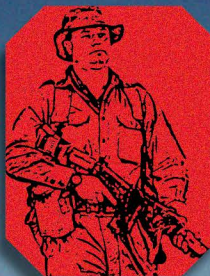


ISSUE 44



CONTACT

AIR LAND & SEA

DECEMBER 2014

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ISSUE 44 – DECEMBER 2014

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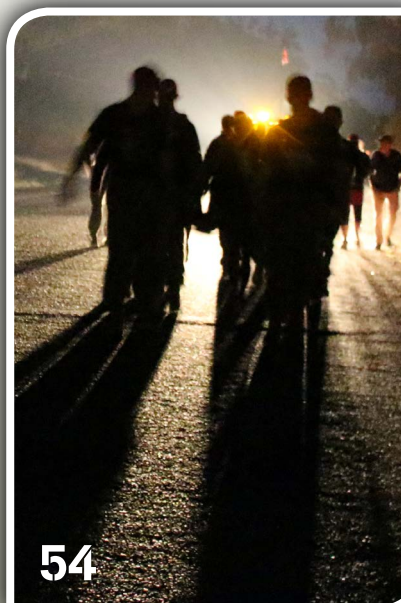
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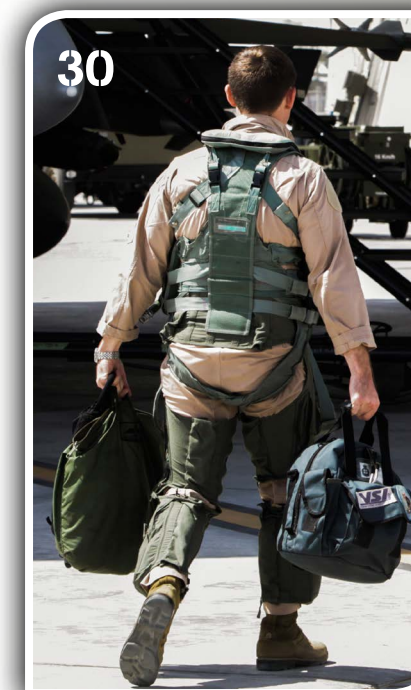


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EDITORIAL

Issue 44 – December 2014

CONTACT
AIR, LAND & SEA



1ST
**COMMANDO
REGIMENT**

Page 42

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Supplied

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CONTACT Air Land & Sea and **COMBAT Camera** magazines are Published by Contact Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 3091, Minnamurra, NSW 2533, AUST

www.militarycontact.com (all info)
www.combatcamera.com.au (free subscriptions, both magazines)
www.issuu.com/contactpublishing (archives)
www.facebook.com/CONTACTmagazine
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CONTACT Air Land & Sea is published on 1 March, June, September and December. **COMBAT Camera** is published on 1 February, May, August and November. Both magazines are only published electronically on the Internet and both are available by FREE subscription via www.combatcamera.com.au. All editorial, advertising and general enquiries should be addressed to the editor.

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I suppose I can't publish this magazine without addressing the elephant in the room – the recent pay deal that Defence members were shafted with.

You have to realise that Defence members cannot join a union nor band together in protest. To do so would be mutiny under the Defence Force Discipline Act, and the consequences would be severe.

Unlike the Public Service or any other work environment, ADF members don't even get an opportunity to vote on their pay 'offer'.

That said, there are plenty of external individuals and organisations who can speak out on members' behalf, and I'm pleased to acknowledge that this issue did generate a lot of debate*.

Now, in relation to the pay offer of 1.5 per cent – there is no denying that it is pretty pathetic. In and of itself, it is actually a pay cut in real terms, given that it doesn't keep up with projected inflation.

Then there's the double whammy of taking various leave and allowances away, which, according to those who have crunched the numbers, are of greater value than the 'pay rise'.

So, Defence Force members are being shafted from two different directions. And I don't think 'shafted' is too strong a description for it, under the circumstances.

But it wasn't just the government who shafted our soldiers, sailors and airmen. The CDF designed the package in the first place and the 'independant' Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal eventually signed off on it – all without giving the members a say.

But, the deal is done and the government says it's the best deal they could offer under the circumstances, with the budget and the economy the way it is.

OK. So the deal is done. Let's get on with the job.

As some have said, no one joins the ADF for the money anyway. I agree. When I joined up, I had no idea how much I was going to be paid. I never asked. It had no bearing whatsoever on my decision to join.

I'll just say at this point that I don't think this pay deal will have much affect on me because I'm a reservist and especially since I don't even know exactly what I get paid anyway (and her indoors has it spent before I ever see it). And I'll also say that I have not been particularly vocal on this issue to date either. I am of the attitude that while it does suck and it is a shafting of defenceless Defence members, I'll cop it on the chin as long as it is fair.

To be fair, however, the Defence deal must be a template for the entire Public Service, all of whom must be offered a similarly shitty deal.

But, unlike the ADF, the rest of the Public Service has union representation, collective bargaining power and the right to vote on the 'offer'. And they have the right to strike etc too.

So, while the government may make an equally poor offer, it's hard to see the Public Service taking it lying down.

That's why, in my opinion, the government deliberately shafted Defence first – because a) the ADF can't fight back and b) the government can now go to the Public Service and say, 'if it's good enough for Defence, it's good enough for you'.

For this reason above all else, I condemn the government for using the ADF as a pawn in what is undoubtedly a much bigger game.

*FOOTNOTE: As we prepare to publish this magazine, media reports suggest that Senator Jacqui Lambie may have actually secured some concession on this issue – or, at the very least, secured a 'promise' from the Prime Minister. But, given his record on promises to date, you'll forgive me for adopting a 'wait and see' stance on this development.

Sincerely,

Brian Hartigan

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Got something to say?
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INCOMING

SNAP

Just when I was in need of entertainment with a long flight coming up. Great Mag.

David S, via email

From what I've seen already, both magazines are worth reading.

Thanks for the free subscription. It has been passed around our club and I would be happy to pass it on to my friends.

Hayden G, Patriots DFMC, Manawatu Chapter, NZ

Thank you very much for the email [re electronic back issues added to www.issuu.com/contactpublishing].

Reading these magazines makes me miss my time in the ADF (former Navy and Air Force).

Tony V, via email

Thanks Tony. I'll add another four back issues on 1 January – then four more every three months untill all our back issues are free on line – Ed.

SWAPZIES

I am a defense resources analyst, and act in an advisory segment in Brazil.

I have made exchanges of army uniforms and this system has helped me develop a job here in my country.

I would like to trade a Brazilian military uniform for an Australian uniform.

Can you help me?

Alex V, via email

If anyone wants to make an exchange with Alex, please email me at editor@militarycontact.com and I'll put you in touch – Ed

KISS

I think both magazines are great work. Love them.

I wanted to give you feedback on not the magazines, but on the method you chose to publish them.

ISSUU.com is absolutely the worst site I have ever tried to use! It is over complicated by too much of everything! All I want is a simple PDF format I can view without all the trash from sites like ISSUU.

PDF allows me to read it anywhere, anytime offline. Why not just send PDF copies to your subscribers' e-mail?

Sorry, but I believe because of the new technology out there, everyone thinks they have to overdo something simple. There is a term we used in engineering and manufacturing called KISS, (keep it simple, stupid). Don't make something overly complicated (something the automobile manufacturers have also forgotten).

I do not want to be distracted by all the clutter on my screen, I want to enjoy the fine magazines!

Maybe give subscribers the option of how they wish to receive them?

Well, "that's my 2 cents worth" as we say in America.

Thanks and keep up the fine magazines.

Argos, via email

Thank you for your feedback – and for being a fan.

Never let it be said we don't listen to our fans. Since you (and a couple of other people) alerted us to your preference, we have begun to offer both options – .pdf and ISSUU.com – in our email notification when we publish a new magazine.

And, if any other format comes along that we or you judge to be worthy of attention as an alternative or a viable third option, well, we'll look at that too – Cheers, Ed.

Could you please tell me how I can order a paper copy of Issue 43 of CONTACT? I've been to your web site, but #43 is not available.

I was in a photograph in that magazine and would like it as a souvenir.

Chris, via email

Sorry Chris, but CONTACT is not printed these days – it's all electronic (and all free) since issue #41.

You can subscribe free to CONTACT – plus our other magazine, COMBAT Camera – via www.combatcamera.com.au

We are also archiving all our back issues (before #41) free at www.issuu.com/contactpublishing

TARGETS UP!

This page is a great outlet for fans to vent or to praise. Please, let us know what you think of our magazines so we can deliver more of what you want. Feel free to write to editor@militarycontact.com about CONTACT or any on other military subject – Ed

A small flotilla of Russian warships was shadowed and monitored by the Australian Defence Force in international waters in the Coral Sea during the G20 Meeting in Brisbane in November. In statements on the matter, Defence said the movement of the ships was entirely consistent with provisions under international law for military vessels to exercise freedom of navigation in international waters. Pictured (main) are HMAS Parramatta (foreground), shadowing at close range the Russian Federation Ships Varyag and the auxiliary oil replenishment ship Boris Butoma. Insets (left to right): Boris Butoma, Marshal Shaposhnikov, Fotiy Krylov, and RAAF AP-3C Orion aircrew.

Russian invasion?



WATCH ORION VIDEO



HEADS UP

IN BRIEF

NEW ATC FOR RAAF

RAAF has acquired new deployable Air Traffic Management and Control Systems.

A contract, awarded to Indra Australia for the supply of two rapidly deployable and one larger Air Traffic Management and Control Systems, is valued at more than \$50 million.

NEW CHOOK SHEDS

Defence has awarded a contract valued at \$54.8 million for construction of facilities to support the Army's seven new CH-47F Chinook helicopters at RAAF Base Townsville.

Lend Lease was appointed head contractor to deliver infrastructure and building works to support the introduction and sustainment of the new Chinooks.

CAV LEAVES DARWIN

After calling Darwin home for 22 years, 2nd Cavalry Regiment paraded for the last time at Robertson Barracks on 31 October.

Some 200 soldiers paraded before dignitaries, colleagues, family and friends on the regiment's parade ground, before symbolically marching off to Lavarack Barracks, Townsville.



Photo copyright Marine Nationale

INDON AWS BOOST

Indonesia has acquired 11 AS565 MBe Panthers to enhance its anti-submarine warfare capability.

Scheduled for delivery within three years, the AS565 MBe will be supplied by Airbus Helicopters to PT Dirgantara Indonesia, who will outfit mission equipment before delivery to the Indonesian Navy.

Mission equipment will include the Helicopter Long-Range Active Sonar (HELAS) dipping sonar and torpedo launching system.

