Thales Hawkei as the preferred vehicle for development and testing under Stage 2 of the manufactured-and-supported-in-Australia option under Land 121 Phase 4 [protected and unprotected light vehicles].

A few months ago, we also made a decision to acquire an additional 214 Bushmasters. This will fill the gap between the end of production of the Bushmaster and the start of work on the Hawkei. It means we keep the skills we need to build the sort of armoured vehicles in Australia that have saved Australian lives in Afghanistan. It means we avoid a valley of death – where jobs are

lost and skills are destroyed and then are not available when they are needed again.

...[Landing Helicopter Dock ships] are of enormous importance to Australia and our whole region. The first LHD arrived in Port Phillip Bay two weeks ago.

It will require a massive effort to prepare to operate the LHDs, and to operate from them. It's been a long time since Army has had the capability to conduct large-scale amphibious operations, and we have never done it on this scale before. We've got to learn how to use them to their full potential, and working with the US Marines rotating through Darwin will play an important role in this.

I talked earlier about Kokoda and I mentioned Len Griffiths and his dyed khaki uniform. Seventy years ago it was Len who organised for that Australian flag to be raised. There was no band that day, no cheers, just a few hundred weary Australian soldiers standing to attention, in the soaking rain.

On Friday [2 November] he will help raise that flag again.

Every year, more and more Australians stop in the street to remember men like Len Griffiths. And so they should.

Over the next few years their stories will be at the forefront of public consciousness as we remember the 100th anniversary of the ANZAC landings at Gallipoli, the battles at Villers Bretonneux, Ypres and Fromelles, as well as the 50th anniversary of the battle of Long Tan.

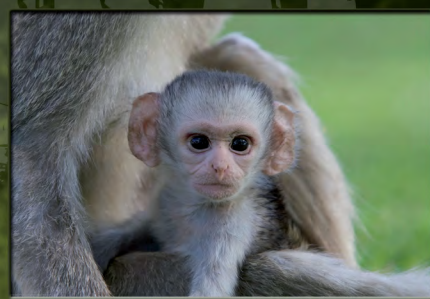
Honouring them is important. And the best way we can honour them is to look after the soldiers who are serving now.

That means making sure they have the right equipment and the right support backed with the right strategy.

That's what drives me. I know that's what drives you – and I thank you for it.



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WORDS AND PICS BRIAN HARTIGAN
WITH ADDED PERSPECTIVES FROM
VARIOUS OFFICIAL SOURCES

I visited Australian troops in the Middle East Area of Operations in September. While I anticipated patrols outside the wire with our soldiers, circumstances prevented it [more on that in my editorial]. Instead, what I did was talk to as many people as I could to get a better background understanding of the day-to-day life of our soldiers, especially in Afghanistan. *What follows are some of those chats, offering different threads around the same conversation.*



Harassing fire

Sergeant Craig Rohse, 17 Alpha Team Leader, 3RAR

When we got here, we pretty much got stuck in straight away. The Tangi Valley itself is quite narrow. It's dominated by high ground on both the northern and southern sides. The green zone is maybe about 600m – a little bit wider in places.

From the start, 8/9RAR were supposed to take us on a nursing patrol, but when we got there, the ANA informed us that there were sharpshooters up in the hills and they were engaging the base – Patrol Base Karib.

We believed it was up to four persons up on the high ground about 2km away from us and they were just using AKs to harass the base.

The nursing patrol didn't go ahead for a few reasons – ANA, as well as our own, so we came back to Hadrian for a while and went back out to Karib a few weeks later.

The shooters were still there, still engaging the base. So we started to use our sniper callsign to try to engage the enemy. But because of the distance it was quite hard.

The snipers did an excellent job identifying where the enemy were and that they were using different firing positions. Over the course of a day, they identified that they were essentially using four different firing positions and every time we shot at them, they just moved to a different position and shot back at us.

Then we tried mortars. First ANA mortars then our own.

At that stage, one exposed himself and the snipers took him out. Then we reckon the mortar callsign took care of another one.

The enemy actually hit a window in the mortars' car – that's how close they came. We kept that as a nice souvenir for our museum.

We also called in artillery from back at Hadrian and because we were here to call fall of shot, HQ was able to build a good picture on where the enemy were.



A MORTARMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Sergeant Adrian Down, 3RAR Task Group, Mortar Support

The dude was shooting at us for a couple of days and after a while we got the shits with him and started bombing him.

Obviously we had to call it in and the JFO [joint fires officer] actually called the mission.

He [the enemy] had three or four different positions he used. They were pretty good positions too – natural overhanging rocks and stuff like that where he could get in underneath, where he could see us but was protected.

So we fired a whole bunch of rounds trying to get him – and the snipers were trying to get him as well. But he kept ducking to a position over the back of the hill.

Then CTU [Combined Team Uruzgan] put up a UAV and it sat there watching.

What the shooters did was lay under a blanket or something to try and fool the thermal, making the ground around him the same temp as the rocks. But eventually, one of them got up to take a piss and the UAV was able to see the movement.

So they called in the F16 and dropped two 500 pounders on him, just on last light.

Then some other dudes came the next day to see what had happened, and the snipers knocked one of them over too. They didn't use that hill again after that.

When they sent a patrol up to check the hill out, they recon there was a lot of naan bread and stuff up there. They figured they were being resupplied by donkey from over the other side of the hill.

Then using ISR assets, we were able to pinpoint where the other two guys were and they were engaged by fast air and taken out too.

From then on it was pretty quiet on the base.

Our call sign is responsible for the Tangi Valley and we share a compound with the ANA. We have a very good relationship with them.

Karib is definitely not 'luxury' like here, it's more basic. There's no toilets, we had to build showers for ourselves, and we live under tarps. And there's definitely no Internet or anything like that. But we have a good time up there.

When we got there it was basically just a patch of dirt within the compound. The first thing we did was put cam nets up for a bit of shade, then put tarps underneath.

For toilets, we used a couple of metal chairs and cut holes in the seats and put ration tins under them with black plastic bin liners in them. Every night we had to go out and burn our rubbish and poo.

There was absolutely nothing for us there – but that's a good thing, I think. When I came over here I expected that to be the norm. Back here at FOB Hadrian, this is luxury.

Morale among the boys is never an issue out there. Twenty days is the longest we've stayed out there, but when you are there there's always something going on.

Part of that is of course going on patrol every now and then, or as much as we can, to provide security to the base as well as to the Tangi Valley.

A MEDICAL MIRACLE

Four Australian soldiers were wounded on 23 August when an IED detonated during operations.

Sapper Curtis 'Kiwi' McGrath, aged 24, was seriously wounded, losing both his legs.

He was aero-medically evacuated, first to the Tarin Kot Role 2 Medical Facility, then to the Role 3 Medical Facility at Kandahar before being transferred to Landstuhl, Germany and eventually home to Brisbane.

A second soldier was also evacuated to the Role 3 Medical Facility at Kandahar. The other two were treated in TK.

Commanding Officer 3RAR Task Group Lieutenant Colonel Trent Scott said that quick action by soldiers on the ground saved a comrade's life.

"Application of immediate medical assistance meant that a soldier's life was saved," Lieutenant Colonel Scott said.

"The training our soldiers receive in preparation for deployment, together with access to first-class medical support, meant that our wounded soldiers received the best possible care at the earliest opportunity."

The ADF does not release personal details of wounded personnel, however, details of Sapper McGrath's plight, fuelled by a growing legend of his unbelievably positive attitude, soon leaked.

His mates posted fliers on notice boards around Tarin Kot and eventually on the Internet in an effort to raise funds to assist their mate on his long road to recovery.

Donations to the Sapper McGrath fund can be made at http://deployedsoldiers.org.au/curtis_m McGrath



EYES IN THE SKY

Wing Commander Chris Platton, Commander Task Unit 633.2.7 – the Heron Detachment

That incident in Karib was one of those missions where we were actually on another task in the general area and suddenly we got a priority, troops-in-contact message.

The guy on the ground you spoke to would have been in contact with the ops centre in TK and quickly assessed the situation and, literally within minutes, spoke to us using our chat systems and retasked us.

The aircraft got across there in short order and our GMS [ground mission station] guys located the snipers fairly quickly, then spoke to the JTAC [joint terminal attack controller] at TK who was also talking to the guys on the ground, and started the target identification process.

Using Heron as well as the information from the ground, they were able to ID those snipers as being a legitimate target.

With our sensors, we maintained eyes-on even though it got dark, and confirmed that no other persons moved into the target area, so the JTAC was able to engage the target using other coalition aircraft.

It's not hard to keep my guys motivated doing this job. When guys get tired, you might suspect that motivation could be an issue. But, quite frankly, exactly the opposite occurs.

Because of the general pace here, which is higher than normal ops at home – we work longer hours per day over more days, and then sometimes ramp up and go crazy for a while. And that keeps guys going.

At the end of their four-and-a-half months, most of them will be quite drained. But I'm not getting any complaints, and the harder it gets, the more pumped up they are.

There was one incident about a month ago up in Kaz Uruzgan where we were providing overwatch for a bunch of engineers and we knew they were going into a dangerous area that was likely to be booby trapped.

We spent a day watching those guys. As they moved up one ridgeline, we could see they were completely exposed. And we were all here thinking, "Oh man, these guys could get whacked any minute".

The buzz around the unit was focused in a very different way that day. About mid afternoon the next day, they got hit by an IED and one guy got his legs blown off.

Eventually, he and his oppo both ended up here in Kandahar. He got shipped out to Germany, but his oppo actually visited us here.

I can tell you, that really re-focused everyone.



MEDEVAC CREW COMMENDED

During an awards ceremony on 18 October, Australian forces at Tarin Kot recognised the actions of Dustoff 69, a US aero-medical evacuation crew, for their actions during the medevac mission on 23 August.

Chief of Joint Operations Australia Lieutenant General Ash Power presented each of the crew with a Chief of Joint Operations Gold Commendation, saying the crews' skills and determination in extremely challenging conditions contributed significantly to saving the life of a seriously wounded Australian soldier.

During the mission, the pilots had to perform a two-wheeled landing because of terrain limitations but, in less than one minute, had the Australian soldier loaded and on his way back to Tarin Kot.

During the flight, the medics had to work hard to restore his vital signs. Captain Zach Mauss said he was honoured to receive the award – but, the most rewarding part was when members of the unit hit by the IED came forward to thank the crew for saving their comrade.



WE SPENT A DAY WATCHING THOSE GUYS. AS THEY MOVED UP ONE RIDGELINE, WE COULD SEE THEY WERE COMPLETELY EXPOSED. AND WE WERE ALL HERE THINKING, "OH MAN, THESE GUYS COULD GET WHACKED ANY MINUTE".

It can be quite challenging just to get a patrol happening here. It has to be done in partnership with the ANA and there has to be a greater number of ANA than Australians on the patrol.

In Karib, where we usually are, the ANA is quite happy with us and we have a really good relationship. In other places they are more reluctant to go on patrol.

Once we establish that we are going on patrol – which is normally done the night before – we get the ANA commander to develop a plan and he will then backbrief us. Then we tweak it until it is right for us and for them.

Out on patrol, we let the ANA actually do the work, because we are there to mentor them. We keep our callsigns to the rear, with just two mentors and a small security detail up front with the ANA.

A patrol can be anywhere between two hours to half a day or longer, depending on the task at hand.

We actually find that if we are going into contested areas, they don't really want to do it as much, so those patrols are normally the shorter ones.

I think their reluctance is more to do with their level of training and the support they get from headquarters. The soldiers out there are not as well equipped as soldiers back here in Hadrian or even further back in TK and so on.

But there's definitely a lot going on out there. Every time we go out on patrol – especially to the east – we have small-arms-fire engaging us or we find small-arms caches and stuff like that. We haven't come across any IEDs thank God, but every time we push out and the further we go east, the more insurgent activity there is.

Every time we go out we know we're going to get hit by something, but that's OK – that's what infantry guys do – and they look forward to it.

We had one patrol where we inserted at night and one of our callsigns got engaged by the insurgents from the other side of the Tiri Rud – the river – and they managed to take one of the insurgents out as he advanced towards us.

Because we had two callsigns out at that stage, we conducted a right flanker, crossed the river and tried to cut them off.

At that stage the helicopters were above us as well and that always scares the insurgents off.

They put down their weapons, in aqueducts or wherever, and disappeared within the township.

But on that day, we wounded one insurgent and killed another and did a full search of the battlefield and found the rounds where they were shooting at us from and took the clothing from the insurgent that was killed [for intel analysis].

On another patrol, we went out with the ANA, and came into the vicinity of another ANA checkpoint. There was a local mullah sitting there and he had a few guys sitting with him. So we stopped and I engaged them in conversation.



While that was happening, our engineers started doing a search and they found a cache. While they were occupied with the cache, I was occupied with the mullah, and the rest of the call sign and the ANA was providing security.

Another team leader with me, Serfeant Moore, pointed out a guy who was sitting on the ground and he thought he looked very familiar. So I had a closer look at him.

Just then, the ANA checkpoint started engaging some insurgents who tried to sneak up on us from the high ground.

We weren't really aware of what was going on, we only heard the shots going over our heads. So everyone started taking cover and the locals sort of removed themselves and started seeking cover as well.

So I really missed the opportunity to engage that local and see if it really was the guy we were looking for.

Once we realised it was the ANA that was firing out and not the insurgents firing at us we just established our security, took all the weapons out of the cache and started going back to base.

That night, I was sitting in the CP sort of doubting myself and regretting that I missed a great opportunity to enroll that individual and take him off the battlefield. I got out some pictures of the individual and studied them for hours.

The next morning we went on another patrol very close to the same location.

I saw a guy cutting somebody else's hair and I just went "Holy shit, it's him!" I didn't even have to get the picture out.

The ANA took the individual back to the base, where we were able to confirm for sure that it was the individual we were looking for.

That was a pretty good result for what was just an opportunity thing.

Every time you step outside the wire, you always learn something new and always achieve something. It's a great feeling to know that you were involved in taking a guy like that off the battlefield or taking a cache of weapons out of circulation.

Our guys have learned so much from this whole experience. We have a mix of very young diggers who've been in the Army for less than two years, to senior guys who've been here in Afghanistan before.



EVERY TIME YOU STEP OUTSIDE THE WIRE, YOU ALWAYS LEARN SOMETHING NEW AND ALWAYS ACHIEVE SOMETHING. IT'S A GREAT FEELING TO KNOW THAT YOU WERE INVOLVED IN TAKING A GUY LIKE THAT OFF THE BATTLEFIELD OR TAKING A CACHE OF WEAPONS OUT OF CIRCULATION.



Of course, when I say 'we' I mean the Australians and the ANA, because we never go out without the ANA. They always lead and we are there to mentor them. So it's always a partnership. And because we have such a good relationship in Tangi, it has been very easy for us to go out. Every second day we expect to be out on patrol, which is pretty good in terms of the ANA generally.

In Tangi, their patrolling is much better than I've seen in other companies around here. They really are doing a good job. Unfortunately, they are not getting the support they need from their own chain. If they did get the support they need, it could look a lot different here.

Of course there are good reasons for that. To raise such a big army in just 10 years is a big task, so it's going to take a while to get it sorted.

Raising an army that size also has its issues, like the green-on-blue incidents.

For us, because it has happened in the past, we know that it could happen again, but we really don't have an expectation that it will happen to us. But it is on our minds and we do talk about it.

SERGEANT ROHSE'S THOUGHTS ON EQUIPMENT

Soldiers will always bitch about stuff – but you're more likely to hear them bitch about little things now – not equipment.

They'll bitch about stuff like, "Why can't I wear a beret?" I think if you go into boys' rooms here you'll still find berets everywhere.

But, the equipment and the training we have these days is fantastic – I think the Army has finally got it right.

Sure there may be things you can do better, but the PPE [personal protective equipment] for example is the best we've ever had. The helmets are good. And nothing's too heavy anymore – though we do still carry a lot of weight when we're on patrol.

The boots scheme, where you can choose which pair of boots you want to buy and then get reimbursed for them, I think that's good and I think we should probably keep that going.

And the Bushmasters are fantastic. There just isn't a better vehicle around for what we need it for.



Obviously we also have measures in place to deal with the threat. You really can't afford to let your guard down. But that's what we do anyway as part of our job. Whether you're on base or off, you have your security measures in place.

But we have a job to do and we just want to be allowed get on and fucking do it.

Our boys are very professional, of course, but for me it has been a huge learning experience too. It's the first time I've worked in such a complex environment and with so many callsigns. We have our three infantry sections from Alpha Company 3RAR here, plus engineers attached to them, plus drivers from 6RAR and 2nd/14th.

Our infantry guys are very professional with their security and knowledge. My involvement in placing guys on the ground is minimal, and so I can concentrate most of my time up front mentoring the ANA.

And that's not just the corporals, but everybody.

The engineers especially work very hard when we have to send them up front for searches and so on.

The drivers too, with Cpl Buxton in charge, are fantastic. I don't have to worry about the vehicles at all. I do spot checks now and then, but I know everything is good to go. It's fantastic.

We had a little exercise about mid last year in Brisbane because, with 3RAR being ex parachute regiment, we didn't have any experience with vehicles. So that exercise gave us a lot of things to think about and sort out.

Then we really all came together at the start of the year.

Our preparation for this deployment was just about as long as the deployment itself and while there are always things you can improve on, I think we were very well prepared for this deployment.

Physically, all the soldiers are in top shape. I don't think I've ever seen 3RAR in better condition than we are now.

That said, though, I don't think soldiers generally are the tough farmers' boys they used to be. For example, just today, someone had a strap caught on something and the boys came up to me and asked if I had a hammer. I looked around, picked up a rock and knocked it free.

It's these sorts of little things that are missing today.

You can see it on the base here. The boys only come out of their rooms when they really have to, to go to the mess or to go to the gym to get bigger. Otherwise they are in their rooms, on the Internet, watching movies or whatever.

Only a few years ago the bond among infantry blokes was much better.

That's what I like about Karib. There's no privacy – you can't lock yourself away.

So, if I had to say whether today's soldiers are harder or softer than soldiers in the past, I'd have to say softer.

But they are still very proud soldiers and very proud 3RAR boys.

The rest of the Army hates us, but we are still proud to be 3RAR.





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Last issue, I left off telling you how **HMAS Melbourne's** crew is an almost addictively fit bunch of Aussies – plus three Kiwi ring-ins.

All hours of the day or night there's someone somewhere doing PT. The small gym is, apparently, fully booked 24/7 – so other popular spots include the flight deck, or the focsle (the open deck up front with the hints of interesting weaponry), or a range of other nooks and crannies, with rowing machines, cycle machines, treadmills, weights, mats, chin-up bars, gymnastic rings and a host of other fitness apparatus salted away (though more often than not, pulled out and in use) in strange and surprising places all over the ship.

Speaking of fitness – and, indeed, of salting things away in strange and surprising places all over the ship – the cooks have a lot to do with the fitness and general health of the ship too.

The best-in-fleet-award-winning galley team are a very hard-working cadre, keeping the ship's company happy and healthy with four square meals a day. That's right, with the rotating rosters and a good portion of the crew working all hours, the scran (shit created by Royal Australian Navy) or food line is open 2330 to 0045 for the 'midnight meal'.

Other than that, breakfast is served from 0645 to 0815, lunch 1130 to 1245 and dinner 1645 to 1815.

The team behind it all is a small band of 'fitters and turners' (fit it into pots and turn it into shit) – though this nickname is strictly affectionate, especially on this ship.

During the day, the kitchen is manned by a staff of five, cooking today's offerings and preparing tomorrow's.

At night the lone night cook prepares tomorrow's deserts and salads as well as the midnight meal.

This is widely acknowledged as one of the worst jobs on the ship because the night cook works from 1730hr (5.30pm) to 0600hr, and then has to try and sleep during the day while the ship is at its most active and most noisy.



Anyway, the food prepared in this relatively small, hot and noisy kitchen is very tasty and very nutritious – designed so by the head cook, a lanky, gruff-but-lovable ex-Army Armoured Corps character who gave me a very entertaining tour of his domain.

Petty Officer Guy Chloesy starts off by explaining, "US ships are designed as a hull for carrying weapon systems. When they have that sorted, then they worry about command and control facilities. Only after that do they worry about human sustainment."

This immediately explains the intimate, so-called VIP accommodation I'm still sharing with the padre (which I learn, used to be

Aussie superpower

PART 2



Above: AHSO Matthew Barber, ASCS Dylan Thomas and LSCS Joshua Tatana seconded from the New Zealand Navy.

Above left x 3: Members of the embarked Navy clearance divers pump out a gruelling PT session in honour of their fallen comrade Sergeant Brett Wood, 2 Commando Regiment, who was killed in Afghanistan on 23 May last year.

Top: Petty Officer Guy Chloesy helps bring supplies aboard.

Main pic: Aviation deck hands catch the helicopter's recovery cable during RA or 'recovery assist' practice.

a rope-storage locker for the boat deck, hence the name, boat-deck locker) – and becomes more obvious when I move my meagre possessions into the Chief Petty Officers' Mess – and even more obvious when I eventually get a tour of the junior-sailors' living arrangements.

For now, though, PO Chloesy is showing me the freezer where he's required to store 42-days worth of meat for 230-odd people and the fridge and cool room where the other, non-frozen supplies are kept. Or I should say, some of the other non-frozen supplies, because after a good chat in the fridge/freezer space on the deck below the galley, we're off on a tour of the ship to see some other storage arrangements.

If you're getting a bit bored with my story at this point, hang in there just a little – this bit is good, in a classic adapt-and-overcome sort of way.

First, we go out on the open deck on the side of the ship, where the torpedo tubes are, past the row of ordinary green wheelybins and the array of Nulka electronic-countermeasures hovering rockets, forward towards the focsle and, up there, in an open-air non-descript space



Cooks outdoor spuds storage.

where huge buoys and coils of massive rope are rightly stored – that's where the spuds, carrots and onions are kept. Enough spuds to cope with a 60kg-a-day usage rate.

Of course, PO Chloesy tells me, storing them there in the open air in the tropics is not ideal – the stink and the green sprouts poking out like hair on a gargoyle is testament to that – “but what can you do, there's nowhere to put them inside”.

Next he takes me up ladders, through hatches, down this corridor and that, into a semi-secret communications room (“no pictures and avert your eyes in here”) and over to a hatch marked ‘Fan Room 01-180-1-Q’.

Opening the inspection hatch, designed for mechanics to access this part of the air conditioning system, he shows me with a grin where he can fit 3100 litres of long-life milk.

“The XO told me about these spaces and, after we cleaned them out and measured them up I made a plan as to what we could store away in these spots.

“Funny thing is, if I measured something up at home, it's guaranteed not to fit, because I'm shit at measuring things. But with this, I was only about 15 boxes out – and we got about 16 pallets of stuff in various hideaways around the ship.”

Another walk to another inspection hatch and he proudly displays his stash of cordial – and, in another, weeks-worth of fruit juice – in another, weeks-worth of bottled water – and god knows what else where. One hidey-hole was even in a hatch in the ward room (officers' mess) toilets!

I blame his Army upbringing and the adapt-and-overcome mentality he learned there, though I hear the Navy calls it ‘can-do, make-do’.

PO Chloesy says that during Melbourne's pre-deployment workups and inspections, an auditor who knew him took him aside quietly after looking in his fridges and expressed concerns that maybe he hadn't provisioned adequately for the trip.

“So, I took her around to all these hiding spaces – and she just smiled.”

Despite the Yank's best efforts to handicap human sustainment, this crew is in good hands.

On the other end of the scale – the bit the Yanks really designed this hull for – I suppose it's time for me to take a look at the weapons on board.

Where to start? Start with the big ones, working down? From the front of the ship working backwards? Or the ‘coolest’ to most mundane?

Well, I like functionalities – so let's start with defensive weapons then the offensive.

The primary role of a ship like HMAS Melbourne is defensive – mainly defending other ships, such as aircraft carriers or merchant shipping.

As such, and especially in Australia's case where she mostly operates as a self-contained unit on independent patrols, as opposed to being a member of a battle group or carrier group, HMAS Melbourne is armed to the teeth in the self-defence field.

Think of defence in terms of layers – that is, using weapons that can take out incoming threats at ever-decreasing distances. Think of it as a multi-layered bubble of protection around the ship where one weapon can attack an incoming threat at a certain distance and, if a target somehow manages to get through that, then the next weapon, with a shorter range, can engage it – then the next, and so on.

The weapon with the longest range (more than 160km) in this suite of self-protection options is the SM2 (Standard Missile 2), whose primary role is to provide area defense against aircraft and anti-ship cruise missiles.

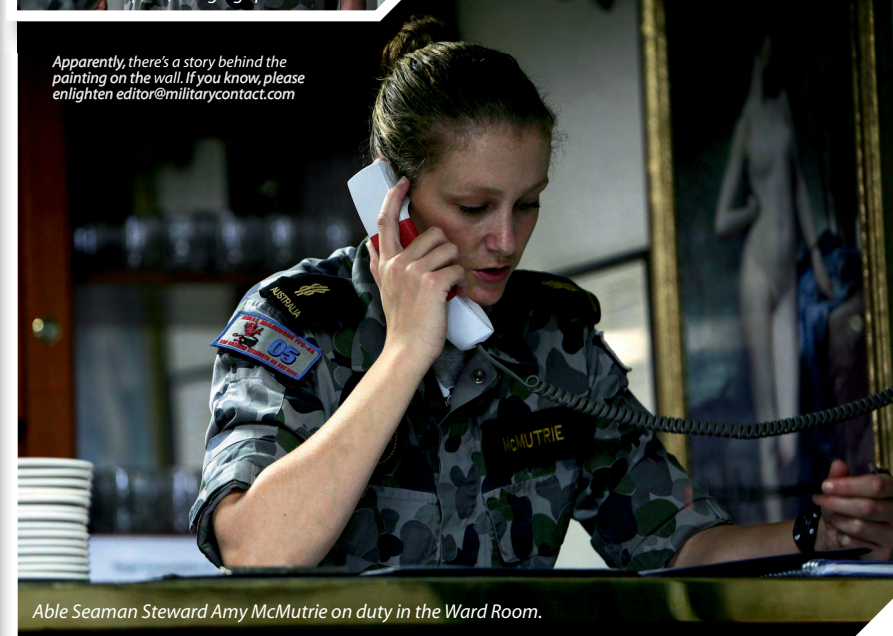
This 708kg rocket, launched from the Mk 13 arm-type launch system prominent on the focsle, flies at greater than Mach 3 to intercept incoming targets, exploding either when it hits the target or in close proximity to it, shredding the target with lethal fragmentation shrapnel.



20mm CWIS ammo



The Padre chips in, bringing spuds on board.



Apparently, there's a story behind the painting on the wall. If you know, please enlighten editor@militarycontact.com

Able Seaman Steward Amy McMurtrie on duty in the Ward Room.



OTO Melara 76 mm/62 US Mk 75 gun

39kg of explosive load to shred the target with shrapnel.

However unlikely that the target could escape this onslaught, this is still not the last line of defence.

The next weapon system to be brought into the fight would be the 76mm rapid-fire naval artillery gun.

Capable of firing around 80 rounds per minute, this fully automatic, remote-controlled (from the ops room or the GDP (more on this later)) weapon can shoot 12kg exploding projectiles out to about 16km. Again, the idea is for the warhead to explode in proximity to the target, filling the air through which the target must fly, with shrapnel.