Philippe Monteux, Head of Region at Airbus Helicopters, said the mission capabilities and cost effectiveness of Airbus Helicopters' AS565 MBe Panther had been further validated by Indonesia's order for 11 rotorcraft to be used in naval anti-submarine warfare missions.

"The Panther now becomes one of the world's most capable light/medium ASW platforms, with an advanced ASW suite and the capability to operate from corvettes or small frigates," Mr Monteux said.

"This order adds to the Indonesian Armed Forces' fleet of Airbus rotorcraft serving the country's defence on land, at sea and in the air.

"The fleet includes the light EC120 Colibri for training, Fennec and BO-105 for light attack missions and Puma and Super Puma operated by the Air Force who will soon also receive the EC725 for combat search-and-rescue missions."

ORIONS CRUSHED

Defence has retired the first three of its AP-3C Orion maritime reconnaissance fleet in preparation for the arrival of Poseidon.

A recent video posted by Defence shows aircraft being dismantled and destroyed.

Meanwhile, A \$707.9 million project to upgrade facilities at RAAF Bases Edinburgh (SA), Darwin (NT), Pearce (WA) and Townsville (Qld), and HMAS Stirling (WA) ahead of the arrival of new maritime patrol aircraft has been referred for approval, Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Darren Chester announced recently.

He said the facilities requirement for the Maritime Patrol Aircraft Replacement Project would support the acquisition of eight P-8A Poseidons.

"These new and upgraded facilities and infrastructure are essential to the operation of Poseidon," he said.

Subject to parliamentary approval of the project, construction is expected to begin next year and be completed by the end of 2020.



Screen grab from video showing destruction of an Orion.

WATCH VIDEO



ANGLO/FRENCH UCAS



The UK already operates Reaper in Afghanistan (above), while Taranis by BAe Systems (right) was unveiled in 2010. Images supplied by UK MoD

Britain and France jointly awarded a £120M defence co-operation contract in November the aim of which is to develop an unmanned combat aircraft system.

Both countries hope to jointly develop an Unmanned Combat Air System (UCAS) capable of strike, surveillance, reconnaissance and spy missions by the 2030s.

November's contracts will underpin a two-year Future Combat Air System (FCAS) feasibility program involving six industry partners exploring concepts and options for a potential collaborative UCAS acquisition in the future.

The joint feasibility phase will be complemented by work worth around £40M in each country.

Bernard Gray, the UK's Chief of Defence Materiel, said the



development of unmanned combat air systems was vital to the UK and to France.

"The technological excellence of our defence aerospace industry must be maintained over the long term. It is a matter of sovereignty and operational superiority," Mr Gray said.

"This requires an ambitious investment strategy open to partnerships."

The six partners involved are BAe Systems, Dassault Aviation, Thales France, Selex ES, Rolls-Royce and Safran.



BAIRDS' VISIT UAE

Doug Baird, father of Victoria Cross recipient Corporal Cameron Baird VC MG, reaches out to touch signage at the Australian domestic compound at Al Minhad Air Base, UAE, watched by his wife Kaye and Commander JTF 633 General Craig Orme.

Doug and Kaye Baird visited Camp Baird, named in honour of their son, on the way back to Australia after attending the 28th Victoria Cross and George Cross Association reunion in London in October.

In the UAE they met ADF personnel and visited the base's memorial plinth commemorating Australia's 41 fallen soldiers from the Afghanistan War.

The 28th Victoria Cross and George Cross Association Reunion attracted nine VC and 12 GC recipients from across the Commonwealth.

Recipients and the widows or parents of recipients met with Queen Elizabeth II, The Prince of Wales, The Duchess of Cornwall and Prince Henry of Wales at a variety of events.

HERON STAYS

Heron, the remotely piloted aircraft leased specifically for operations in Afghanistan, is set to become a more permanent capability for the RAAF.

Defence Minister David Johnston said the decision to retain the platform was part of a plan to ensure RAAF pilots maintained the skills to operate unmanned aerial

systems until the introduction of the MQ-4C Triton.

"Heron is a proven capability, providing 'eyes in the sky' for our troops in the Middle East," Senator Johnston said.

"The retention of Heron following their withdrawal from Afghanistan later this year will ensure Australia remains at the forefront of this advancing technology."

Estimated cost of the Heron is \$120 million over six years, including portable ground-control stations initially based at Woomera, maintenance, logistics, training

and renovations to facilities at RAAF Base Amberley.

Senator Johnston said one Heron already operated at Woomera in restricted military airspace for training purposes,

and the second would return to Australia from the Middle East.

"The additional Heron aircraft will provide greater opportunities for training,

and the development of robust tactics, techniques and procedures for operating complex UAS platforms, as well as the integration into Australian airspace."



Photo by Corporal Aaron Curran

HEADS UP

WWII MUNITIONS RENDERED SAFE

An intact mine discovered by an Australian EOD team near Torokina, Bougainville, during Operation Render Safe 14.
Photo by Corporal Matthew Bickerton

WATCH VIDEO



More than 16 tonnes of unexploded ordnance that littered the remote community of Torokina, Bougainville, PNG, since WWII was destroyed by teams from Australia, USA, UK, New Zealand, Canada and Solomon Islands during Operation Render Safe in October and November.

Commander of the multinational joint task force Captain Jay Bannister said Operation Render

Safe 2014 cleared 109 sites of 2293 items of ordnance.

"It is the largest Render Safe undertaken by the ADF, not just in terms of explosives destroyed but the number of personnel involved – almost 500 in total," he said.

"We received exceptional support from HMAS Choules, plus the people of Torokina in what has been an extremely complex, sustained amphibious operation."

HATS OFF TO FLYING START

A long-awaited Helicopter Aircrew Training System (HATS) has been announced for ADF.

HATS, for Navy and Army aircrew, will be based at HMAS Albatross in Nowra, NSW, and managed by Boeing Defence Australia, with 15 Airbus EC-135 twin-engine 'glass cockpit' helicopters, three full-motion Thales flight simulators and the addition of a flight deck to Navy's new sea-going training vessel.

Defence Minister David Johnston said the joint-service approach would benefit the ADF through a reduced training burden on operational aircraft and would enhance Navy and Army operations from the new amphibious ships.

"This will deliver a fully integrated modern training environment with both in-flight and virtual environments on contemporary twin-engine helicopters and simulators," Senator Johnston said.

"These will prepare Navy and Army for the new generation of advanced combat helicopters such as the Tiger ARH, MRH-90, MH-60R and CH-47F.

"Defence will also achieve a significant efficiency now that all Army and Navy aircrew will do their initial helicopter training in the one location.

More than \$700 million has been allocated to the project.

HATS should be at full capacity by late 2018.

OP X RECOGNITION

The Australian government has accepted a Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal recommendation that now makes Australian seamen embarked on merchant ships operated by the US Army Small Ships Section between 1942 and 1945 eligible for the Australia Service Medal 1939-1945.

During the Second World War a flotilla of more than 3300 small vessels manned by Australian crews sailed under the US flag to deliver men and equipment to New Guinea and the Pacific.

The US Army called it Operation X but in Australia it was better known as 'The Ragtag Fleet'.

Many of the thousands of crew on these boats were deemed unfit or too old for regular Australian service, but stepped up for this special and vital assignment.

Their contribution to the war effort has long been recognised by the US and the Philippines, but the Australian government refused to acknowledge their service – until now.

Surviving veterans of 'The Ragtag Fleet' can now apply for the Australia Service Medal 1939-1945 via www.defence.gov.au/medals/ or email honours.awards@defence.gov.au or phone 1800 111 321 (10am to 4pm AEST Monday to Thursday).



Picture supplied by Airbus Helicopters

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New pilot officers (from left) Thomas McDowell, Daniel Walker, Aaron Quinn, Richard Raven, Edward Drane, Ryan McRae and Nicole Brooke



Photo by Corporal Amanda McErlich

KIWIS GET THEIR WINGS

Seven newly qualified Royal New Zealand Air Force pilots celebrated a milestone in their careers when they were presented their 'wings' on 3 October at a graduation parade at Air Force Base Ohakea.

Commanding Officer of Flying Training Wing Commander Richard Beaton said the presentation of a pilot's brevet signified the successful completion of tough flight training.

"The award of the pilots' brevet or 'wings' represents a milestone in every military pilot's career, and is the culmination of a very demanding but rewarding period of training," Wing Commander Beaton said.

"This symbol of their achievement provides visible recognition of the standards they have reached."

RNZAF pilot's course is difficult and challenging.

Pilot aspirants start with Initial Officer Training at Base Woodbourne, then, after aviation medical training and survival training, they move on to Pilot Training Squadron learning to fly the CT-4E Airtrainer.

After accumulating 130 hours flying time they move on to No 42 Squadron where they learn the complex systems of the King Air aircraft and flying as single-pilot captains, accruing a further 90 hours.

After receiving their 'wings', the new pilots will go on to specialise in A109,

NH90 or Seasprite helicopters, or C-130 Hercules, Boeing 757s or P-3K2 Orions.

ABOVE: The Royal New Zealand Air Force 2014 graduating pilots are (left to right) Pilot Officers Thomas McDowell, Daniel Walker, Aaron Quinn, Richard Raven, Edward Drane, Ryan McRae and Nicole Brooke.



FORCE FIT

New Zealand Defence Force is on a mission to get every Kiwi fit with Force Fit – a simple, free app that takes fitness back to basics.

Designed by the NZDF to help prepare new recruits for their fitness test, the app is available as free for iPhone and Android and is designed to help anyone get into a great routine in just six weeks.

The app covers a Six Week Challenge that involves a mixture of running and simple exercises for beginners or advanced, with routines from just 15 minutes a day.

Chief of Defence Force Lieutenant General Tim Keating said recruiters around the country had observed a growing number of young New Zealanders, interested in joining the NZDF, but not achieving the entry-level fitness test.

"Fitness is something we take seriously and we make sure our people have the support they need to help keep them in top condition," he said.

"Defence Force personnel are also passionate about New Zealand, so we felt an obligation to do something that would not only help prepare our recruits, but could also inspire the whole country to join us in making fitness their mission."

Watch the clever and humorous launch video clip "Ambush" [here](#).

There are also a range of support videos available [here](#).

OFFICER WINS CHINA GOLD

Flight Lieutenant Liana Costello-Salt won gold while representing New Zealand and the Royal New Zealand Air Force at the recent 2014 Weihai ITU Long Distance Triathlon World Championships in China.

The former student of Villa Maria College and Lincoln University finished first in the 25-29 year-old category, crossing the line 22 minutes ahead of her closest competitor, in just over seven hours.