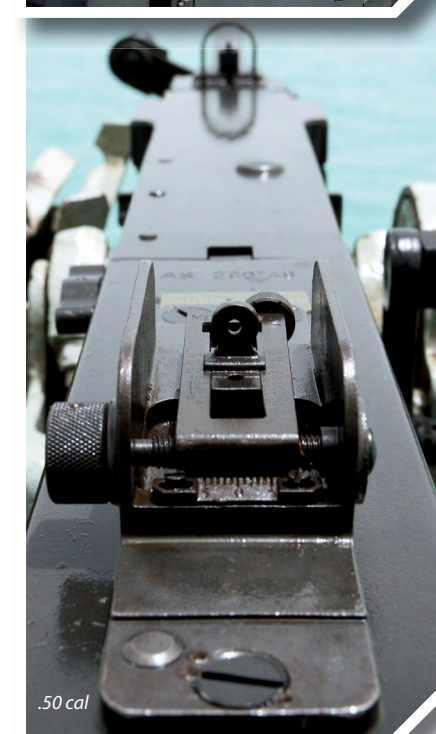
After this, CIWS (Close-in Weapon System – also known as Phalanx) takes over. CIWS is a 20mm, six-barrel Gatling gun that can fill the path of an oncoming target, out to about 3600m, with super-sonic tungsten-alloy armour-piercing projectiles.

When switched to automatic target-acquisition mode, combined inbuilt radar and computing power makes Phalanx a fully automatic, fully autonomous system for close-in defence.

The radar senses something moving in the sky and the computers figure out if it is a threat to the ship, by analysing size, speed and direction. Electric motors in the base of the system, drawing on 30,000 volts DC, rotate the housing into the direction of the approaching threat through about 100 degrees per second. Then, with the barrels revolving under 3100psi of pneumatic pressure, it unleashes 75 rounds per second until either the target stops coming – or, in



Leading Seaman Craig Osborne works on the CIWS



.50 cal



fact, until any piece of the target bigger than a 50cent coin stops coming – or until the system's 1500-round load has run out.

With all these layers of self defence, it's hard to imagine how any airborne threat could get through. But, in a worst-case scenario, imagine a whole squadron of enemy fighters, armed with multiple anti-ship missiles coming at supersonic speed at wave-top height. It would only take one missile to slip through the cordon to take out the ship, or the aircraft carrier it was protecting.

So, as a backup to the self-protection weapons, there are a couple of other systems designed to fool the missile that's lucky enough to get through. Chaff and flares shot into the air will confuse most missiles' heat-seeking or radar guidance systems.

Then there's Nulka – a rocket that, when fired, hovers in the air away from the ship, sending out an electronic signature that, to the right kind of missile guidance system, looks just like a big, fat, juicy warship – just over there.

And that clever little bastard was invented here in Australia.

But not all threats are fast-moving aircraft or missiles.

As in the case of the USS Cole in October 2000, a relatively slow-moving speedboat packed with explosives almost sunk the ship while she was tied up in the Port of Aden in the Middle East, killing 17 sailors and wounding 39.

Today, the ghost of USS Cole weighs heavy on the shoulders of HMAS Melbourne's crewmembers who stand on security watch, even in friendly ports.

So what if something bad did happen on the ship?

Every crewmember is trained and regularly practiced in damage control, man-overboard drills or any number of 'medical emergencies'.

The fictitious multiple fires that broke out after a fictitious missile strike on my tour seemed to me to be dealt with quickly and professionally and in unbelievably difficult conditions – heat, protective clothing, breathing apparatus, hatches closed down to minimum size and the added pressure of assessment.

What I genuinely saw on the faces around me (through the full-face breathing masks), was gritty determination. I wrote in my notebook at the time, "the determination of people who genuinely believe 'if I don't get this right, I could die'. Compare this to a typical, apathetic, fire drill at Russell Offices".

Despite what I thought, however, the XO (who assesses success or failure) only just assessed this exercise a success, with quite a few lessons learnt. Individual efforts and enthusiasm were singled out by name, as were some foolhardy 'suicide missions'.

Yet despite the humour in the seriousness of the debriefing, everyone seemed to take this as seriously as the exercise itself.

When I mentioned this to an officer, he confirmed that everyone does indeed take damage control very seriously.

"It could literally happen any time and with very little warning. For example, sailing through the Straights of Hormuz in a couple of days from now. Depending on the visibility, you can actually see the missile emplacements in Iran as we sail past. It's usually pretty tense going through there."

Next issue we'll catch up with the offensive weapons I didn't get around to this time, and take you below decks again, to discuss the fuel that HMAS Melbourne guzzles in vast quantities, especially on a high-speed run – and where she gets all that fuel from.

Plus, there may even be some nudity [unrelated to the fuel]!

To understand why that passage is so tense, look up 'Straights of Hormuz' in Wikipedia. It seems, one wrong move or a careless exchange when challenged on the radio could spark unthinkable consequences – not just for HMAS Melbourne.

Anyway, while the XO's score wasn't as high as I might have given the sailors, I was reminded that the eight or so assessing officers who conducted the exercise were very highly trained and skilled and would be leading rather than pushing the sailors in a real emergency.

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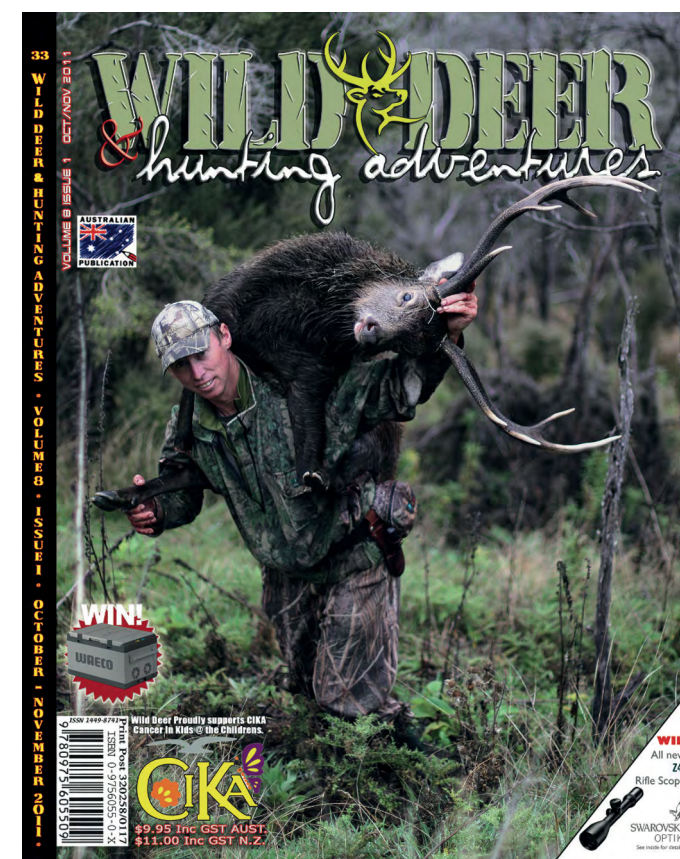
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2RAR BLITZ COMPETITION

Fresh from operations in Afghanistan, a section from the 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (2RAR) came out on top in the Duke of Gloucester Cup at Singleton Military Area earlier this year.

The cup, which was first established in 1946, sees sections competing in a range of foundation war-fighting activities designed to assess team dynamics and individual soldier skills under mentally and physically stressful conditions.

Detailed assessment is conducted at every stage of the competition.

The Townsville battalion's eight-man section took out the prestigious cup, as well as the Sir Arthur McDonald Trophy for best night navigation/night firing and the Gurkha Trophy for best overall shooting results.

2RAR section commander Corporal Lee Newham said teamwork was paramount to success in the competition.

"Morale within the section was always high, but when it came to crunch time there was always that motivation to keep driving us along," Corporal Newham said.

"I know that we have all put in our maximum effort and I believe we have achieved an outstanding result and to be rewarded for that is brilliant."

In October, the Duke of Gloucester Cup champions flew to Wales to take part in Exercise Cambrian Patrol, the premier infantry-patrolling event of the British Army – and came away with a highly sought-after silver medal after completing the gruelling 60km course in less than 48 hours.



MAIN PHOTO: A SECTION FROM 1RAR TACKLES THE URBAN-OPERATIONS PHASE OF THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER CUP AT SINGLETON.
INSET: THE WINNING 2RAR SECTION.





Clockwise from left:
A Special Forces soldier searches a
Kajaki cave system for drugs and
hidden insurgent caches, 20 May
2011 – Corporal Christopher Dickson

A RHIB from HMAS Parramatta in
the Red Sea, 28 November 2011 –
Petty Officer Damian Pawlenko

Australian special forces soldiers
patrol Al Asad Air Base in western
Iraq, 24 April 2003 – Sergeant W Guthrie

A C-17 Globemaster lands at
Multinational Base Tarin Kot,
28 May 2010 – Sergeant Mick Davis

WOFF Angelo Augustis loads
supplies bound for Helmand
province, 14 March 2011 –
Sergeant Mick Davis

Major Kurt Rezek, outside a minefield
in Bihac, Bosnia, 14 June 2002 –
Sergeant W Guthrie



THESE IMAGES WOULD NOT EXIST IN OUR
COLLECTIVE PSYCHE WITHOUT PLACING SOMEONE,
OFTEN IN HARM'S WAY, BEHIND A LENS



WORDS CAPTAIN CHRIS RICKEY

It is a well-established adage that conflict, specifically armed conflict, brings out the best and worst in man. Arguably many of the world's most striking and emotive images have been captured on the field of battle.

Raising the Star and Stripes over Iwo Jima, a wounded digger assisted by his mates along the Kokoda Track and the Saigon police chief's street execution of a Viet Cong suspect during the Tet Offensive are just three photographs that provide an instant and powerful account of a particular moment in time.

Fast forward 44 years and who hasn't been exposed to countless images of 9/11, Iraq, Afghanistan and of course, closer to home, East Timor and the Solomon Islands?

It's often said that journalists and photographers create history's first draft and this statement most certainly applies during times of war.

These images would not exist in our collective psyche without placing someone, often in harm's way, behind a lens – and that's where Australia's 1st Joint Public Affairs Unit (1JPAU) enters the frame.

Members of a tri-service, high-readiness

unit, the men and women of 1JPAU are some of the most deployed soldiers, sailors and airmen currently serving in the Australian Defence Force.

Since formation in 2002, many 1JPAU members have averaged up to six months absent from the unit each year on Australian taskings or deployed overseas.

Officer commanding 1JPAU Major Haydn Barlow quickly sums up the unit's position within the ADF and its reason for existence. "1JPAU performs two important functions – we support the communication objectives of the ADF mission, and we capture a permanent and continuous visual record of Australian servicemen and women on operations," Major Barlow says.

"Both aspects of the job contribute to the nature of the relationship between the public and its defence force, which is a huge and humbling responsibility."

The 'who, what, where, when, why and how' principles of journalism definitely apply at 1JPAU. The difference is, when asked about the 'where and when' the answer is a resounding "everywhere and anytime!"

To further illustrate the point – 1JPAU public affairs officers and photographers, now known as imagery specialists, usually have boots on the ground within the first hours of any new operation anywhere in the world.

Naturally, technology plays a major role in how the unit functions. In this digital age, 1JPAU members are obliged to keep abreast of rapid advances in technology to maintain industry standards of technical proficiency. Not necessarily an easy task for a tri-service organisation that also needs to be militarily experienced, combat capable and ready to deploy at a moment's notice.

Of course, it's not all about combat and firepower at 1JPAU. According to unit sergeant major Warrant Officer Class 2 Mark Dowling, some of the unit's best work has emerged from disaster-relief and community-assistance operations both domestically and overseas.

"It's part of the team's commitment to telling the full ADF story, and that means capturing images of sandbagging during floods or an Australian Army medic providing help to an injured civilian following a cyclone," WO2 Dowling says.



Above: Videographer Sergeant Katrina Johnson, public affairs officer Captain Kris Gardiner and photographer Leading Seaman Paul Berry gather product in Uruzgan province, Afghanistan, 11 June 2008.

Unknown

Right: Sergeant Mark Dowling, Captain Phil Pyke and Sergeant William Guthrie in Iraq, 25 March 2003.

Kate Geraghty, Sydney Morning Herald



Major Barlow believes it's not just the ADF that benefits from this commitment.

"Most Australians will be familiar with our work that regularly accompanies nightly news stories or in morning papers," he says.

Within the unit the heavy lifting is carried out by four military camera teams. Each MCT consists of a public affairs officer, a stills photographer, a videographer and, if required, a military reporter.

Each MCT is tasked with the collection of still and video imagery, as well as supporting text from ADF operations around the world.

Military funerals, important ceremonial events and all major exercises are also the responsibility of the camera teams.

After a quick edit and some admin in the field, the product is then transmitted to a central portal in Canberra where it is edited and distributed for publication or broadcast.

The walls of 1JPAU's home, a single-level building in Fyshwick, ACT, reveal the unit's unofficial story. Lining the hallways are dozens of striking images from world hotspots. These images reveal the depth and breadth of 1JPAU operations – an Australian Special Operations Task Group soldier searching a cave in Helmand province; local children following soldiers through the streets of Baucau, East Timor; and, the final act of mateship as engineers carry the

Right: WO2 Al Green filming on the streets of Dili, 11 October 2000.

Unknown

Below: Corporal Mick Davis, Lieutenant Kris Gardiner and Able Seaman Paul Berry on the gun line at FOB Armadillo, Helmand province, Afghanistan, 27 August 2008.

Corporal Andrew Hetherington



Below: Corporal Ricky Fuller on patrol with the Mentoring Task Force in Uruzgan province, Afghanistan, 18 May 2009.

Unknown





Want to help Celebrate the 65th Anniversary of the Royal Australian Regiment and Royal Australian Infantry Corps?

To celebrate the 65th Anniversary of the Royal Australian Regiment Photographer Alex Ormerod is photographing a series of portraits of soldiers who served overseas as part of the Royal Australian Regiment from it's establishment in 1948 up until current operations in Afghanistan.

If you are interested in being a part of this unique project or know somebody who may please feel free to contact Alex via e-mail or phone.

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casket of their mate Corporal Richard Atkinson to a waiting C-130, among the many.

It's a calling and a source of pride among 1JPAU members according to WO2 Dowling.

"As service men and women as well as professional photographers, we take great satisfaction in showing what ADF personnel and equipment are capable of," he says.

Evidence of the unit's highly tactical nature is also evident in Fyshwick, with the members' cubicle spaces and offices filled with military packs, webbing and field kit, as well as mountains of camera and video equipment.

Recording history and paying tribute to the past are equally important at 1JPAU. Their unit shoulder patch is designed in honour of Damien Parer, a photographer and cinematographer who enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force in 1939 following the start of the WWII. His iconic images, captured in the deserts of the Middle East and Tobruk as well as the jungles of New Guinea, have become quintessential parts of the ANZAC legend.

In 1944, during the invasion of Peleliu Island, Parer was killed by Japanese machine-gun fire

while filming tanks attached to the 1st Marine Division assaulting a beachhead.

The blue diamond and number 1 of the unit shoulder patch are direct references to the USMC Division. Five-pointed stars depict the Southern Cross, while three background colours represent the Australian Navy, Army and Air Force, acknowledging 1JPAU's joint-service makeup.

In addition to the unit's numerous individual photographic awards, 1JPAU as a whole received official recognition for its dedication to duty when, in 2005 the unit was awarded a Chief of Defence Force Commendation, which states in part, "The unit has made a significant contribution to the success of Australian Defence Force operations, through the provision of critical public affairs support, including guidance to operational commanders, development and implementation of detailed communication strategies, collection of high-quality video and stills imagery, and the facilitation of public information, in dangerous and demanding physical environments".

At a time when commanders are placing increased priority on internal and external communications, and with so many ADF personnel currently serving on operations, the role of 1JPAU has never been more vital.

However, with the prospect of reduced operational commitments looming on the horizon, Major Barlow insists 1JPAU will remain relevant.

"After 10 years of solid commitment to operations, a slightly reduced workload over the medium-term future offers us a great opportunity to consolidate what we have learnt.

"I think we have proven our value to the Defence mission in recent years, but we can now focus more on what makes us unique and strengthen those capabilities. Things such as taking our video operators to the next level and building our reputation with the three services as real force multipliers who can operate under any conditions," he says.

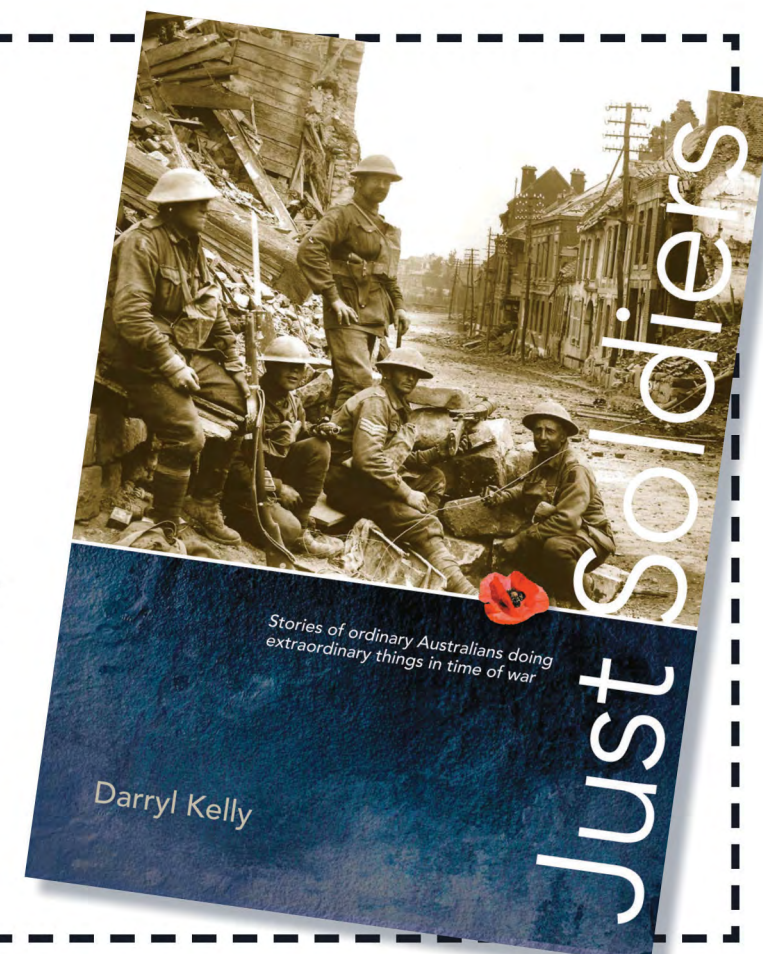
Today, the unit stands by the Australian Army Public Relations Service motto, *Defende et Doce – Defend and Inform*.

IN 2005 THE UNIT WAS AWARDED A CHIEF OF DEFENCE FORCE COMMENDATION

JUST SOLDIERS: STORIES OF ORDINARY AUSTRALIANS DOING EXTRAORDINARY THINGS IN TIME OF WAR by Darryl Kelly

In 1914, Australia had a population of fewer than 5 million, yet 300,000 from all walks of life volunteered to fight. More than 60,000 were killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed or taken prisoner. This book of WW1 stories, based on fact, portray the human tragedy of war. Many confirm the reputation of Australians as fearless fighting men. Yet, as in life, not all were heroes.

Available at all good book shops or www.anzacday.org.au





G'day, my name is Trooper Angus Firth. I returned from Timor Leste in February this year after six months with the Timor Leste Aviation Group. I'm currently posted to 1 Aviation Regiment in Darwin. These photos are just a few I captured during my time in Timor. Unfortunately I don't have names for the military working dog handlers or their dogs. The sunrise shot is over Comoro Airfield, Dili.

DILI DOGS FLY



PHOTOS BY JAY

JAY, THANKS FOR SHARING THESE PHOTOS FROM AFGHANISTAN WITH US — THEY ARE EXCELLENT PHOTOS AND VERY ATMOSPHERIC. I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE MORE FROM YOU! BRIAN HARTIGAN EDITOR



LETTERS HOME – AFGHANISTAN

Serving food and the nation

Two cooks in Afghanistan know how to feed an army – or part of an army at least.

Lance Corporal Otis Hodge and Private Jason Newmann are deployed with the 3RAR Task Group and are responsible for providing meals for the soldiers at Patrol Base Sorkh Bid, in northern Kandahar.

The Townsville duo prepare 14 meals a week for anywhere between 30 and 150 soldiers.

"Depending on who is here and the operational tempo, the most common number would be around 70," Lance Corporal Hodge said.

"It's our job to make sure there is a good spread on, so when they come in from a patrol the first thing they do is drop their kit, have a shower, have a nice feed and recover for the next mission."

Twenty-six-year-old Lance Corporal Hodge, originally from Ulverstone in Tasmania, has previously deployed to East Timor and Papua New Guinea, but says his current job is the most rewarding of his career.

"I really enjoy the experience of deploying overseas and doing my job in an operational role and meeting lots of people. Not many chefs get to cook out on the front line in Afghanistan, so that's pretty cool."

"The guys really appreciate fresh meals instead of ration packs. Their highlights of the day are going to the gym and eating. They hang out for meals, always line up 10 minutes early and chat with us."

"It's an awesome team and a privilege to be a part of," he said.



Ipswich-raised 23-year-old Private Newmann has been a cook for four-and-a-half years, and is currently on his second deployment to Afghanistan.

"I was over here last year for eight-and-a-half months so it's good to be back and see how it's all changed," Private Newmann said.

"I'm in a different battle area now, but previously I spent my time between three other patrol bases."

"It's good to see different sides of the country and interact with people of different backgrounds."

While the Afghan National Army partner force usually has their own cooks in patrol bases, the relationship between each culinary expert grows strong over time.

"Last year they'd come to me for their usual staples such as rice, yeast, bread, tinned tomatoes. If I could spare it I'd help them out and suggest different ideas and recipes," Private Newmann said.

"Through the use of an interpreter, they returned the favour and gave me tips on how I could make their local favourites."

"It was a good experience professionally and personally, and we will incorporate that again this time."

The two cooks work tirelessly to prepare food and keep their kitchen and messing areas clean throughout the day, but it's the gratitude shown by their customers that drives them to excel.

"We feel like we are doing a service for the boys."

"They go out and train the ANA and do the hard yards and when we make a good meal, we see the big smiles on their faces – plus they come up and tell you and pat you on the back, and that work appreciation means a lot," Private Newmann said.

Despite the strong camaraderie and tight relationships formed within Patrol Base Sorkh Bid, minds are always filled with thoughts of home.

Lance Corporal Hodge has two children, and a wife who used to serve in the Navy.

"With her experience in the Defence Force, she really understands what it's like for me. She really likes being in Townsville where there's a great support network."

"Our catering platoon has a really good social life outside so she's good friends with the wives and other cooks in our platoon, which makes it a bit easier for her while I'm away," he said.

Private Newmann is also married.

Both cooks will not only be welcomed home by their wives before Christmas, but also by a very proud city.

"Townsville, being a garrison city, I'd probably put money on there being a parade through town," Private Newmann said.

Life's no beach now

They didn't know each other growing up near Wollongong, but Private Ally James and Lance Corporal Kate Harvey spent many days together at Patrol Base Mirwais in war-ravaged Afghanistan earlier this year.

Private James, a cook, and Lance Corporal Harvey, a signaller, both served with Mentoring Task Force – Four, led by 8/9RAR from Brisbane.

Private James, 21, from Shellharbour, and Lance Corporal Harvey, 24, from Kanahooka – both just south of Wollongong



– worked on the doorstep of the populated Chora Valley, surrounded by rugged mountains, lush green paddocks – and the vast, open expanses of treeless desert.

Both agreed their deployment was the pinnacle of their careers so far.

"Everybody trains for Afghanistan. We're thrilled we got the chance too," Private James said.

From 7 Combat Support Battalion at Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera, Private James said she had some challenges during her deployment.

"When it was snowing, all the pipes froze and no one could shower for a couple of days."

"We had no running water, so we couldn't cook or clean, so we had to shovel snow into a big pot and wait for it to melt to be able to use that," she said.

"Then it was the heat. One day it was 58 degrees in the kitchen."

Lance Corporal Harvey, whose home unit is 7th Signals Regiment in Cabarlah, near Toowoomba, also experienced some challenges.

"Education and awareness of my capability to the Mentoring Team was sometimes challenging, but, when you've proven your skill and ability, the guys will go out of their way to support you," Lance Corporal Harvey said.

The two women first met at Forward Operating Base Mirwais and, a short time later, worked out that they were from the same town when the subject of the Dragons football team came up over a cup of coffee.

"It brings back old memories, something familiar, the beach and going to the leagues club," Private James said.

Lance Corporal Harvey agreed.

"The beach is a big part of your life in Wollongong, you spend so much time there," she said.

A 22nd birthday was on the calendar for Private James when she returned to Australia in July.

"I'm looking forward to having the weekend off with friends and family, not worrying about what's happening tomorrow – and playing my guitar," Private James said.

Lance Corporal Harvey had a few months longer to go before catching up with her loved ones. She said she was looking forward to being with her partner in their new home.

"I'm looking forward to moving in and enjoying the creature comforts," she said.

Keep the wheels rolling

A lone Army mechanic at Forward Operating Base Hadrian in Uruzgan province, Afghanistan, is keeping the outpost's vehicle fleet on the road.

Craftsman Tom Cotton, 22, from Wynnum near Brisbane, loves being his own boss and is proud of the fact that he is the sole mechanic maintaining the fleet of Bushmasters, ASLAVs, up-armoured Unimogs and up-armoured Mack trucks that service the base.

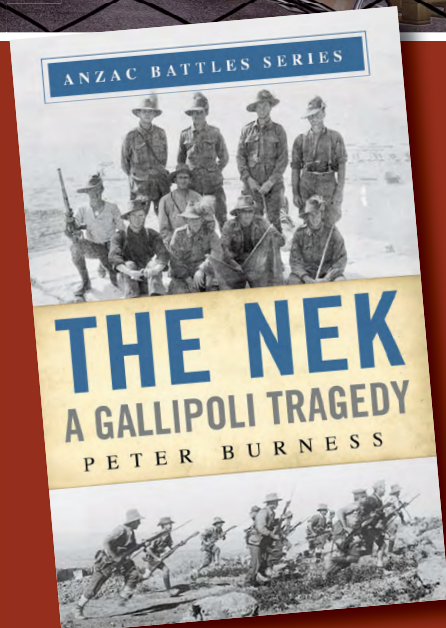
While this normally entails very long hours of skilled labour, he also finds time to indulge another passion – restoring worn-out motorcycles.

The bikes, a few of which were found around the base, present a challenge that sharpens his skills, but also gives the motorcycles a new lease of life in the hands of coalition and Afghan National Security Force soldiers.



Family shoutouts

During a recent visit to Afghanistan, CONTACT Managing Editor Brian Hartigan recorded a range of 'family shout-outs' and other videos, some of which are uploaded to www.youtube.com/CONTACTpublishing for all to see. Other videos will be uploaded when Mr Hartigan's skills at editing video rises slightly above its current 'shithouse' classification.



The Nek – A Gallipoli Tragedy

Peter Burness
www.exislepublishing.com.au
RRP \$34.99

One of the greatest tragedies in Australian military history occurred at Gallipoli on 7 August 1915, when hundreds of Australian light horsemen were repeatedly ordered to charge the massed rifles and machine-guns of the Turkish enemy.