Flight Lieutenant Costello-Salt thanked the Royal New Zealand Air Force for its support of sport, which she rated as "second to none".

"I have had nothing but incredible support from my command and I currently work with an amazing team who get right in behind my sport," Flight Lieutenant Costello-Salt said.

"This is by far my favourite part of being in the RNZAF."

Flight Lieutenant Costello-Salt leads a team of 18 people who are responsible for looking after all RNZAF second-line support equipment,



Photo by Elisha Cathcart

including the purchase, maintenance and storage of ground support equipment and safety and surface equipment.

But, Flight Lieutenant Costello-Salt also has to balance work and training.

"I wake at 5am every morning to get a decent training session in before the workday – then I train again after work."

"The hardest part of training while in the RNZAF is balancing a busy training schedule with the demands of my career."

"This was the case, for example, before the Taupo Half Ironman last year when I was deployed on Exercise Southern Katipo."

Flight Lieutenant Costello-Salt credits her success on the world stage to her coach, former Olympian Sam Warriner.

She said that without Sam she would not be able to physically or mentally compete on the world stage.

While the rest of us may relax over the Christmas break, Flight Lieutenant Costello-Salt will be racing in no fewer than three half ironman events – Taupo, Tauranga and New Plymouth.

"I am focusing on improving my swimming, which will enable me to become competitive with the professional athletes," she said.

Soldiers, mounted riflemen and light armoured vehicles from Queen Alexandra's Mounted Rifles, paraded throughout the centre of Palmerston North on 20 September to mark the regiment's 150th anniversary. Governor General Lieutenant General Sir Jerry Mateparae inspected the parade. Despite the showery weather the parade drew a large crowd of appreciative onlookers. Crown Copyright © NZDF



NZ HEADS UP

FLEET COMPLETE

Royal New Zealand Air Force welcomed the delivery of its final NH90 helicopter at Base Ohakea at the end of October – bringing the fleet to eight.

NH90 is an advanced medium utility helicopter capable of undertaking a variety of roles including search and rescue, disaster relief, troop transport and aerial lifting of cargo and supplies.

Chief of Air Force Air Vice-Marshal Mike Yardley said NH90 was a significant step-up from the Iroquois the Air Force used for many years.

"The NH90 are highly capable helicopters and we've been flying them on sorties for the past year," Air Vice-Marshal Yardley said.

"Most notably, the NH90 assisted with the Pike River re-entry in October 2013 by removing 35

tonnes of debris from the mine's ventilation shaft.

"NH90s have a significantly long range and endurance.

"They are also versatile and can be deployed in many environments such as landing in snow or being embarked on a Navy vessel.

"The Air Force undertakes a lot of work with NZ Police, Customs, MPI and MFAT and NH90 provide us with an excellent asset capable of assisting in keeping New Zealanders safe."



Photo by Sergeant Lucy Jordan

LANDLOCKED TRAINING OF SHIP SKILLS



Modules for a Seamanship Training Aids facility being built at Devonport Naval Base began arriving on site in early September.

The modules were delivered by low-loaders from a construction facility at Wiri in South Auckland, over the Auckland Harbour Bridge and then to Devonport.

The project entailed creating a full-size Inshore Patrol Vessel forecabin, a full-size Offshore Patrol Vessel midships, an OPV quarterdeck sized to IPV dimensions and a replenishment-at-sea (RAS) tower.

When finished next April, the facility will allow new recruits to do much of their initial ship's training on the land-locked modules – a safety bonus for the trainees, while freeing up real ships for more non-training time at sea.

A Defence statement said the importance of this facility couldn't be understated as it would provide safer, more competent sailors to our ship platforms and reduce the on-job-training component of seamanship training at sea.

The Royal New Zealand Navy is currently running a competition to name the facility. The competition closes on 5 December with the winner announced on the 10th.

Find the naming competition instructions and rules here.

KATIPO HEADS 'TOP OF SOUTH'

Planning underway now will see more than 2000 military personnel descend on the Buller, Tasman and Marlborough regions of New Zealand's South Island late next year.

Exercise Southern Katipo 2015 – the NZDF's largest exercise – will transform the 'top of the south' into the fictitious but troubled Bekara, a region beset with political instability and unrest and requiring a UN mandate for international intervention to restore security.

Fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, ships, LAVs and other military vehicles and equipment will be involved, with international participants likely to include Australia, Canada, French Armed Forces of New Caledonia, UK, USA and Pacific Island nations.

Lead exercise planner Colonel Martin Dransfield said the international exercise was vital to ensure that New Zealand Defence personnel were well trained and ready to respond to any crisis.

"The importance of being prepared can not be underestimated," he said.

"An exercise like this covers the spectrum of what we might be called to do anywhere in the world, and especially in the South-West Pacific.

"We need to be prepared to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief by land, sea or air, or to assist with security and stability, when our help is requested."

Residents of 'Bekara' may get up-close experience in some exercise activities.



Photo by Corporal Sam Shepherd



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KC-30A ON A ROLL

RAAF's Multi Role Tanker Transport fleet flies from strength to strength

WORDS EAMON HAMILTON, HQ AIR MOBILITY GROUP

EDITED BY CONTACT – PHOTOS BRIAN HARTIGAN AND ADF

Photo by Brian Hartigan

A clearer picture of the capability being delivered by the KC-30A Multi Role Tanker Transport to the Royal Australian Air Force is emerging.

Introduced into service with No 33 Squadron in mid-2011, the KC-30A achieved its Initial Operational Capability (IOC) in February 2013, clearing the way for strategic transport missions, and also allowed the KC-30A to begin hose-and-drogue in-air-refuelling support to Australia's (and other) fighter fleet – a capability put to good effect recently during Exercises Cope North, Bersama Shield and Pitch Black, and now also on operations over Iraq.

Officer Commanding No 86 Wing Group Captain Guy Wilson said 33 Sqn had demonstrated its adaptability and deployability during recent runway works at RAAF Base Amberley, which forced 33 Sqn to find a temporary new home.

"The squadron deployed in Darwin during the runway works at Amberley, and from there they engaged in air-to-air refuelling exercises," Group Captain Wilson said.

"It was convenient, as a lot of exercises are located in the Darwin/Tindal region, and 33 Sqn did a lot of transport well beyond Darwin – domestically and internationally."

One recent hurdle was the number of aircraft available to 33 Sqn, with two KC-30As remaining in Europe to undergo

development work, leaving three KC-30As in Australia, of which one aircraft will typically be undergoing scheduled maintenance or upgrades.

The two KC-30As in Europe are undergoing development of the Advanced Refuelling Boom System (ARBS) with a resident team of RAAF engineers.

ARBS extends from the aircraft's tail and can transfer fuel to a receiver aircraft at 4500 litres a minute – three times faster than the hose-and-drogue pods.

The system is compatible with refuelling the C-17A Globemaster, E-7A Wedgetail and other KC-30As. In future, it will also be used to refuel the P-8A Poseidon and, critically, the F-35A Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter.

RAAF has had limited experience in boom-refuelling

in the past, largely as a receiver with aircraft such as the F-111C and E-7A. To bring the ARBS online, Air Force needs to be satisfied it can be employed safely and effectively.

"Shortly, we'll go through the process of certification and preparation for an airworthiness board," Group Captain Wilson said.

"We need to sit that early next year to provide clearance to fly and use the boom with receivers.

"We expect that to happen in March and to have clearance to use the boom in April."

KC-30A was purchased for the Air Force to conduct refuelling operations in a modern battlespace. To do this successfully, a number of other systems on the aircraft still need to reach maturity.

"The mission planning system still has some development to go, but it is coming along well," Group Captain Wilson said.

"We're also fitting Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures, which should be fully operational from this time next year as well."

Taking things to new limits

Performance records have been smashed by 33 Sqn along the way. On 30 May this year, a KC-30A flew a training sortie of 14,500km from RAAF Base Darwin to Dallas, Texas – the furthest unrefuelled and non-stop distance travelled by any RAAF aircraft.

Perhaps the most impressive sortie to date, however, was on 22 May when one KC-30A left RAAF Base Darwin for an 11-hour round trip to refuel F/A18-F Super Hornets in Queensland and South

Australia, followed by F/A18 'Classic' Hornets on the return leg in the Northern Territory – plus, upon landing in Darwin, turned around and conducted another three-hour refuel task near Tindal.

In June, a KC-30A deployed No 37 Squadron personnel from Sydney to Anchorage for Exercise Red Flag Alaska – again non-stop.

Squadron Leader Craig Whiting, 33 Sqn's B-Flight commander said the KC-30A's full talents had been demonstrated while supporting multiple exercises simultaneously.

"No 81 and 82 Wings were provided with on-time refuelling for two weeks with a KC-30A from

RAAF Base Darwin," Squadron Leader Whiting said.

"Every mission was 100 per cent on time and demonstrated exceptional reliability, which in turn developed a greater level of confidence in the KC-30A as a maturing platform."

Major planning considerations were not the aircraft's capability, but rather crew endurance.

"The RAAF is learning that this is a truly multi-role aircraft with significant legs," Squadron Leader Whiting said.

"To that end, with careful coordination, you can achieve two or even three completely different tasks with the one aircraft over the period of one day, if we start thinking outside the square."

Getting used to the view

From an altitude of 39,000ft, the view from the cockpit of the KC-30A is a seemingly endless stretch of sky.

It's a recurring vista for No 33 Squadron crews, who are building experience in operating the KC-30A to all corners of the Pacific – and beyond. And now over Iraq.

Group Captain Wilson said the nature of the KC-30A's work took

it overseas perhaps more than any other aircraft in the RAAF inventory.

"The crews need to get used to flying over international boundaries, over long stretches of water, and flying into countries where air traffic controllers might speak a different (first) language."

In one example, 33 Sqn conducted flights between Australia, Guam and Japan between 14 and 19 July.

These tasks were essential for helping foreign air forces to understand the support arrangements required for an aircraft like the KC-30A.

"In the future, we hope to operate with the other nations in our region, and in this case, particularly Japan," Group Captain Wilson said.

"There's quite a lot of American presence in Japan as well, so we are always expecting to work with them in the future, whether it be assisting them with transport or refuelling their fighters."

One KC-30A pilot who had the opportunity to fly to Japan was Flying Officer Nic Barnes, who has been with 33 Sqn for 18 months.

"We started off in Darwin and flew down to Sydney, to pick up

BY WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE US, WE CAN LEARN A LOT FROM THEM AND THEIR TANKER CREWS

An RAAF KC-30A Multi Role Tanker Transport lands in the Middle East to commence operations over Iraq.
Photo by Sergeant Andrew Eddie



WATCH KC-30A ON
OPERATIONS VIDEO

a load of passengers, flew them up to Guam and dropped them off for a planning conference," Flying Officer Barnes said.

"The next day, we flew up to Japan, where we were exercising the Status of Forces Agreement that the United Nations has with Japan.

"Today, we're flying home from Japan, back to Darwin, where we're currently operating from."

The round trip, which covered more than 16,500km in three days, was standard work at 33 Sqn.

"Just in the last nine months or so, I've been to the Philippines, Hawaii, Guam, Spain and mainland USA a few times, and we're coming back from Japan now," Flying Officer Barnes said.

"The advantage of the KC-30A is that it's a long-range aircraft. We can fly up to 16, 17, 18-hour missions, taking people and cargo all over the world.

"Plus all over Australia. Flying domestically is a weekly occurrence for us."

Flying Officer Barnes said ensuring the KC-30A could meet its strategic obligations meant training to international destinations and, in particular, the USA.

"The US is one of our major allies and they have a lot of resources and a lot of facilities across the Pacific that make operating the KC-30A a lot easier for us.

"For example, they've got the bases in Guam, Japan and Hawaii that we can use to stage our own operations and exercises.

"By working closely with the US, we can learn a lot from them and their tanker crews.

"They've been doing air-to-air refuelling on a much larger scale than us, for a much longer time than us.

"They've developed the tactics, techniques and procedures that are really useful for us, so that we don't have to keep reinventing the wheel."

Getting experience in planning and conducting these long-distance missions is essential to 33 Sqn.

"For an international mission like this, there are a few weeks of planning and forethought that has to go into it," Flying Officer Barnes said.

"We need to make sure that we have the diplomatic clearances to fly through other country's airspace, that we've got all the right approach charts and maps.

KC-30A



Clockwise from top left: Crew sleeping facilities in the KC-30A mean mission endurance can be extended;

The KC-30A is a militarised version of a civilian Airbus A330 with capacity for 270 passengers, 34 tonnes of cargo and 100 tonnes of fuel;

A suite of double-lens cameras means the air-to-air refuel operator, who works on the flight deck, can view refuelling operations in 3D;

An unusual sight for a passenger out a starboard window as an F/A-18 'Classic' Hornet tops off its tanks over Victoria;

A pilot gives visitors an overview of the 'glass cockpit' in the KC-30A; and,

The large cockpit has ample work space for up to four crew.

All photos in this panel by Brian Hartigan



"Even down to accommodation sorted, customs and immigration – there's a lot of things that we have to deal with on international trips that we don't normally have to deal with."

Wings over Japan

Recent tasking by No 33 Squadron to Japan shares similarities and contrasts with RAAF transport flights to the country nearly 70 years ago.

The first opportunity for the RAAF to travel to Japan came in late 1945, when a No 38 Squadron Dakota took Australian journalists to Hiroshima soon after its bombing.

That task was led by Squadron Leader John Balfe, who recounted in his memoirs that the journey north took a week to complete. He flew with six crew and 27 passengers from Archerfield in Brisbane to Darwin, then on to the Philippines where they stopped at Tacloban, Manila and Loag. After a four-and-a-half hour flight from Load, they arrived in Okinawa before continuing to Hiroshima.

It was an eerie sensation for the crew to arrive in a devastated country that they had been at war with only weeks before.

That journey from Brisbane to Hiroshima was perhaps one of the longest-distance RAAF transport tasks of its time, but soon became a matter of course.

Throughout late 1945, 34, 35, 36 and 38 Squadrons conducted missions from Morotai in Indonesia to Japan, and the post-war recovery period led to a regular Japan courier from Australia.

More than 5000 Australian personnel were sent to the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan, which was supported by a RAAF Dakota courier that flew a regular service from Australia.

It was a laborious journey for the Dakota, which could carry up to 3 tonnes of cargo, including mail and equipment, or up to 30 passengers.

The Dakota lacked a weather radar, had an unpressurised cabin, and was limited in its performance.

However, as arduous and perilous as conditions could be, no Dakota was lost on the Japan courier run, which eventually clocked up an impressive 8,500,000km carried 470 tonnes of cargo and transported 3583 passengers.

In 1954, a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) was made between the Japanese government and nine United Nations signatory states, which allows the use of seven American bases throughout Japan.

Even today, the SOFA remains in effect and is exercised regularly.

As much as Australia's relationship with Japan has changed since 1945, so too has the performance of RAAF's transport.

In March 2011, 36 Sqn deployed three C-17A Globemasters to Japan from Australia in response to the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, and the resultant nuclear disaster.

In the space of two weeks, they carried 470 tonnes of cargo, with missions to deploy cargo and personnel from Australia and throughout Japan.

In July 2014, 33 Sqn flew to Yokota Air Force Base near Tokyo to exercise the SOFA with Japan, and allow senior members of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force to view the KC-30A.

For the KC-30A and C-17A, a trip from RAAF Base Darwin to Yokota Air Base takes a mere six-and-a-half hours, and crews can

An RAAF KC-30A Multi Role Tanker Transport is marshalled at Australia's logistic base in the Middle East after completing its first mission over Iraq.
Photo by Sergeant Hamish Paterson



**FOR THE KC-30A AND C-17A, A TRIP FROM RAAF
BASE DARWIN TO YOKOTA AIR BASE TAKES
A MERE SIX-AND-A-HALF HOURS**

Photo by Brian Hartigan



Photo by Sergeant Mick Davis



Photo by Sergeant Hamish Paterson



Photo by Sergeant Hamish Paterson

Clockwise from above: Aircraft technician Corporal David Van Hoos inspects the engine on a KC-30A at Australia's main base in the Middle East;

Ground crewman Leading Aircraftman William Holland inspects the undercarriage of a RAAF KC-30A after a flight;

Ground crewmen wait to tow stairs out to a KC-30A at Australia's logistic base in the Middle East after a mission;

Squadron Leader Greg Ferguson (left) and his co-pilot, Flying Officer Nathan Dull, guide their KC-30A MRTT on final approach to Andersen Air Base, Guam;

An Air Refueller Operator onboard a KC-30A refuels two F/A-18F Super Hornets during a mission over Iraq; and,

Two F/A-18 'Classic' Hornets fly abeam a KC-30A Multi Role Tanker Transport over Victoria.



Photo by Sergeant Mick Davis



Photo by Corporal Mark Friend

KC-30A

KC-30A



A No 33 Squadron KC-30A Multi-Role Tanker Transport is checked by ground crew before departure from Andersen Air Base, Guam. Photo by Corporal Mark Friend

Photo by Corporal Mark Friend
A No 33 Squadron KC-30A Multi-Role Tanker Transport is checked by ground crew before departure from Andersen Air Base, Guam.

fly comfortably above much of the weather en route.

If required, the KC-30A could transport up to 270 passengers with no difficulty.

Alternatively, the KC-30A travelling non-stop from Darwin to Tokyo, can transfer 50 tonnes of fuel to receiver aircraft during the journey.

Delivering vital cargo

In a rare exchange in July this year, a No 36 Squadron C-17A Globemaster transported several KC-30A air-to-air refuelling (AAR) system components between Australia and Spain, and back again.

The 'swap', conducted in Madrid, was organised by Air Mobility Group units working with Defence Material Organisation and industry counterparts.

Flying Officer Dawson Schuck, an engineer who until recently was attached to the RAAF/DMO team in Madrid, said the C-17A mission exchanged in-service refuelling equipment for newly modified items from two RAAF KC-30A aircraft currently in Spain.

"The C-17A delivered an in-service AAR boom and two in-service AAR pods to the Airbus

Defence and Space KC-30A production facility in Madrid," he said.

"These items will be inducted into a retrofit program in Spain, which will provide greatly improved functionality and reliability.

"A modified AAR boom and two modified AAR pods, which have already been upgraded, have also been returned to Australia. These items will support progression towards achievement of the fleet's Australian Military Type Certificate and service release."

Flying Officer Schuck said the boom and pods had a number of internal components modified during KC-30A development works.

"This suite of modifications represents the most up-to-date configurations for both items."

The overall swap will allow an RAAF KC-30A undergoing deeper-level maintenance in Brisbane to return to flight in the newly updated configuration and enable another set of AAR pods to be modified in Australia.

While the AAR boom has not yet been certified for use by the RAAF, the newly modified boom was sent to Australia to help

advance the certification process, expected to be granted in early 2015.

Offensive operations

The Royal Australian Air Force introduced the KC-30A into service in mid-2011, but for much of 2014, two of the aircraft – A39-001 and A39-005 – have been at the Airbus facility near Madrid in Spain, undergoing development, modification, test and evaluation programs.

Following completion of retrofit and deeper maintenance activities in Spain, these two KC-30As are expected to return to Australia by early 2015, thus completing the RAAF's fleet of five KC-30A Multi Role Tanker Transport aircraft.

This will also be a significant step towards No 33 Squadron's start of air-to-air refuelling by boom, which is expected to be certified in the second quarter of 2015.

In the mean time, hose-and-drogue refueling missions continue apace on operations over Iraq, proving that the Royal Australian Air Force can participate effectively in offensive air-combat operations anywhere they are required.

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High ops tempo over Iraq

Australian Defence Force support to coalition air operations against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) continue at a relatively high tempo.

Since September, the Australian Air Task Group (ATG) has flown hundreds of sorties providing close air support and air interdiction for the Iraqi Security Forces, as well as deliberate and dynamic targeting of ISIL command and control facilities, military equipment, transport vehicles, as well as logistics and training compounds.

Chief of Joint Operations Vice Admiral David Johnston said the ATG had been operating at high tempo, contributing to the degradation of ISIL capability.

"Kinetic strike operations provided by coalition aircraft in support of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) are slowing ISIL's progress," Vice Admiral Johnston said.

"While some areas in the west and north are being contested by ISIL, with gains and losses by ISF and Kurdish Peshmerga forces, ISIL capability continues to be hit hard."

Royal Australian Air Force personnel have even planned and led attacks against ISIL targets, including one attack on a cave complex that killed more than 100 militants.

Director General Air Operations Air Commodore Joe Iervasi said the ATG had risen to the challenge in coordinating a large number of fighter aircraft from several nations.

"Responsibility to lead a large multi-national force conducting a strike mission in Iraq is recognition of the exceptional skills and professionalism of Australia's ATG personnel," he said.

"The mission was a great success. Every weapon was on-time, and on-target and key ISIL facilities used to mount attacks on the people of Iraq were destroyed.

"I remain absolutely confident in the skill and professionalism of the whole team.