It was a hopeless endeavour and the resulting bloodbath has horrified every generation since, and been the subject of considerable scrutiny by historians.

The charge at The Nek, so vividly realised in Peter Weir's famous film *Gallipoli*, came to epitomise both the futility and courage of the formation, training and character of the Light Horse regiments, and profiles the officers involved.

His vivid account of the battle itself includes careful consideration of how the suicidal charges were allowed to continue when all hope of success was lost.

For this new edition, the author has updated the text to include new information that has come to light since the book was first published in 1996, and provided new maps and photographs.

Peter Burness is a senior historian at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra and the memorial's longest-serving employee.

A specialist in the battles of WWI, he has written several books on the subject, as well as working on numerous permanent, temporary and travelling exhibitions.

Dogfight – The Battle of Britain

Adam Claassen
www.exislepublishing.com.au
RRP \$34.99

In the summer of 1940, the Luftwaffe locked horns with the RAF in a life-and-death struggle for mastery of the skies over southern England.

Success for Germany would knock Britain out of the war and give Adolf Hitler a free hand for his assault on the Soviet Union.

Success for the RAF would bring an end to the German advances to the west and ultimately facilitate the D-Day landings four years in the future.

Thus the fate of the Allied war effort lay in the hands of those whom Winston Churchill dubbed "the few".

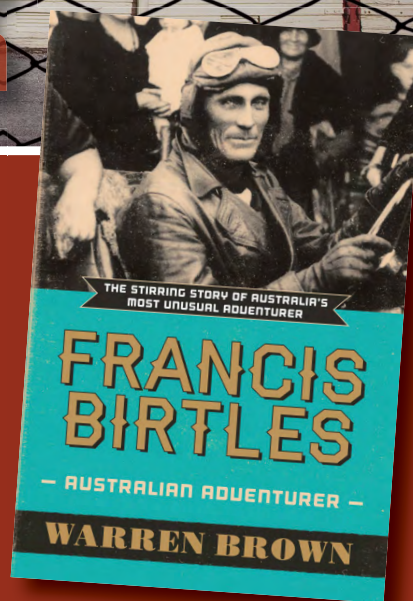
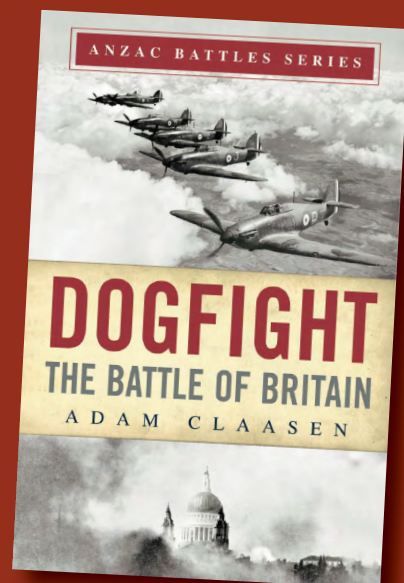
What is less well known is that the second-largest foreign contingent in Fighter Command was drawn from the British Commonwealth's southernmost dominions, New Zealand and Australia.

Thrust headlong into a ferocious air battle, 171 Anzac airmen would have their skill, resolve and character put to the ultimate test.

The tale of their place in the Battle of Britain, along with their personal stories, friendships, successes, losses and fears are told in detail for the first time in *Dogfight*.

Adam Claassen is a lecturer at the School of Social and Cultural Studies, Massey University, Auckland.

He teaches and researches primarily on WWII and the role of air power.



Francis Birtles

Warren Brown
www.hachette.com.au
RRP \$35

Francis Birtles was a man like no other. His motto in life was 'chance it'. And he did – many times, in many ways. As a bushman, cyclist, motorist, soldier, sailor, photographer, author and movie maker, he was one of Australia's greatest adventurers and one of our most daring rogues.

By the time he was 19, he'd sailed around the world – twice – fought in a war, been shot at and almost burned to death.

In the early 20th century, picking his way along non-existent tracks, he cycled around Australia, battling everything from dehydration and starvation to venomous snakes and climatic extremes. And then he did it again.

In the late 1920s, he became the first person to drive a motor car overland from London to Melbourne. On the way, he was strafed by an RAF plane in the Middle East and outwitted headhunters in Burma.

Forced to cut vehicle access through jungles and haul the car up mountain passes, the world said it was impossible, but he had a go anyway, arriving in Australia to a hero's welcome.

Francis Birtles' whole life was a remarkable Boy's Own Adventure and this inspiring biography captures his never-say-die spirit.

Warren Brown is a newspaper cartoonist, motoring columnist and former host on *Top Gear Australia*.

In 2005 he participated in a Peking to Paris reenactment race and presented a four-part TV doco on the event.

He is the proud owner of several vintage cars, including a Bean 14 – the same model used by Francis Birtles for his London to Melbourne epic.



BRING ON THE BANG

Chris Allen writes escapist action thrillers for realists, having seen and done it all: one of the paratrooping elite, serving in three Commonwealth armies across two decades and four continents.

His action/adventure hero, Alex Morgan, is Intrepid's star recruit in top-secret international crime-fighting agency Intrepid – the Intelligence,

Recovery, Protection and Infiltration Division of Interpol.

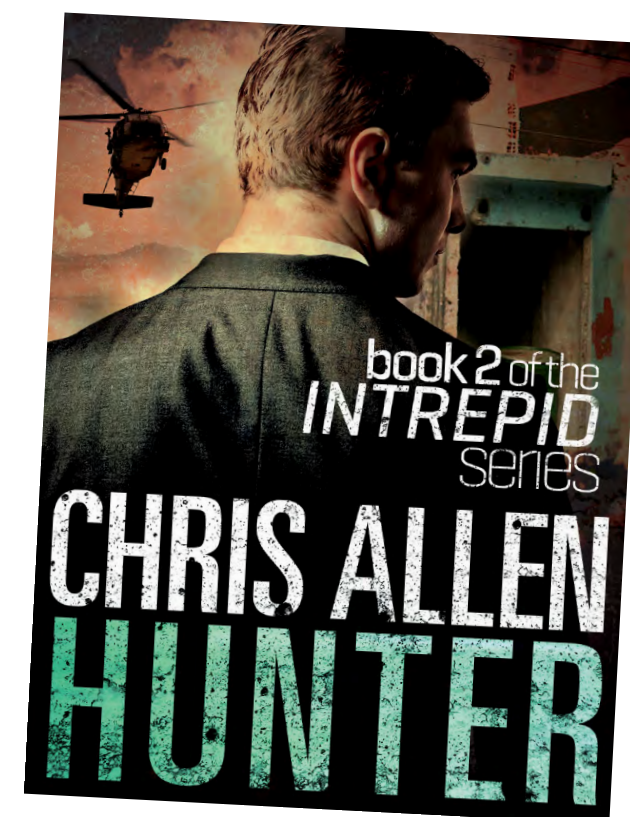
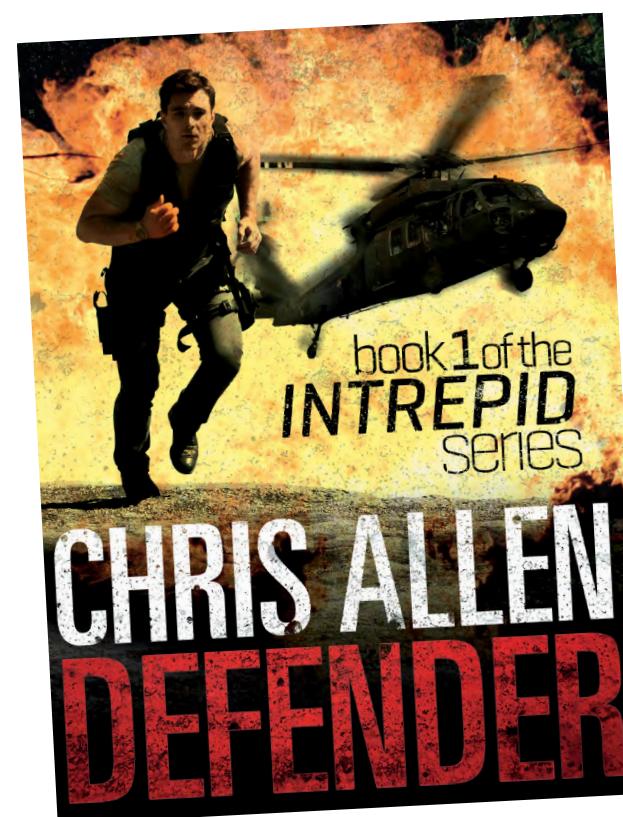
Led by a legendary SAS veteran, Morgan and the other hard-ass former paratroopers, Navy SEALs, GSG9 operatives and FBI hostage rescue specialists in Intrepid protect the innocent, regardless of borders, politics or race.

DEFENDER: INTREPID 1

A nation is on the brink of civil war, an SIS agent is brutally murdered and Intrepid agent Alex Morgan is sent in to take his place. Can he stop a rogue intelligence officer and uncover the dark conspiracy behind him?

HUNTER: INTREPID 2

Alex Morgan is on the hunt for Serbian war criminals, but they're not making it easy. When a flame-haired classical music star is abducted, Morgan has permission to make it personal.

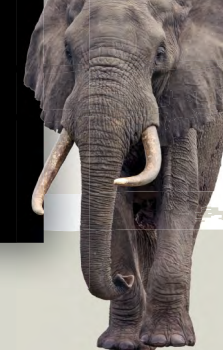


"THE AFTERTASTE OF BLOOD AND GUNMETAL MAKES IT CLEAR THESE BOOKS ARE WRITTEN BY A REAL SOLDIER"

- Bradley Trevor Greive, former paratrooper and New York Times Best-Selling Author

Want to read 20 chapters of DEFENDER free? Head to intrepidallen.com

Talk to the author on Twitter @intrepidallen – Latest Intrepid missions and black-ops updates at facebook.com/intrepidallen



Saigon and traditional Vietnamese Medicine

After arriving in Ho Chi Minh City, or Saigon as it is still affectionately known by the locals, I settle in and get ready for the trip ahead. After several trips already to Vietnam and some good local contacts, I understand the reclusive nature of the Vietnamese people and the potential for suspicion of westerners. If I don't sell my approach in the right way, I'll get no information at all in regards to traditional medicine and the use of rhino horn.

I begin my journey north. It takes me through Saigon, into the Mekong Delta jungles on the border of Cambodia and up through the country to the capital, Hanoi. I explore local perspectives of similar practices that occur across most of the Far East, Latin America, India, Africa and many other parts of the world – the use of animal parts in traditional medicine.

While it may seem right to certain cultures and wrong to others, what we can't hide is that it happens, and in the case of rhino horn, on an alarming and violent scale. It spans many levels of society, from crime bosses, law-enforcement officers, villagers, conservationists, veterinarians, diplomats and people dying of disease in Asian countries where rhino's are now extinct.

Although Vietnam is modernising quickly, traditional medicine has not disappeared and, if anything, is gaining something of a revitalisation. Traditional Vietnamese and Chinese medicine evolved together and arguably the development of the two are so interwoven that they are often difficult to separate.

At the Museum of Traditional Vietnamese Medicine (TVM) in Saigon I play the dumb tourist, not the CEO of an organisation trying to help save the rhino from extinction. I learn of a long and time-honored history here. As far back as the second century BC, hundreds of medicinal herbs were discovered; among them also were precious compounds such as pearl, tortoise-shell, aloe wood, cinnamon – and rhinoceros horn. Through trial and error, many kinds of food, vegetable, fruit, herbs and natural compounds were discovered



I explore local perspectives of similar practices that occur across most of the Far East, Latin America, India, Africa and many other parts of the world – the use of animal parts in traditional medicine.

to be drugs or medicines. Whereas this traditional medicine was once only used for the poor, it is now more likely to be used by the middle and upper classes that find their way to a traditional physician either because Western medicine is not working for them, or because they are sceptical about Western medicine in Vietnam. Today, one third of Vietnamese rely exclusively on traditional medicine and more than 90 per cent use it on a regular basis.

To properly understand TVM, we must first understand the philosophy of Eastern medicine or Dong Y, which dates back thousands of years. People belonging to Asian cultures are accustomed to relying on distinct health practices and beliefs that are significantly different from those of Western beliefs. These principles are so different that it is often hard for us to comprehend. We Westerners approach disease by assuming it is from an external force such as bacteria or virus

or a slow breakdown of a functional ability of the body.

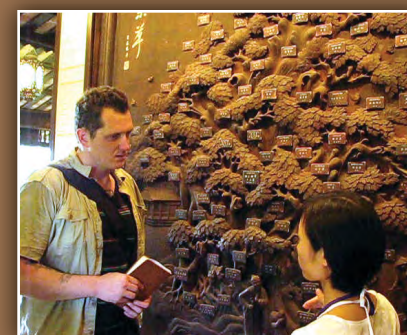
The cornerstone of Dong Y theory is based on the observed effects of Qi (energy) and the balance of Ying and Yang. Asian patients have a mindset where healthiness is a state of balance of Qi, or life force, between physical, social and the supernatural. They perceive the body to be whole and each part intimately connected.

The system of TVM across most of Vietnam is built on the foundation that all living organisms are made up of the five main elements – wood, metal, fire, earth and water. These have the characteristics of hot, cold, wet and dry. An imbalance in Qi can lead to an illness as it fails to travel through the complex channels of the body.

Qi encompasses more than just energy. It is also blood and fuel gathered and stored by the body. The concept of Qi is universal – our energy and that of the universe is transferable. Poor diet, hard work or a bad lifestyle can deplete Qi, just as maintaining a healthy lifestyle and practicing breathing can restore or harvest energy from the universe.

The task of a traditional medicine practitioner is to identify and correct disharmonies based on the three divisions of Ying and Yang – cold versus hot, interior versus exterior and deficiency versus excess. Prescriptions of plant extracts and other elements can then be prescribed to correct an imbalance.

As I walk through the streets of Saigon, where traditional treatments are sold, I converse through my translator to the traders and customers. The treatments are nonthreatening, and seem to have therapeutic benefits in calming patients and restoring their confidence. This is because the methods and medicines are so deeply rooted in the Vietnamese culture. There is now also an increasing interest in using traditional medicine to supplement



treatment of chronic illnesses, such as AIDS and cancer.

I also frequently witness a combination of practices between Western medicine and traditional medicine. It is not uncommon for a patient to be admitted to hospital and treated by a doctor trained extensively in both disciplines.

In Saigon, I met with Stan Gunn, CEO of Vietnam's largest media company. We spoke at length about the use of traditional medicine and the millennia-long culture, which is almost set in concrete.

He said a well-structured country-wide campaign against the use of rhino horn would cost in the vicinity of US\$40-50 million annually.

He then asked me, "Do you think spending the same amount in the UK could convince Manchester United supporters to become Manchester City supporters." The answer was obvious.

He went on to highlight, "This is not just thousands of years of culture – this is thousands of years of ingrained DNA we are talking about, and no amount of Western-based media campaigns would alter this. Asians just have different cultures and norms to Westerners and find Western concerns about the preservation of wild animals curious and funny. To most Asians, wild animals simply represent food, medicine or money. A media campaign may have short-term impacts such as previous campaigns they ran, but follow-up surveys revealed very limited results, and not where it counted."

These comments were the honest response from a company that stood to make significant financial gains from any future media campaign. He said that we were wasting our money with media campaigns in Asia, and that money would be better spent protecting the animals directly.

**NEXT ISSUE:
THE MEKONG DELTA**



THE POCKET DYNAMO

It was the eve of ANZAC Day, 2000. As the young gunner from Australia's Federation Guard strolled along the beach at Gallipoli, his mates noticed that he was particularly solemn and uncharacteristically reserved. He stood silently surveying the surrounding landscape as his thoughts wandered to that historic day 85 years before. His gaze was drawn to the steep cliffs rising from the narrow beach and he thought to himself, 'How did the old boy get up there?'¹

Stan Treloar, a nuggetty little fellow from Creswick, Victoria, was the son of a minister, but he possessed a larrikin streak that did not conform with one raised in such a religious family.¹

When his parents set off for church each Sunday, young Stan would hide in the nearby bush to avoid having to accompany them – he felt there were far more enjoyable pursuits than religious studies.

With his parents safely out of the way, the boy made the most of his time alone and the opportunity it gave him to get up to all sorts of mischief. His family berated and cajoled the errant young man to change his ways and settle down, but their chiding fell on deaf ears.

At their wits' end, they resorted to chaining the boy to the verandah post when they went to church – the only way they knew that would keep him out of trouble.²

He wasn't a bad lad, just full of life, a little bit wild and forever on the lookout for excitement and adventure.

As the unruly young boy developed into a man, he did not lose his lust for life, but with maturity came responsibilities he could not shirk. It was time to knuckle down and do his share to support his family and help make ends meet – and help he did.

He stood a mere 163cm (5'5") tall, but what he lacked in height he more than made up for in fortitude and determination. He was never one to be afraid of an honest day's work.

On 16 November 1914, within weeks of Australia being drawn into the war against Germany, Stan applied to enlist in the AIF.³ As the medical officer checked his height, a look of concern caused Stan to slowly raise himself onto his tiptoes, changing the officer's frown to a smile as he said, 'Aah! That's better.'²

Stan was allocated to the Light Horse and was sent off to Broadmeadows Training Camp on Melbourne's outskirts.³

As he lined up for his issue of clothing and equipment, the sergeant surveyed the would-be troopers and, looking directly at the diminutive new recruit, said with a wry smile, 'Looks like we'll have to get a rocking horse for you, little fella'. The comment brought much laughter from the other Diggers.

Stan did not appreciate being the butt of the sergeant's humour. He was heard to mumble a rather uncomplimentary retort that included the mention of a horse's rear end.

Stan's lack of stature continued to create problems. Finally, he was summoned to the squadron commander's tent and advised that a decision had been made to discharge him on medical grounds – basically because of his height.²

Treloar was devastated. 'What's a few inches got to do with it? It's what's inside that counts,' he thought to himself.

He remained at the camp for the next two weeks and, as the hierarchy was pondering his fate, Stan campaigned to stay in uniform. He sought and was granted a transfer to the infantry.

The 5th Battalion was already hard at work training in Egypt and Stan was allocated as a reinforcement in the battalion's second draft.³ He sailed on the transport ship Clan McGillivray on 2 February 1915, bound for Egypt.⁴

His mates and superiors alike soon developed a healthy respect for the gutsy soldier. He asked for and received no favours. He was strong and dependable and always quick off the mark to get a job done. He also showed his worth on the rifle range – his years on the land had made him an excellent shot.²

It was a cool, calm night as the soldiers lined the railing of the troopship. The enemy shoreline was barely distinguishable against the darkened skyline. Each soldier stood silently in his full marching order. Packs were filled with overcoat, spare clothing, 48 hours' rations, 250 rounds of ammunition, two blankets, a groundsheet, rifle, bayonet, pick and shovel.⁵ The weight of the pack caused the straps to cut into their shoulders as they waited for the order to go over the side.

It was soon time to transfer from the troopship to the smaller landing craft. The little steam pinnace chugged towards the shore, towing several small boats filled with khaki-clad ANZACs. The signal was given for the towing lines to be cast off.

The only sound that the soldiers could hear above the splashing of the oars, were their own heartbeats.

As the boats nudged the shoreline, the Diggers came under fire from the waiting Turkish troops entrenched in the hillside above the cove. The men tumbled over the side and headed to the beach, weighed down by clothing and packs that had soaked up the seawater as the men waded to the shore.

Some made it, but others were cut down while still in the water. Sadly, some drowned as they tried to negotiate deeper water carrying such heavy packs.

Stan made it to the beach and scurried across the sand to the relative safety of the cliffs.

The order was given to move and the 5th made its way up the steep cliffs where the men would be in a better position to attack the enemy positions that were bombarding the ANZACs as they landed.

For Stan, the next couple of days were a blur. He mingled with men from several battalions, all with the same objective, to overrun the Turks. He had never felt such excitement and elation. With the naivety of his country upbringing, this was a grand adventure – days filled with hair-raising action and narrow escapes.

On 26 April, the battalion paused to take stock of the situation. As the roll was called, Treloar did not answer when the sergeant called his name. 'Anyone seen him?' the sergeant asked. The Diggers all shook their heads. Hence, Stan was marked as missing in the company roll-book.³

Meanwhile, Treloar was still soldiering on at the battlefield. He seemed to be everywhere – lugging ammunition, digging in, helping with the wounded and taking his turn in the forward trenches.

On 30 April, Stan sustained his first battle wound when a round struck him in the face. The injury wasn't particularly serious but it was enough to warrant his evacuation to Egypt.³

After a brief stay in the hospital at Heliopolis, Stan was sent to the base camp at Zeitoun where he continually pestered the medics to send him back to Gallipoli. His persistence paid off and he returned to the peninsula on 22 May.¹

In the ensuing months, Stan proved his worth a hundred times over, but on 14 August his luck ran out. As he manned his position, a Turkish 'cricket ball' bomb landed in the trench alongside him. When it exploded, some red-hot shrapnel speared into his right knee and left wrist, fracturing the bone.³

This time the wounds required specialist treatment in England where the doctor operated and was able to remove the metal fragments.³ Treloar made a speedy recovery, but he never stopped hankering to get back to his mates at the front.

Unbeknown to Stan, his mother had written to her local Member of Parliament requesting that he be sent home.

As he was the only son, there would be no-one left to run the farm if he were to be killed.³

His commanding officer summoned him to his tent. 'Private Treloar, your mother has requested that you be sent home on compassionate grounds. We're not going to force the issue. It's up to you. Do you want to be sent back to Australia?'

Stan's answer was straight to the point. There was no way he would agree to leave his mates.²

In October of that year, he'd had enough of the mundane hospital routine, so he decided to give himself a spell of local leave in London. For his efforts, he was given seven days confined to barracks.³ On another occasion, he turned up drunk for guard duty, which earned him 48 hours in the cells.³ Finally, the doctors thought it best to get rid of him, so they marked him fit for duty and shipped him back to Gallipoli.

He rejoined the battalion on 6 December, just in time to be evacuated a few days later.

Back in Egypt, the expansion of the AIF was taking place and, as a result, the battalions of the division were being split to form the nuclei of the new battalions of the 5th Division. Consequently, elements of the 5th Battalion went on to form the 57th Battalion.⁶

Stan marched into his new battalion on 19 February.³ He was there for less than a month when the call went out for volunteers to bolster the ranks of the stretcher-bearers in the 58th Battalion. Stan, always on the lookout for a new challenge, was quick to respond.

The 57th, 58th, 59th and 60th Battalions were moulded into the 15th Brigade, under command of the legendary Boer War veteran, Brigadier 'Pompey' Elliot.

Stan landed in France on 23 June 1916 and immediately headed north by train.³

STAN GOT UP, SHOOK OFF THE DIRT AND TURNED TOWARDS WHERE HE'D LAST SEEN HIS MATE. "C'MON COBBER, LET'S KEEP GOING." BUT HIS FRIEND COULD NOT ANSWER – HE'D BEEN BLOWN TO BITS.



The battalion's first major action took place in mid July at a place called Fromelles. The 5th Division suffered grievous losses in its first major battle against the Germans on the Western Front. The brigade lost 1735 men in the two-day battle. The 58th was almost annihilated by machine-gun fire and lost 248 men, almost a third of its strength.⁶

Stan performed his duty expeditiously and effectively. He continued to risk his life, crawling across open ground to retrieve the wounded and bodily move them to the safety of a shell hole. Many times his efforts were in vain, as he found the men he sought to recover had been killed instantly or had died of their wounds before he could reach them.

After Fromelles, the 58th was withdrawn from the line to lick its wounds and await reinforcement.

The Diggers fought through 1916 at the Somme, then faced their first European winter. The Australians were unaccustomed to the length and severity of the Continental winters and they suffered terribly. In the winter of 1916-17, some 20,000 Australians were evacuated from the lines with exhaustion, frostbite or trench foot.

In the early months of 1917, the battalion pushed towards the next site of bitter trench fighting and consequent heavy Australian casualties – Bullecourt.

Every day the battalion saw action, Stan faced situations that would have overwhelmed lesser men, yet he never faltered. If there was a particularly nasty job that needed to be done, Stan Treloar was always ready and willing. Such was his dedication to his duty that he caught the attention of the Commander of the Fourth Army, from whom he received a card congratulating him on the outstanding manner in which he conducted himself in the field.³

On 29 September, Stan was wounded in the leg by a bullet from a German sniper's gun. He was evacuated to England for treatment that would last for two months.³

By mid-March 1918, the battalion was holding the line just east of Messines. One dark, starless night, Stan and a mate were enjoying a quiet break outside the command post when a huge explosion rocked the battalion front, followed by a barrage of shells. An officer ran to assess the situation and reported that one of the platoons has been hit by a minenwerfer – a heavy trench mortar bomb – and had taken casualties. Stan and his mate instinctively rushed to the scene where they found one dead and six wounded.⁷

They immediately placed one of the wounded on a stretcher and headed back to the aid station. They wasted no time transferring the patient to the care of the medical staff before grabbing another stretcher and returning to the front. On the way back with the second casualty, they heard the warning scream of an incoming shell. Throwing themselves face first into the dirt, they sought shelter in the depressions of the battle-scarred ground. When the danger had passed, Stan got up, shook off the dirt and turned towards where he'd last seen his mate.

'C'mon cobber, let's keep going.'

But his friend could not answer – he'd been blown to bits.

Stan made four more trips to the front to single-handedly retrieve the remaining casualties. As he prepared to go back yet again, an officer caught him by the shoulder and demanded to know where he was going.

'To get what's left of my mate, Sir! To get what's left of my bloody mate.'⁷

For his actions, Treloar was awarded the Military Medal.⁷

Stan was afforded a short break from life in the trenches when he was chosen to be a member of the guard of honour for the Corps Commander, General Monash as he was knighted in the field.²

By October 1918, the Allies had the Germans on the run. The 58th was now just north-east of Bellicourt and locked in a night battle with the enemy infantry. Stan was being kept busy shuttling the wounded from the battlefield to the aid post.

Another group arrived at the post and told Stan of a couple of wounded soldiers who were pinned down in front of their position, the accuracy of the German machine-gunners having thwarted all attempts to retrieve them.

Without hesitating, Stan grabbed his medical satchel and made his way to the forward trenches. On arrival, he sought directions to the stranded men. He was told one was some 60 yards away, the other 10 yards further on.

The platoon commander questioned Stan on the sanity of venturing towards the men in view of the bombardment they were taking, but the caution was wasted on Stan. He judged his time and climbed over the parapet.

Keeping as low as he could, he crawled on his hands and knees to the position of the first wounded Digger. Rolling into the shell hole, he found the soldier in a bad way. He tended the man's wounds as best he could, then, again waiting for the right moment, Stan crawled back to the post with the patient clinging to his back.

He took time to catch his breath before making the second trip. Once more, Treloar ran the gauntlet of the relentless German attack. He crawled, dragged and pushed the wounded Australian safely back to the battalion's lines.

As he dropped exhausted into the trench, the men sent up an almighty cheer. They wouldn't have believed it if they hadn't seen it with their own eyes.

Old Pompey himself signed the recommendation for the bar to the Military Medal. Stan Treloar's actions are epitomised in the last sentence, which reads: 'His courage, self-sacrifice and devotion to duty have been on all occasions beyond praise and he continually sets the highest example to all round him.'⁷

Treloar was sent to London to be invested with the award. At Buckingham Palace, Stan felt uncomfortable as he waited in the line with the other Diggers. As his name was called, he moved forward and took his place in front of the bearded monarch. The citations were read out and the King made idle chit-chat. He asked Stan, 'What was it like at the front, Private?'