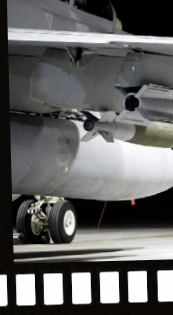
"Australia should be proud of its Air Force personnel."

Australia's ATG comprises about 400 personnel, six F/A-18F Super Hornet fighter aircraft, one E-7A Wedgetail command and control aircraft and one KC-30A multi-role tanker transport.

Operation Okra



Photos by Sergeant Mick Davis (above) and Sergeant Andrew Eddie (below).



Australia's Special Operations Task Group eventually moved into Baghdad about mid November

Vice Admiral Johnston said that after successful negotiations with the Iraqi government had delivered the necessary approvals, Australia's Special Operations Task Group had eventually moved into Baghdad about mid November.

"That move is now largely completed," Vice Admiral Johnston said.

"The initial focus for the Task Group has been on establishing accommodation, getting the communications and security arrangements in place that we need, and they have commenced engagement with key Iraqi Security Force officials around the advise and assist mission.

"Our Special Operations Group will be working with the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service with the objective of reinforcing that service – which is another special operations group – in order to enable it to conduct activities against ISIL.

"Our personnel have commenced the advise and assist mission, largely within the Baghdad Diplomatic Security Centre, which is within the broader precinct of the Baghdad International Airport.

"Our personnel have commenced assisting both in terms of the immediate operations that are conducted out of the Baghdad Diplomatic Security Centre, where we are provided coordination of close air support and we are making preparations as required to go forward to forward operating bases with our partner counter-terrorism service, where we will work down to the battalion headquarters level in that advise/assist role.

"It in part depends on the preparedness of the Iraqi forces to move and the operations to which they will contribute.

"I'd certainly be expecting that moves would start within the next fortnight, but it depends on the pattern of the Iraqi operations, and then their need for us to be able provide that assistance to them.

"Our troops will go where they need to go. They've got quite a bit of freedom in terms of depending on where the Counter-Terrorism Service needs to fight.

"We will do our normal risk assessments about the viability of moving to particular locations and the support available to us. But we've got that flexibility to be able to support them in a range of areas."



Photos by Sergeant Hamish Paterson





Vice Admiral Johnston said the Aussies in Baghdad were fielding requests around leadership training, mentoring, engineering training and sniper operations.

"We also have counter-IED capabilities within our forces.

"Some of the advise and assist training roles that we would anticipate providing to the counter-terrorism services would be in counter-IED.

"So that would be part of how we would assist in upskilling them – give them the confidence to cope or test train and check for these devices before they move.

"We're well-trained in that field and prepared to deal with them."

Vice Admiral Johnston said there were quite a range of military skill sets that the counter-terrorism service was seeking that Australian forces could assist them with in their training.

"And, of course, we'll bring all that as part of our skill set to them.

"Our forces do also have joint targeted air controllers within them.

"So, in part, that advise/assist mission will be around how do you bring the Coalition airstrike capabilities to bear and integrate it into Iraqi military plans.

"The JTAC role is an element of that."

Vice Admiral Johnston said the ADF was scoping options around expanding the mission in Iraq should the government need them.

"We're looking at both what the campaign currently is in terms of how the government of Iraq may wish to continue to build their own forces and move on an offensive, and how the Coalition effort may contribute to that.

"We continue to evaluate potential options, but we don't have a firm plan around [broadening the scope of the mission] at the moment, but we're evaluating what might need to be done, and be ready when required to bring options forward."



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WORDS AND PHOTOS BY BRIAN HARTIGAN



L02

HMAS CANBERRA AUSTRALIA'S NU CAPITAL SHIP

HMAS Canberra, the largest ship ever built for the Royal Australian Navy, was ceremonially commissioned into the fleet on 28 November in her home port, Sydney.

Her 400-strong ship's company and very proud Commanding Officer, Captain Jonathan Sadleir, were joined by more than 1000 family, friends and dignitaries – including Governor General Sir Peter Cosgrove, Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Chief of Navy Vice Admiral Tim Barrett for the historic occasion.

Since home-porting at Fleet Base East in early November, the 27,500-tonne ship has made a significant impact on the Sydney harbourscape with her sheer size and scale.

Canberra is the first of two Landing Helicopter Docks (LHDs) built for the Royal Australian Navy and is capable of carrying out a variety of roles including complex amphibious warfighting operations as well as large-scale humanitarian-assistance and disaster-relief missions.

She is capable of deploying or withdrawing land forces via air or sea in a variety of conditions, including areas not accessible by other means.

HMAS Canberra's entry into the fleet is a significant milestone in providing Australia one of the most capable and sophisticated air-land-sea amphibious deployment systems in the world.

But commissioning is just the latest step on the long road to full operational readiness.



Days before the commissioning, Captain Sadleir said it was a very proud and emotional time for him and his crew.

"Ships take on a personality of their own and so commanding any ship is a very personal thing," he said.

"To be given the privilege of commanding a ship like this and to be in command of so many fine young Australians is a pretty emotional thing. I think I'll struggle to keep it together on commissioning day.

"Being the first commander and being the first crew on a ship like this is a big thing for all of us.

"I guess there's a tradition in any navy that the first commanding officer is the plank-owner of a ship and being the first of anything can only be done once.

"So, yes, it is a big deal for all of us.

"But there's another aspect to it. As the stewards of this ship across this particular piece of time will have a long legacy impact for the Navy, and I'm very conscious of that.

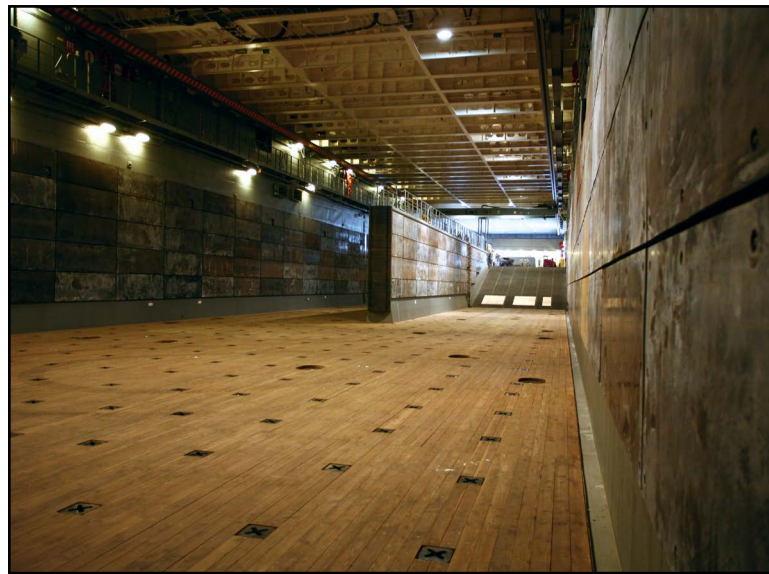
"How we set this up and the culture we create here now will endure for a long time."

Top left: One of two operating theatres in Canberra's fully equipped hospital.

Left: The well dock, with capacity for four LCM-1E landing craft.

Below: One of the first helicopters to grace her decks arrives to participate in the commissioning ceremony.

Right: Crew take in the view nearly 30m above the water.



WATCH VIDEO 





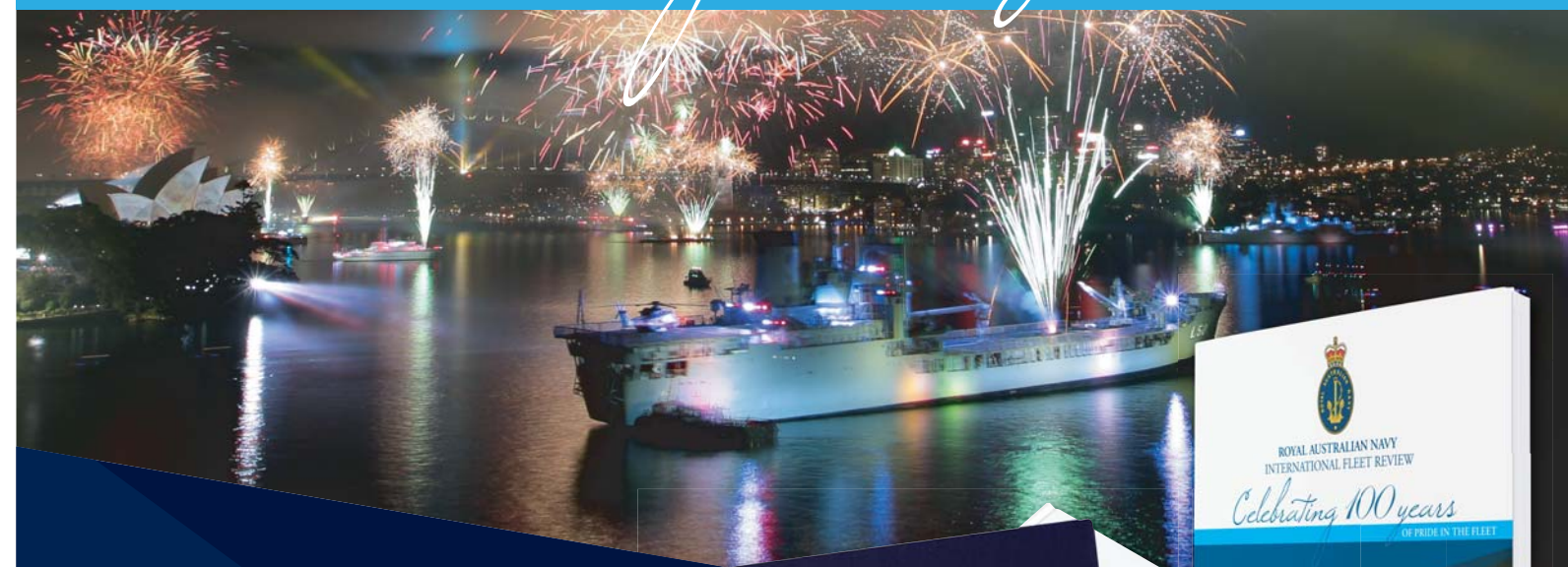
Above: Commanding Officer HMAS Canberra Captain Jonathan Sadleir accepts the Ship's Commission and White Ensign from Commander Australian Fleet Rear Admiral Stuart Mayer.

Below, clockwise from top left: HMAS Canberra crew on parade during her commissioning; An emotional Captain Sadleir addresses guests; HMAS Canberra's White Ensign; HMAS Canberra's official badge; Chief of Navy Vice Admiral Tim Barrett talks to HMAS Canberra I veteran Henry Hall; Crew and invited guests stand in salute as HMAS Canberra's White Ensign is raised for the first time; Ship's Company of HMAS Canberra 'cheer ship', breathing life into the newly commissioned vessel; and, A crewmember's hat.