Stan blurted out his honest but colourful reply. 'Bloody awful!'

The aide to the king blushed and clicked his heels in a vain attempt to cover any further outburst. Unperturbed, the King smiled as he pinned the medal on the proud Digger's tunic.²

Like many of the soldiers returning home after the war, Stan had trouble finding inner peace after the horrors he had seen – the slaughter, the carnage, the misery and the wanton disregard for human life. He enjoyed a drink – sometimes two and sometimes too many – anything to banish the nightmares brought on by memories of the past four years.²

He worked at a variety of jobs, labouring, driving and delivering wood. In civilian life, as in uniform, he was just as determined to overcome adversity and make the best of any situation. He continued to drink and his conversation was still liberally sprinkled with colourful adjectives.²

Eventually he met a young lady, Frances, who gave his life new meaning. They married and Stan vowed never to drink or swear in front of her or their children. The couple produced four girls and a boy.

Stan became a devoted family man and catering for their needs became his sole objective. He continued to be



tormented by the nightmares, but now he had someone with whom he could share the pain and anguish.

His kids often asked him about his medals. He would jokingly tell them, 'This one's for drinking the most rum. This one's for drinking the most beer and this one...'²

He idolised his children and the children adored their father.

As the years passed, Stan's health began to suffer. Of most concern were the pieces of shrapnel in his body that had begun to move and cause him severe pain. Stan, now an old man of 70, developed pulmonary pneumonia, which took its toll.² He had fought his last battle, but he was valiant to the end.

Author's note: Stan Treloar's bond with the Australian Army continues today, with two grandsons in uniform – Warrant Officer Class Two Graham Roberts and Sergeant Stephen Roberts – and one great-grandson, a good mate of mine, Sergeant Shannon 'Feathers' Peacock, who provided me with the information for this story.

1 Author, interview with Corporal S Peacock, 2000

2 Author, interview with family, 2000

3 National Archives of Australia: B2455, WWI Service Records, 1290 Private Stanley Treloar MM

4 AWM 8, Unit Embarkation Nominal Rolls, 5th Battalion AIF, 1914-1918 War

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

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

7 AWM 28, Recommendation Files for Honours and Awards, AIF, 1914-1918 War

National Bravery Award

Sydney schoolgirl and RAAF cadet Ashleigh Flanagan has been awarded a Commendation for Brave Conduct after helping rescue a family of three in dangerous surf in November 2010.

Ashleigh was awarded the Commendation by Governor-General Quentin Bryce at a ceremony in Government House in September.

In 2010, while on a break from a school camp sports and science class activity, Ashleigh and a school friend were alerted to a family of three in distress in a strong current 100m off Wairo Beach, southern NSW.

The two friends swam immediately to the family, kept them calm and began guiding them out of danger until help arrived.

"Once I realised exactly what the situation was, I just acted immediately and entered the water out of instinct," Ashleigh said.

"They had been in the water for around 40 minutes and were weak, tired and distraught."

Ashleigh has been an Australian Air Force cadet attached to the Rockdale Squadron in southern Sydney since 2009.

AAFC believes that Ashleigh is the only current-serving Air Force cadet in receipt of a Commendation for Brave Conduct – the fourth highest Australian Bravery Decoration.

CONTACT extends our congratulations to Ashleigh on a job well done.



Air Force Cadet Warrant Officer Ashleigh Flanagan proudly sporting her Commendation for Brave Conduct.

Kapooka Open Day



Leeton 223 ACU before setting out for the Kapooka Open Day.

By Cadet Hamish Barnard and Recruit Cadet Heather Barnard

On Saturday 13 September, Leeton 223 ACU (Army Cadet Unit) in conjunction with Cootamundra 256 ACU attended the open day at Kapooka near Wagga Wagga.

The day featured a double march-out parade, precision drill displays by the Australian Federation Guard, a day-in-the-life-of-a-recruit bus tour that included a demonstration of a section attack on an 'enemy' position and a demonstration of the obstacle course, which relies heavily on teamwork.

After the bus tour the two ACUs watched Australia's Federation Guard Precision Drill Team, which travels all over Australia to perform at charity events, sporting grand finals and careers expos, but in this case – lucky for us – at Kapooka.

The soldiers, sailors and airmen who make up the PDT require a lot of concentration, skill and teamwork, which is perfected over many hours of practice.

Their demo was spectacular to watch.

Other demos and activities on the day included a flag-lowering ceremony, a massed pipes-and-drums band from the Riverina area, and military working dogs in action.

The evening finished with a concert by the Australian Army Band and a performance of the 1812 Overture accompanied by canon fire and fireworks.

Our personal favourite was the day-in-the-life-of-a-recruit bus tour, especially the section attack, which showed us how the Australian Army moved toward the enemy position 'keeping one foot on the ground'. To achieve this manoeuvre you must have three teams, two teams to provide covering fire while the third team advances and moves forward a few paces. The third team that advances then provides covering fire to enable one of the two remaining teams that provided the initial covering fire, to then move forward.

We found this to be an effective demonstration, highly informative and enjoyable. In fact, the whole day was very enjoyable – an excellent unit outing.

Sharpshooters

Twenty-eight Australian Air Force cadets attended the Jim Smith Range, Belmont, just south of Brisbane over the weekend 5-7 October to test their marksmanship over 25m at the AAFC National Rifle Competition for 2012.

Seven of the AAFC's eight wings sent their best four shooters to compete in the annual event to take out the Olin Winchester Prize for Best Team, and the Commander's Prize for the Best Shot in the AAFC.

Senior firearms officer (.22) Flight Lieutenant (AAFC) Colin Palmer said many cadets competed at their home squadrons over the preceding 12 months, and then at their Wing-level competitions for a place in their Wing's national team.

"It normally takes at least two years of consistent work, practicing their marksmanship skills, to reach this national level," he said.

"The AAFC's firearms training program is extremely popular among cadets. It instils firearms safety, competence and confidence as a principal aim, and marksmanship as the secondary aim."

The Olin Winchester Prize was retained by 3WGAAFC with 2191 points scored out of a possible 2400, with 7WGAAFC (WA) in second, on 2156 points, and 4WG (Victoria) piling up 2146 points to secure third.

The Best Shot in the AAFC was won by CWOFF George Wallace of 323 SQNA AFC, Glenbrook, NSW, with a remarkable 573 points out of a maximum 600.



Left: Winning 3WG Team, left to right, CWOFF George Wallace (Best Shot), CCPL Stephen Mercer, team coach FSGT (AAFC) Rodney Manton, CFSGT Samuel Davidson and CWOFF Ashleigh Flanagan.



Below: CWOFF Ashleigh Flanagan, 302 SQNA AFC Rockdale, NSW, takes aim.

Air Commodore Stuart Cameron, together with Group Captain (AAFC) Ken Given, Commander AAFC, presented the awards at RAAF Base Amberley, which included 20 AAFC 'Crossed Rifles' badges.

Gaining Crossed Rifles requires an overall score of 85% (510 points) or higher using open u-sights with the rifle unsupported apart from the cadet's natural strength. Optical sights are not permitted.

Navy got the blues

By Sub Lieutenant Jared O'Connor

Cadets and staff from Australian Navy Cadet Training Ship Kanimbla paid a visit to the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command on 18 August.

Leading Senior Constable Michael Hogan arranged the visit and provided a guided tour of the command, including the 32m patrol vessel, Nemesis.

Cadets then helped to cook a BBQ as a thank you to the boys in blue for their time.



Cadets with Leading Senior Constable Michael Hogan onboard Nemesis.

CADET CORNER

Sailing ship Duyfken visit

By Sub Lieutenant (ANC) Ilse Gosper

Cadets at Training Ship Pilbara (WA) made the most of an opportunity in August when the tall ship Duyfken sailed into Port Hedland for a few days to transfer crew and take on stores.

Arrangements were quickly made with the captain who warmly welcomed the CO and 15 cadets from TS Pilbara.

There was a general tour in two groups with the cadets scrambling around in cramped quarters above and below decks.

The crew really enjoyed freshly made butterfly cupcakes kindly made by Recruit Caitie Walker.

Duyfken and her crew's hospitality and the opportunity for the tour in an isolated place like Port Hedland were greatly appreciated by the cadets and their families.



US visitor

By Cadet Petty Officer Jordan Turner

Seventeen cadets from Training Ship Southport (Qld) visited USS Halsey during her visit to Brisbane in May.

We viewed the latest technology in marine warfare, AEGIS, where the crew can control all of the weapons on the ship and can coordinate between ships, planes and ground troops while deployed.

This was a really interesting part of the ship, not only because of the technology behind such an incredible machine, but because this is where I could be spending a lot of my time when I hopefully join the Navy as a maritime warfare officer.

We also saw the helicopters and talked to one of the pilots. We also saw the bridge where the ship's CO and XO control the ship; the engineers' room; and, probably my favourite part of the tour, we walked around the deck.

We saw some 100 Tomahawks, a 127/62mm gun, four .50cal machine guns, three Phalanx and six torpedo tubes, right next to where we were standing.

The crew were great and taught us a lot about the US Navy.

For some of us it was more than a trip to a US destroyer, it was an insight into what our careers are going to be like and what we should expect when we are deployed.

AAFC visit Amberley

Left: Australian Air Force Cadets' Flight Sergeant Alaina Marsters and Flying Officer David Nancedo do their best 'Top Gun' pose with a No.1 Squadron F/A-18F Super Hornet during a visit to RAAF Base Amberley.

Below: Australian Air Force cadets cap off a tour of RAAF Base Amberley with a group photo beside a No.1 Squadron F/A-18F Super Hornet.



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DVA ADDS MORE ONLINE SERVICES

Thousands of Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) clients throughout Australia have registered to use DVA's new online service, MyAccount, since it was introduced in May 2012, and new services are being regularly added.

From December 2012 clients can download income and asset statements and concession letters through MyAccount, which means clients can quickly access the documents they need for proof of income and concession eligibility, making it easier to manage their affairs.

Ex-service organisations and ADF members have responded enthusiastically to the choice and convenience of online services. In particular, the new Entitlements Self Assessment (ESA) wizard has been popular.

The ESA has questions to help existing and prospective DVA clients assess their potential eligibility for DVA entitlements online. Information about this service is now included in RSL 'Support Packs' sent to ADF members on deployment.

By introducing MyAccount, DVA has responded to the changing needs of the veteran and Defence communities, but it has not replaced traditional means of communicating with DVA. You can still contact DVA by phone, fax, email, mail and face-to-face.

Visit myaccount.dva.gov.au for more information. Phone 133 254 for local or 1800 555 254 for regional callers during business hours Monday to Friday to register.

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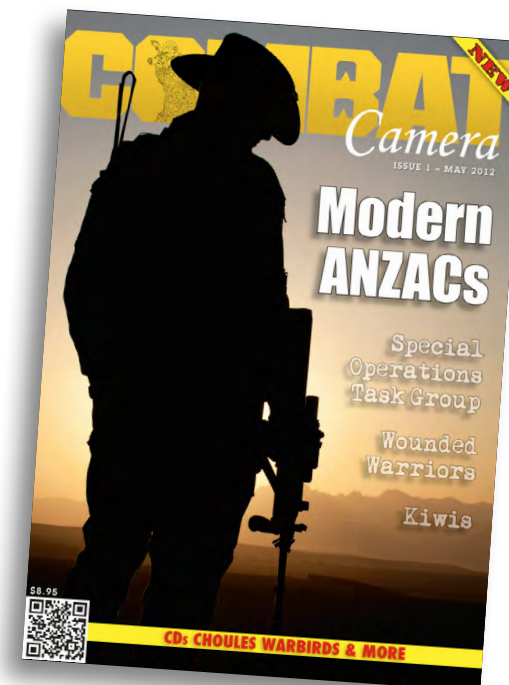
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NUTRITION for Serious Training



Recently I reviewed all the previous articles that I have written for CONTACT since mid 2005 and I realised two important things.

#1. Seven years is a long time to be doing this and I am very grateful that these articles have been so well received and I thank everyone who has contacted me to ask questions and provide feedback, and; # 2. That, apart from a few throw-away lines in an article on supplements back in CONTACT #28, I have never written anything about basic nutrition for military personnel.

This is a major oversight for which I apologise and which I want to fix now, with the disclaimer that while I think the fitness industry overcomplicates diet, there is no hope of covering everything that needs to be covered in a single page.

Let's look at some basics.

Everyone knows that the food we eat fuels our body at work and at rest. Most people also understand that the proportions of fat, carbohydrate and protein we eat can have a profound affect on the amount of stored muscle and fat we carry.

What is less well known is the role that manipulation of macronutrient ratios and timing can have on your training performance, lean mass gain, fat loss and recovery from training. The correct ratio and timing of carbs, protein and fat for a person trying to lose fat may be totally inappropriate for someone trying to optimise training performance to attempt SF selection.

Here are a few very basic starting points for diet and then we will move on to a couple of examples of different scenarios.

My most important piece of advice – aim to eat the least processed foods you can find. Humans evolved eating fruits, nuts, vegetables, meat and fats, so try to avoid lots of processed foods, in particular highly refined carbs such as sugar.

Having said that, there is no need to go crazy and there is a valid place for things such as pasta, bread and so on in the diet of high-performance athletes and military personnel.

Eat a balance of protein, carbs and fat at each meal. Protein and fat should feature in all meals and you can vary your carbohydrate intake to either fuel activity in the near future or create an energy deficit that burns fat.

Hormonal control is critical. Most people don't realise it but controlling your levels of hormones such as insulin and glucagon has a massive impact on recovery and performance. These hormones are controlled by what you eat.