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WORDS MITCHELL SUTTON AND
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PHOTOS ADF

STRIKE SWIFTLY

The Australian Army's 1st Commando Regiment has always had a unique place in the Australian Special Operations community – being the only SOCOMD unit made up predominantly of reservists. It has undergone a major transformation in recent years, redefining itself following the significantly higher operational tempo of the post-9/11 world. As its Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel G (whose name is suppressed for operational security) explains, it was the shock of the Afghanistan deployments that turned 1st Commando Regiment from a unit of 'vague utility' to the 'distilled and lean organisation' it is today.

1ST COMMANDO REGIMENT

As the oldest regiment of Special Operations Command, the 1st Commando Regiment was raised in 1955 to harness the skills of commando veterans who had served in World War II, but who had returned to civilian life with the cessation of hostilities.

As the Regiment's Commanding Officer explains, "At the end of the Second World War there was a fair amount of special-operations capability resident within the Australian military forces. Unfortunately those forces were disbanded. It was later recognised, that some of that experience needed to be retained or nurtured by the Army".

Thereafter, the unit grew quickly – from two independent companies in Sydney and Melbourne to include 301 Signals Squadron in 1960, and a headquarters element in 1981.

With its wealth of knowledge and experience in the field, it also contributed to the raising of the Special Air Service Company (which later became the Special Air Service Regiment) in 1957.

However, by the 1980s and '90s, the regiment risked losing its relevance as Australia's special-operations capability started to expand (4RAR Commando, now 2nd Commando Regiment was established in 1997).

Chief among its challenges was training.

With many of the commando veterans having moved on, the unit had to create highly trained commandos using the traditional reservist hours of one night a week, one weekend a month, two weeks a year.

Lieutenant Colonel G affirmed, "If you look at the unit's history, originally we would push the recruits through the commando courses and, after a very long time chipping away at things over weekends and holidays, guys might be partially commando qualified after several years."

He further explained, "The 1st Commando Regiment used to have literally hundreds of reservists trying to complete special-forces training, but very few actual qualified as commandos. There would be truncated courses for reservists and they would get partial qualifications compared to their regular-army counterparts."

The regiment was falling behind its SOCOMD counterparts, producing part-time operators who lacked the skill-sets of their regular-army counterparts.

However, the advent of the so called 'War on Terror'



and Australia's commitment to the Afghan War would change all of this.

The war in Afghanistan had ramped up Australia's need for special operations forces to a level unheard of since the Second World War. This need placed increased pressure on the regular special-forces community to man the Special Operations Task Group (SOTG).

As such, SOTG's role in Afghanistan developed as Australia's commitment in Afghanistan grew.

"Essentially, the primary role of the SOTG over time has been a counter-leadership and an insurgent-disruption mission," Lieutenant Colonel G explained.

"This involved identifying insurgent leadership – who are individuals involved in the co-ordination of planning and facilitation of insurgent operations – and neutralising them."

As manning opportunities were identified, the 1st Commando Regiment was tasked with supplying trained operators to fill them.

"The regular-Army commando regiment would identify vacancies and opportunities in manning for deployments and then reach out to the 1st Commando Regiment to fill those positions.

"That started to operationally focus the 1st Commando Regiment and we built up to an average of about 25 members of my unit in the field and the deployed headquarters per SOTG rotation and they were over there for between four and five months.

"As we were doing individual reinforcements we started to get reservists integrated into regular-Army

SF sub-units and involved in significant combat operations for the first time."

Yet, the true challenge was still to come.

Starting in late 2008, 1st Commando Regiment was to send an entire company of commandos to relieve SASR and 2nd Commando Regiment contingents over the Afghan winter period.

This was an unprecedented move for the Army Reserve.

"I can't think of another time since the Second World War that we've sent reserve companies into combat like that," Lieutenant Colonel G says.

"It's just not how the Australian Army Reserve is employed outside of Special Operations Command."

The deployment was a resounding success, so much so that company-sized groups were sent back over winter 2009-10 and 2010-11 to do the same thing.

"Those three tours were a real turning point for the regiment. It gave our guys a lot of operational experience and they conducted themselves very well on the battlefield. I think it was a real coming of age for the regiment.

"I feel it also came with recognition from the regular-Army SF community that, with the appropriate amount of build-up training, the reserve commando capability could field a competent and effective sub-unit within the required notice to move."

The 1st Commando Regiment adapted with this



experience, becoming, in the CO's words, "A distilled and lean organisation".

Where the change had really shown was in the commandos themselves.

"The average operator within the regiment has had two or three tours of Afghanistan and probably one tour of another theatre, such as East Timor.

"There are no other reserve units that have anything approaching the experience of our regiment, and I would be confident in saying that there would be many operators within my organisation who have seen considerably more close combat than many in the regular Army."

This operational experience has resulted in changes in all aspects of the unit.

For a start, there was no longer to be any difference in training between reserves and regulars.

"If you're going to deploy and be serious about reinforcing the regular-Army commando capacity, then you've got to have guys who have the same qualifications," Lieutenant Colonel G says.

"We decided to formally align the trade models between reserve commandos and regular-Army commandos, so that you more or less need to dedicate a year of your life to come into a continuous-full-time service if you want to join the 1st Commando Regiment."

Recruitment became more efficient and focussed too.

"Potential recruits now apply to Special Forces Training Centre and go through the entire commando training pipeline before they are posted into the 1st Commando Regiment.

"All of the reserve commandos in the regiment are either former regular-Army commandos or Army reservists who have undergone the full suite of regular-Army special-forces courses."

The 1st Commando Regiment has achieved its goal of creating, 'a core of highly skilled individuals who have lots of operational experience and are trained to the same standard as their regular-Army counterparts'.

Moreover, even the tools of the trade have improved.

"I think there have been broad improvements in our equipment across the board. We have a very good body-armour ensemble now, plus a range of new weapons including new sniper systems, assault rifle and machine guns. We have a range of new optics, new radios, even different camouflage uniforms."

Given these significant evolutionary developments, the 1st Commando Regiment is confident about the future.

"The unit is in an excellent place right now," the CO says.

"We've got this great role supporting the 2nd Commando Regiment, we've got a defined trade model and we have cut away all the chaff.

"The guys come to us fully qualified and we maintain and nurture their skills.

"It's a good spot to be in."



IRREGULAR SUPPORT

SPECIAL OPERATIONS LOGISTICS SQUADRON

WORDS MITCHELL SUTTON AND SERGEI DESILVA-RANASINGHE PHOTOS ADF

Providing logistic support to Australia's Special Operations Command (SOCOMD) is the role and responsibility of the Special Operations Logistics Squadron (SOLS), which is the only independent logistics squadron within the Australian Army. The unit performs normal logistics functions such as maintenance, distribution and warehousing as well as more specialised functions including movements, rapid fabrication and contracting. As it has evolved, SOLS has become something akin to a jack-of-all-trades.

Originally raised in 2003 as the Special Operations Combat Service Support Company (SOCSSC), the unit was renamed in 2007.

SOLS is responsible for providing logistics support to the range of units that constitute SOCOMD.

These include the SASR and the two commando regiments, the Special Operations Engineer Regiment, Special Forces Training Centre, Parachute Training School and Special Operations Headquarters.

Similarly, the unit is tasked with supporting international deployments, domestic counter-terrorist operations, exercises and training.

In its 10 years of operation, the squadron has developed a range of specialist and niche capabilities reflecting the unique requirements of SOCOMD.

Officer Commanding Major K (whose name has been suppressed for security reasons), explains that a good example of this range of capabilities is the Rapid Fabrication Cell.

"Over the past four years, the cell has developed the ability to rapidly develop prototype equipment when new requirements arise, make modifications to in-service equipment to meet specific operational needs, and produce unique items for operators," Major K says.

"To do this, SOLS provides specialist training for maintenance staff, and employs a range of high-tech machines, such as a computer and numerically controlled five-axis lathe and a 3D printer."

While it has a vital role, SOLS remains relatively small, with just over 100 full-time personnel and around 20 reservists.

The unit trains its people to be multi-skilled across a range of logistical tasks. All SOLS personnel are capable of fulfilling roles outside their primary specialisation.

It is also able to

deploy in small groups at short notice, and can operate with little or no supervision.

"Ultimately, it is about getting the operators the right support, at the right time and the right place," Major K says.

"While the squadron staff do not undergo the rigorous selection that special-forces soldiers do, SOLS does rely on the Army's personnel managers to send mature and capable logisticians.

Major K says, "The backbone of the unit's capability is highly competent soldiers".

The squadron has been heavily involved in SOCOMD's commitment to operations over the past decade and have deployed extensively to Iraq and Afghanistan providing critical logistical support to the Special Operations Task Group.

While its operational commitments have recently reduced, SOLS remains focussed on providing support to SOCOMD in training and in operational environments.

With this operational experience and the growing role of special forces, SOLS has secured an integral role with SOCOMD.

According to Major K, "SOCOMD's roles and tasks will continue to evolve in the future, so to remain relevant, SOLS will continue to grow into those niche areas of logistic support that no one else can provide".

"With the right people and the continuing support we have, we will be able to live up to our motto – 'assured support'."



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D: Phoenix-2 (175 mm blade, Z60 high carbon steel 56-58 HRC, ABS Polymer sheath, Elastron-G handle construction) \$ 199

E: Condor (178 mm blade, Z60 high carbon steel 56-58 HRC, ABS Polymer sheath, Elastron-G handle) \$ 210

F: Phoenix-1 Combat (205 mm blade, Z60 high carbon steel 56-58 HRC, full leather sheath, Micarta handle) \$ 249

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BIRTHDAY TATTOO

PICS BY CORPORAL DAVID COTTON

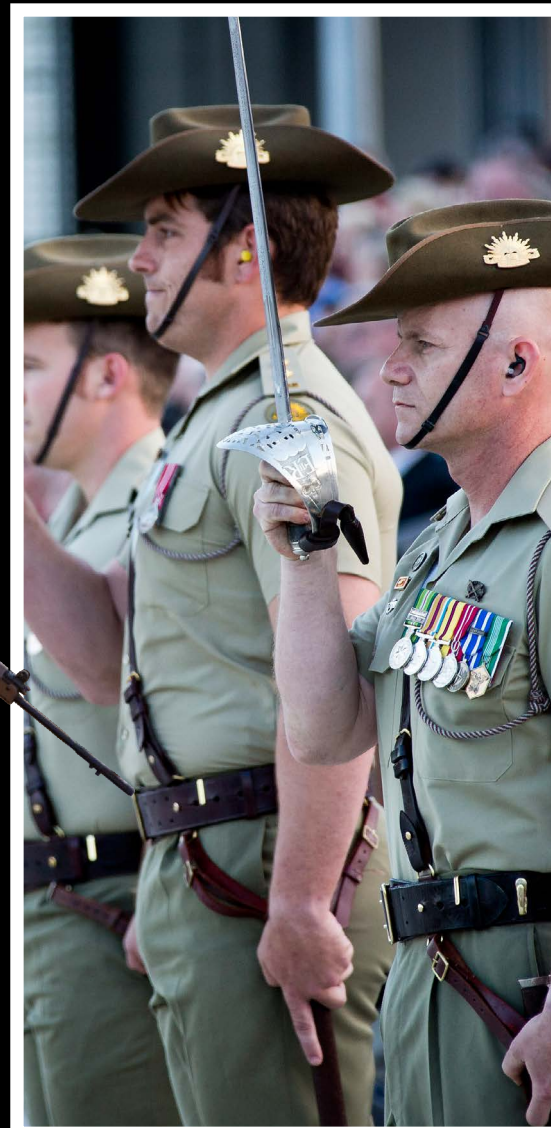
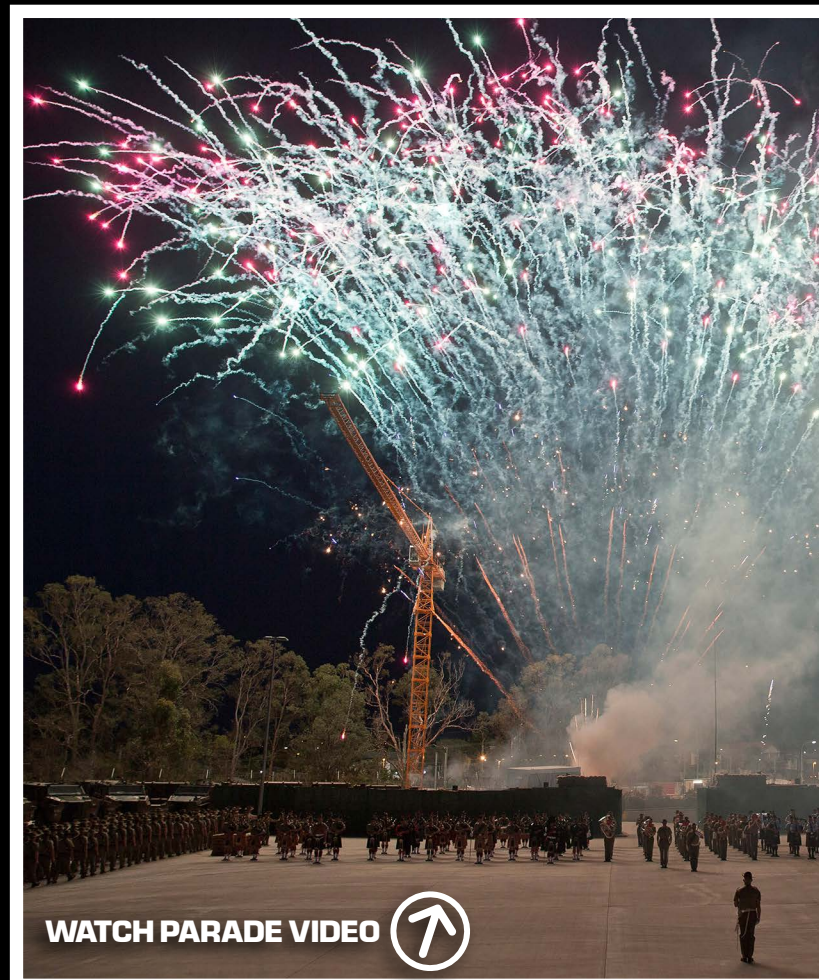
In the best traditions of military celebrations the Enoggera-based 8th/9th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, part of the 7th Brigade, celebrated its birthday with a full-blown military tattoo.

The party was for invited family and friends only, however, and was not open to the public.

In addition to the precision and spectacle of troops marching on parade, the evening also included capability demonstrations from the major units of 7 Bde and included vehicles, weapons, gun races and more.

A 130-strong Massed Pipes and Drums band, including members of the RAR Pipes and Drums, Police Pipes and Drums, St Andrews Pipes and Drums and Brisbane Boys College Pipes and Drums; and the 1 Regiment Band performed regimental tunes.

There was also a 'walk through time' segment with re-enactors and vintage fighting vehicles covering both World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, East Timor and Afghanistan, as well as an acknowledgement of the veteran community and special guest performances.



WATCH PARADE VIDEO



AUST GEO RECOGNISES SOLDIERS' SPIRIT



Private Heath Jamieson and Corporal Seamus Donaghue, who trekked to the South Pole with Prince Harry for the charity organisation 'Walking with the Wounded', were honoured by the Australian Geographic Society at a gala dinner in Sydney in October.

The Aussie soldiers were bestowed the Society's Spirit of Adventure Award 2014 to reflect their strength, determination and ability to overcome obstacles to achieve their goal of walking to the South Pole to draw attention to soldier-rehabilitation issues.

Both soldiers had sustained serious long-term injuries in Afghanistan and were selected for their sense of team spirit by Australian polar adventurer Eric Philips to tackle the grueling South Pole challenge.

Heath and Seamus – along with Eric, Canadians Alexandre Beaudin D'Anjou and Chris Downey, The Wire actor Dominic West, and co-founder of Walking with the Wounded Simon Daglish – formed Team Commonwealth.

Two similar teams from the UK and the USA made up the full South Pole Allied Challenge, originally designed as a race. But, after facing adverse conditions, all the teams ceased racing mid-way and made it to the Pole together – raising more than \$200,000 in the process.

The awards ceremony on 29 October brought together adventurers, scientists, conservationists and Australian Geographic enthusiasts to salute the courage and resilience of eight awardees.

Guests in attendance included AUSTRALIAN GEOGRAPHIC journal founder and patron of the Australian Geographic Society Dick Smith.

Prince Harry recorded a personal congratulatory address, which was presented at the gala.



Name: Seamus Donaghue
DoB: 01/06/1983
Unit: 5/7RAR
Wound: Gunshot through right leg

Watch an interview with Seamus as he explains his wounding and his long road to recovery.



Name: Heath Jamieson
DoB: 03/05/1978
Unit: 2nd Commando Regiment
Wound: Gunshot through the neck

Watch an interview with Heath as he explains his wounding and his long road to recovery.

Participants in the South Pole Challenge gather for a photo before heading south.
Photo by Peter Nyquist



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A NICE LONG WALK

How would you feel lugging a 50kg stretcher, non-stop, for a tad over 42km? Sure it's not everyone's ideal weekend escape. But then again, this was not your everyday walk – this was something special.

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY SAM WOODS

Volunteers from around Australia made tracks for Gunnedah in September to take part in the inaugural **Sharing the Load Challenge**.

People from all walks of life and wide-ranging backgrounds opened their hearts and their wallets to help raise funds for veterans' charity, Wandering Warriors.

From teachers to firefighters, builders to personal trainers, as well as current and former army personnel gladly got involved.

The fundraising premise was simple – three teams would carry three stretchers, each weighing 50kg, over a 42.2km circuit on the town's fringes.

On route to the finishing line, all stretcher bearers were doing it tough, including Doug Balcomb – a builder from Canberra.

"It's not real pleasant at the moment," Doug gasped, mid-stride on the return journey into Gunnedah.

"I've got sore legs, I know that much.

"I'm not exhausted, it's just my legs are caning.

"But I think once we see that road into Gunnedah in about 5km, it will lift everybody's spirits a touch."

Blistered and bruised, six hours after they started, all three stretcher teams rounded the final turn for the home stretch.

Among them was ex-SAS major and Wandering Warriors executive officer Quentin Masson, who was glowing of the team's finishing time.

"... just over six hours, there are a lot of people who can't run a marathon in that pace let alone carry a stretcher," the former special-operations officer said.

"That was a cracking pace the guys set today and fantastic effort all round."

Masson, who spent almost 20 years in the military before finishing up as a squadron commander in Perth, was humbled to see the people power in action.

"The motives behind this activity are brilliant and being aligned to an event such as this helps our cause.

"It's quite humbling to have people in Australia that really feel they believe it's worth supporting our veterans when they come back."

He said recent world events emphasised the importance of the Wandering Warriors charity and the service they provide.

"We just finished our longest war ever, being the Afghanistan campaign, and it looks like that job isn't quite finished yet," he said.

"Wandering Warriors is a strategic veterans' charity and we provide much-needed funds to veterans charities that support mentally

wounded, physically wounded and disabled veterans when they come back.

"There are a lot of good people doing good work in veteran's charities but sometimes they don't always have the ability to fund-raise so that's where we fit in – we act like an umbrella charity.

"There is only so much funding and grants the government can provide and it's really about a community response and I think this event epitomises that notion."

Also among the 'Sharing the Load' stretcher bearers was a spirited bunch from the Australian Defence Force Academy.

The team travelled by car from Canberra overnight on Friday to meet up with their fellow stretcher teams just hours before stopping off in Gunnedah about 5am on Saturday.

The budding defence officers had considered other team-building events like Tough Mudder but settled on Sharing the Load because of the meaning the challenge represented.

"It keeps everything in perspective," ADFA team member Luke Ede-Jones said.

"You think I'm going through pain but the cause we're doing this for is people who have been through much more pain than we'll probably ever go through."

It was a sentiment echoed by Jenny Fitzpatrick who was part of Brisbane-based stretcher team.

"It was tough and challenging but not nearly as challenging as what our servicemen and women have been through," Jenny said.

"I'm so glad I did it because it has raised so much more awareness for the cause which is why we did it and being here and raising the money for this fabulous charity."

Event co-ordinator Greg Sams, from Gunnedah's Battle PT 2380, was proud as punch of all members for completing the task, especially his locally trained Gunnedah stretcher team.

"We've done something like this now and achieved it," Sams said.

"It was down to 10, nine and sometimes seven or eight people per stretcher and we still smashed it.

"A lot of them wanted to give up. You could see them bending over, so you'd come and give them a slap on the back and they'd push through."

A highlight for Sams was the courage exhibited by these everyday Aussies to push their own known physical and mental boundaries.



Veterans see this, and think, 'well, people actually appreciate us'

"The best thing is we had three stretchers start and three finish," he said.

"We had contingency plans that we might have to drop one stretcher team and blend them into the remaining two teams – it could have come to that but it didn't because everybody dug deep.

"They kept going even though they were hurting.