Unless the basics are squared away, no manner of expensive pills and powders will make any difference to your performance.

For best athletic performance you need to eat the correct things before, during and after exercise.

Now, let's examine three common nutrition scenarios and consider the correct timing and ratios of macronutrients.

Fat loss

Any time you want to lose fat you need to eat a bit less than you burn and increase the amount of aerobic/anaerobic exercise you perform. The trick to this is that even if you plan a hard training session you need to eat very little beforehand and accept that your athletic performance is not going to be optimal.

Another vital aspect of diet for fat loss is minimising insulin (a storage hormone that prevents effective fat burning) levels in the blood stream. This can be achieved by eating protein in each meal and minimising the amount of refined carbs you eat, particularly in the morning.

Muscle Gain

If you want to gain muscle, then everyone knows that you need to eat more protein. What most people fail to realise is that increasing overall energy intake is just as important. Under normal circumstances the body switches between all three macronutrients for energy, but when you are building muscle you want to provide as much energy as you can from fats and carbs and leave the protein for building structural muscle tissue.

Inevitably, if you are doing this correctly, you will put on a little fat, but it is far easier to gain muscle with a little fat and then strip the fat back than it is to stay lean and add muscle.

Most important for muscle gain is to eat protein after hard workouts and before bed.

Military fitness performance

In order to get the best strength and endurance results from your training you need to fuel your body with a relatively high-carb, moderate-protein meal before training, fuel your body during long (one-hour +) workouts with sports drinks, and recover with a balance of protein and carbs immediately after training.

In particular the post-workout recovery meal is perhaps the most important as there is an uptake window that exists for up to 90 minutes after a training session and eating optimally in this time allows much faster recovery so that you can train again later that day or the next.

As promised, that barely scratches the surface of nutrition. If you want to know more please send me an email and I will send you a series of much more detailed articles I wrote for my online newsletter. Contact me at fitness@octogen.com.au



US ARMY COMBATIVES

While deployed to Afghanistan as an embedded officer with the US Army this year, I was fortunate enough to meet a number of US military members who were instructors in their respective military unarmed combat systems. The following article is a summary of a discussion with Staff Sergeant Matt Cornforth, 82nd Airborne Division, on the US Army Combatives Program.

The US Army Combatives Program is broken into four levels:

Basic Combatives Course (Level I)

This is a one-week introductory course, essentially the same in methodology as the Australian Defence Force Military Self Defence (MSD) Exponent Course.

By way of background, in the late 1990s, a US Army sergeant first class developed a course for the Ranger Regiment and selected techniques from various martial arts. The Gracie family were also invited to assist and, together with the US Army, developed a basic program. This module is designed to teach basic combatives techniques to soldiers with no experience in unarmed combat. The optimum size for this (and subsequent) course is 36 students.

Lessons covered in this course are as follows – basic combatives positional techniques; finishing techniques; stand-up fighting techniques; fight strategy; drills; warm-up and review with basic combatives drills; review of drills previously taught; and, advanced ground fighting.

Because of space restrictions, it is impossible to detail every technique taught on the basic course, but the following are a few of the techniques required for testing at Level 1 – escape the mount, trap and roll; pass the guard; achieve the mount from side control; escape the mount, shrimp (hip escape) to the guard; arm push and roll to the rear mount; escape the rear mount; rear naked choke; and, front guillotine choke.

Tactical Combatives Course (Level II)

Building on the basic course, this is designed to teach advanced techniques, teaching methodologies and philosophies. It is two weeks duration, with students learning more submissions, plus there is a greater focus on takedowns and groundwork. The students also learn how to fall safely. This course can be likened to an instructors course for the Basic Combatives Course, and is similar to how the ADF trains MSD exponents to become MSD instructors, albeit over a longer period.

In addition to the fundamental techniques taught on the Basic

Combatives Course, there are a number of more technically advanced techniques that need to be mastered.

There are a large number of techniques required to pass this course, some of which are as follows – opponent mounts, post both arms, arm around neck, and larger enemy pins wrist; defend against attempts to mount, arch and back door; escape the half guard; escape the head lock, form the frame; five different chokes; reverse bent-arm bar from side control; reverse bent-arm bar from the guard; elevator sweeps; and, timing sweep.

Basic Combatives Instructors Course (Level III)

The aim of this course is to provide unit commanders with combatives trainers who are technical experts in Basic Army Instructor Course (Level III) combatives techniques and training.

This is an in-depth four-week course and produces soldiers who can plan and conduct Basic Army Combatives (Level III) training, provide technical advice to commanders and supervise the execution of Tactical Army Combatives (Level II) training and certify Basic Army Combatives (Level I) combative trainers.

Basic Army Combatives Instructor Course (Level III) qualified instructors therefore have the authority to instruct the Basic Army Combatives (Level I) course, referee post events standard and intermediate rules competitions, and serve as a Battalion Master Trainer for scenario-based training.

Students revise the techniques taught on previous courses and must pass a written exam. The pass mark for all tests is 70 per cent. In addition to revising previously taught techniques, weapons retention, ground fighting and detainee movement are included. Scenario training is also covered on this course and includes – multiple teams, multiple rooms; market place; traffic control point; and, detainee operations. Each scenario has different factors the student(s) must deal with, such as individual and multiple opponents, compliant and/or non-compliant, and with and without weapons. At the end of each scenario, the students are debriefed on their performance. The conduct of these scenarios is very similar to the scenarios students encounter on the ADF MSD exponent course.

Tactical Combatives Instructors Course (Level IV)

This final course produces instructors capable of planning and conducting Tactical Army Combatives Instructor Course (Level IV) combatives training.

Also four weeks long, instructors learn to provide technical expertise in planning and conducting advanced scenario-driven combatives training, and combining all aspects of close combat for individuals and teams.

A range of subjects are comprehensively taught on this course. Management skills are stressed, together with a focus on how to design, manage, execute, and promote a safe combatives program. Special emphasis is placed on teaching methodologies and safety. There is a significant amount of practical assessment, for example the student will instruct a pair of combatants on two Basic Army Combatives (Level I) techniques in accordance with the Basic Army Combatives checklist and be assessed on their lesson delivery.

Other subjects include hand-wrapping, first aid for head trauma, delivering a lecture on the evolution of Judo, BJJ and MMA, applying combatives-tournament rules and performing duties during a combatives tournament.

Student instructors must also complete a range of written examinations on subjects previously taught on other courses.

To conclude, it is evident that at the completion of all four US Army Combatives courses, a soldier is well trained to conduct and supervise a wide range of Combatives lessons, activities and tournaments at unit or brigade level.

The US Army Combatives program, however, has been greatly influenced by MMA and UFC-style tournaments – it is heavily oriented towards ground-fighting without body armour, which is largely impractical for today's soldier on the battlefield. A soldier on operations is typically carrying a significant amount of weight on his/her person and seldom has the luxury of being able to remove this equipment before the adversary closes in.

By comparison, the ADF MSD Exponent program is a comprehensive, all-corps, five-day package designed to teach male and female soldiers a range of practical skills to deal with both physical and non-physical threats in a variety of situations, either with or without body armour. It is not sport- or competition-orientated. It includes not only ground fighting, but weapon disarms and retention, verbal methods of dealing with a physical threat, edged-weapon awareness and defence, scenario and reflex training, the legal and moral implications of MSD training, and the importance of maintaining a combat mindset.

Humans under stress, or any other sensory overload, will react as they have been trained. MSD is therefore designed to teach soldiers to deal with threats and function under stress on operations, not MMA-style competitions.

About the author: Iain Robertson is a major in the Australian Army who deployed to Afghanistan in 2012 with the US 82nd Airborne Division. An active Military Self Defence Instructor, he also holds black belts in Shotokan Karate and Bujinkan Ninjutsu.



Royal Australian Regiment's First VC

Corporal Daniel Keighran VC

For the most conspicuous acts of gallantry and extreme devotion to duty in action in circumstances of great peril at Derapet, Uruzgan province, Afghanistan as part of Mentoring Task Force One on Operation Slipper.

Corporal Keighran deployed to Afghanistan in February 2010 with the 6th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment.

On 24 August 2010 he was a member of a partnered fighting patrol with soldiers of the Afghan National Army's 1st Kandak, 4th Brigade, 205th (Hero) Corps which was engaged by a numerically superior and coordinated enemy attack from multiple firing points in three separate locations. The attack was initiated by a high volume of sustained and accurate machine-gun and small-arms fire, which pinned down the combined Australian and Afghan patrol and caused a loss of momentum.

In the early stages of the attack, and upon realising that the forward elements of the patrol needed effective fire support, Corporal Keighran and another patrol member moved under sustained and accurate enemy fire to an exposed ridgeline to identify enemy locations and direct the return fire of both Australian and Afghan machine guns.

On reaching this position and with complete disregard for his own wellbeing, Corporal Keighran deliberately drew enemy fire by leaving the limited cover he had and moved over the ridgeline in order to positively identify targets for the machine gunners of the combined patrol.

After identifying some of the enemy firing positions, Corporal Keighran, under persistent enemy fire, continued to lead and mentor his team and move around the ridge to both direct the fire of the Afghan and Australian machine gunners and to move them to more effective firing positions.

As the intensity of enemy fire grew, Corporal Keighran returned to the crest of the ridgeline to identify targets and adjust the fire of Australian Light Armoured Vehicles.

His actions resulted in the effective suppression of enemy firing points, which assisted in turning the fight in the favour of the combined patrol.

Moving to a new position, Corporal Keighran deliberately and repeatedly again exposed himself to heavy enemy fire to assist in target identification and the marking of the forward line of troops for fire-support elements, while simultaneously engaging the enemy.

Realising that the new position provided a better location for the patrol's joint fire controller, Corporal Keighran moved more than 100m across exposed parts of the ridgeline, attracting a high volume of accurate enemy fire, to locate and move the fire controller to the new position.

He rose from cover again to expose his position on four successive occasions, each movement drawing more intense fire than the last, in order to assist in the identification of a further three enemy firing points that were subsequently engaged by fire-support elements.

During one of these occasions, when his patrol sustained an Australian casualty, Corporal Keighran, with complete disregard for his own safety, left his position of cover on the ridgeline to deliberately draw fire away from the team treating the casualty.

Corporal Keighran remained exposed and under heavy fire while traversing the ridgeline, in order to direct suppressing fire and then assist in the clearance of a landing zone to enable evacuation of the casualty.

Corporal Keighran's acts of the most conspicuous gallantry in repeatedly exposing himself to accurate and intense enemy fire, thereby placing himself in grave danger, ultimately enabled the identification and suppression of enemy firing positions by both Australian and Afghan fire-support elements.

These deliberate acts of exceptional courage in circumstances of great peril were instrumental in permitting the withdrawal of the combined Australian and Afghan patrol with no further casualties.

His valour is in keeping with the finest traditions of the Australian Army and the Australian Defence Force.

Daniel Alan Keighran was born in Nambour, Queensland on 18 June 1983 and spent his formative years in regional Queensland. He enlisted in the Australian Army on 5 December 2000 and completed initial employment training at the School of Infantry in Singleton, New South Wales.

In 2001, Private Keighran was posted to the 6th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment (6RAR), where he served as a rifleman in Delta Company.

He deployed to Rifle Company Butterworth, Malaysia, in 2001, on Operation Citadel in East Timor in 2003-04 and again to Rifle Company Butterworth in 2004.

He was promoted to lance corporal in 2005 and then served within Mortar Platoon, Support Company, 6RAR.

In 2006, he deployed on Operation Catalyst, Iraq, where he served as a Bushmaster driver, a role he also filled on deployment to Afghanistan with Operation Slipper in 2007, in support of the Special Operations Task Group.

In 2009, he was promoted to corporal and posted back to Delta Company, 6RAR.

In 2010, Corporal Keighran deployed to Afghanistan on Operation Slipper with Mentoring Task Force 1 (MTF-1), becoming a mentor midway through his tour.

Corporal Keighran transferred to the Active Reserve in 2011, and commenced a civilian career in the mining industry.

He is currently posted to the 11th/28th Battalion, the Royal Western Australia Regiment (11/28RWAR).

He is married to Kathryn.



After identifying some of the enemy firing positions, Corporal Keighran, under persistent enemy fire, continued to lead and mentor his team and move around the ridge to both direct the fire of the Afghan and Australian machine gunners and to move them to more effective firing positions.



Chief of Defence General David Hurley was the first person to salute Corporal Daniel Keighran after the soldier was awarded the Victoria Cross for Australia for bravery of the highest order during the Battle of Derapet in Afghanistan on 24 August 2010.

General Hurley said it was one of the greatest honours he could have in his service, to salute a person who'd won the Victoria Cross – and to be the first person to ever do it to the most recent Victoria Cross winner was an enormous honour.

Corporal Keighran is the 99th Australian, the third for action in Afghanistan and the first member of the Royal Australian Regiment to be awarded the Victoria Cross.

He said he was surprised and humbled by the award.


"This is a very unexpected and humbling experience and I don't think it has really sunk in yet," he said.

"I am very proud of the boys from Delta Company, 6RAR and how they performed that day. This award is as much for their efforts as it is for mine.

He said he didn't normally like to talk about himself, so he hadn't even told his wife about the events of that day in 2010 until just days before the VC investiture in Canberra.

"It wasn't that I couldn't talk about it, it's just that what happened over there is for me and for the boys," he said.

"But she knows now and she wasn't too impressed at first."

A close-up portrait of Tim Kennedy, a man with a weathered face and short brown hair, wearing a camouflage military jacket. He is holding a black Gerber CFB combat knife in his right hand, with the blade extended. The knife has a serrated edge and the Gerber logo and '154CM' are visible on the blade. The background is a blurred, industrial setting.

HELLO, TROUBLE.
THIS IS MY KNIFE.
IT NEVER RUNS
OUT OF AMMO.

Tim Kennedy and his Gerber CFB.

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