"I'm proud of them, but they should also be proud of themselves."

Another person clocking up the miles on the stretcher teams was Wandering Warriors chief executive officer Audie Moldre.

The 66-year-old Vietnam veteran reckoned the most onerous lifting he had done lately was swinging a golf club.

"The heaviest thing I've lifted in the last five years is a one wood," Moldre joked.

"Even that would be better if I could keep it down the centre," he laughed.

On a serious note though, Moldre was impressed by the commitment of the teams to go the distance.

"These guys are awesome, I'm blown away by the way everyone hung in there and did so well – it's just brilliant," he said.

He considered the Sharing the Load challenge good preparation for another Wandering Warriors walk, from Brisbane to Canberra, which also raised funds and awareness for their not-for-profit charity.

Moldre felt the sense of community and motivations behind the people involved in the stretcher challenge hit at the heart of what the Wandering Warriors organisation is all about.

"For the wounded, the injured, the ill, community is the thing, and this is exactly what it is about.

"Everybody who has sponsored Greg (challenge co-ordinator), put money up. That's community in front of you.

"People see this, veterans see this, and think, 'well, people actually appreciate us'.

"My war was Vietnam and people didn't get much appreciation after coming home from that one I can tell you.

"And we can never do that again to veterans.

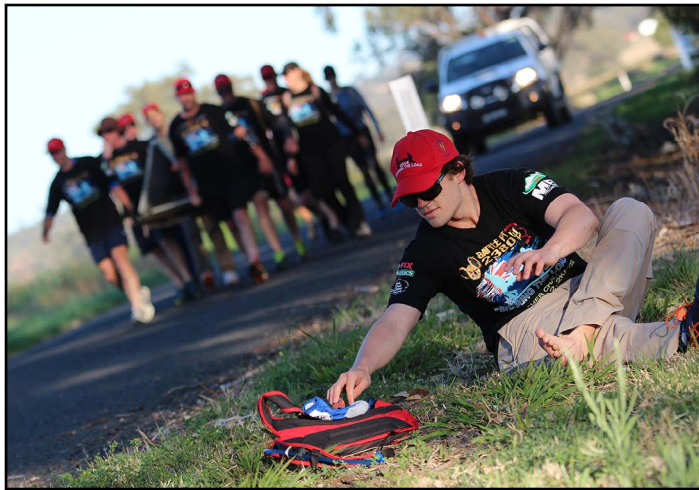
"What these guys do in uniform, they do on behalf of all of us.

"I don't think there's a better brand than uniform these days when you look at community and say, who can you trust."

More than \$30,000 was raised for Wandering Warriors through the Sharing the Load challenge.

Co-ordinator Greg Sams said plans were already underway to stage a bigger and better stretcher challenge next year.

For more information on Wandering Warriors or to donate, go to www.wanderingwarriors.org



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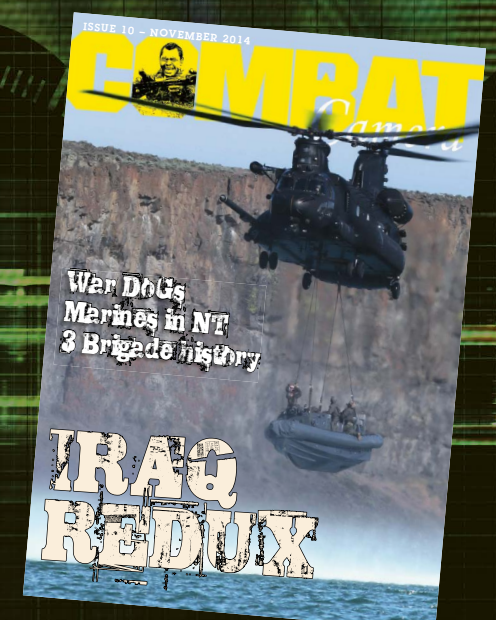
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LETTERS HOME – For Christmas

Garett Freeman – Comms expert



Photo by Corporal Janine Fabre

Queenslander and Australian Army Signaller Garett Freeman is keeping soldiers connected as part of his work as an information systems technician in Afghanistan – a role that will be very important to a great many people over Christmas.

The former Kuranda lad is responsible for server maintenance, troubleshooting and making sure the email and computer systems are running efficiently for Australians at Kandahar Airfield.

"I've also worked with other nations such as the Americans and Germans for the integration of our systems," he said.

"It's been interesting and a bit of a challenge working with the Americans. They are trained a bit differently to us, so jobs might take a bit longer with them, but we always get through it."

"After finishing Cairns State High in 2002, Garett worked in bars and restaurants before joining the Army 10 years later.

He joined on the advice of his older brother Marcus who is a sergeant in Armoured Corps.

"I saw how much he enjoyed the lifestyle – he really enjoyed the work and told me stories about exercises," Garett said.

"He gave me advice on what jobs to choose. He had scoped out all the roles in terms of training and what qualifications I might get."

Garett is now posted to Townsville but visits his parents Murray and Laura in Kuranda whenever he can.

"Mum is a bit worried about me being deployed," he said. "But she's been through it

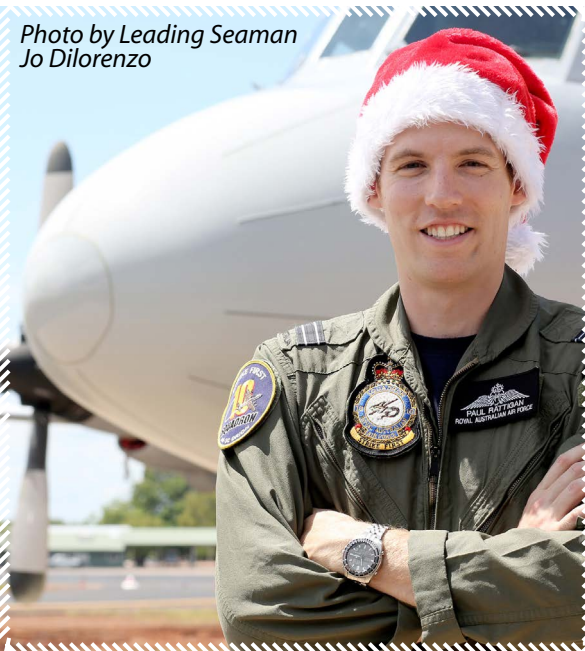
before with my brother, so she knows how to deal with it.

"My dad's a bit more used to me being here. I stay in regular contact with them."

Garett's eight month deployment to Afghanistan is due to end early next year.

Paul Rattigan – Didn't hit Santa

Photo by Leading Seaman Jo Dilozenzo



Western Australian Flight Lieutenant Paul Rattigan had to keep clear of Santa's sleigh last Christmas as he navigated his Royal Australian Air Force AP3-3C Orion through the skies of northern Australia.

It was the first Christmas away from home for the former Lesmurdie Senior High School student since joining the ADF in 2004.

He was one of about 500 personnel deployed over Christmas 2013 on Operation Resolute, the ADF's contribution to Australia's border security effort.

Paul, 28, experienced a number of highlights since joining the Defence Force and lists his deployment on Operation Slipper in Afghanistan and a successful search-and-rescue in the Solomon Islands as two of the most significant.

High on a long list of reasons why Paul was looking forward to returning home after Christmas last year was that wife Vanessa had recently given birth to their first child, Zoe.

Paul said he was grateful for the support of his wife and said she was very proud of his role in the ADF.

"We're high-school sweethearts and she is such a wonderful support.

"It was hard being away from her and Zoe for Christmas. I certainly missed them, but it gave me a lot to look forward to."

He said he and his colleagues celebrated Christmas by wearing Christmas hats on the aircraft during their patrols.

Martin Gillet – Double Christmas

Martin Gillet's passion for the sea took the Jurien Bay local from the Western Australia coast to Christmas Island last Christmas, for border-protection duties.

Martin got a taste for Defence when he participated in the Navy Gap Year Program in 2009.

"During my gap year I took part in the largest maritime exercise the Navy participates in, RIMPAC, off the coast of Hawaii," he said.

After that, Martin returned to Perth and worked with the merchant Navy, volunteering as a youth development leader onboard the tall ship Leeuwin II.



Photo by Leading Seaman Jo Dilozenzo

"I really enjoyed my time volunteering onboard Leeuwin, knowing that the Navy would pay me to do something I enjoy wasn't a hard decision to sign up to as a career."

He was also fortunate to be in Sydney for the International Fleet Review, where he witnessed the tall-ship entry and worked at Garden Island during the international warship entry.

"The IFR was an amazing event, I was like a kid in a toy shop," Martin said.

"The city was abuzz and I was surrounded by a true passion of mine."

Martin found his passion for the sea at age 14 during a stint working on various charter boats in Jurien Bay, Western Australia.

Last year was his first Christmas away from home while deployed at sea.

"Normally my family would get together in Perth for a big Christmas lunch. This year it will be a little quieter for me without my four sisters around."

Alex Fairfield – Afghan Christmas

Army trooper and proud Victorian Alex Fairfield will be keeping things moving in Afghanistan behind the wheel of a Bushmaster protected mobility vehicle this Christmas.

Alex, from Altona North, transports and guards Aussie soldiers who work as advisors at the Afghan National Army's 205 Hero Corps at Kandahar Airfield and is due to finish his eight-month deployment early next year.



Photo by Corporal Janine Fabre

Qualified to drive ASLAVs and APCs, Alex is driving a Bushmaster on this deployment.

"Bushmasters are pretty fun to drive and not a lot of effort goes into handling the vehicle itself. You're mostly scanning your arcs and looking out for children crossing the road," he said.

Alex, now 23, left St Pauls College in 2011 before joining the Army the following year.

"I was sick of university and I wanted to do something different and get some life experiences," he said.

Though Alex now lives in Townsville with his fiancé, back in Altona North his mother Alyson, his two brothers and his sister will all be sending extra Christmas wishes this year.

"Mum pretty much said 'I can't stop you going, so just be safe'," Alex said.

"I can tell she's very proud of me but obviously she still wants me to come home as soon as possible.

"My little brother thinks it's cool and wants me to send him more photos. But for my little sister, I think it's a bit hard for her to understand."



100 years of history

The Royal Australian Navy's International Fleet Review from 3 to 11 October last year was a grand spectacle.

Held to commemorate the centenary of the Royal Australian Navy's First Fleet entry into Sydney in 1913 when thousands cheered a moment hailed as a key indicator of Australia's progress towards national maturity.

One hundred years later, the centenary International Fleet Review was even more magnificent and almost as meaningful, as eight RAN ships, followed by 30 foreign vessels cruised up a thronged Sydney Harbour for official review.

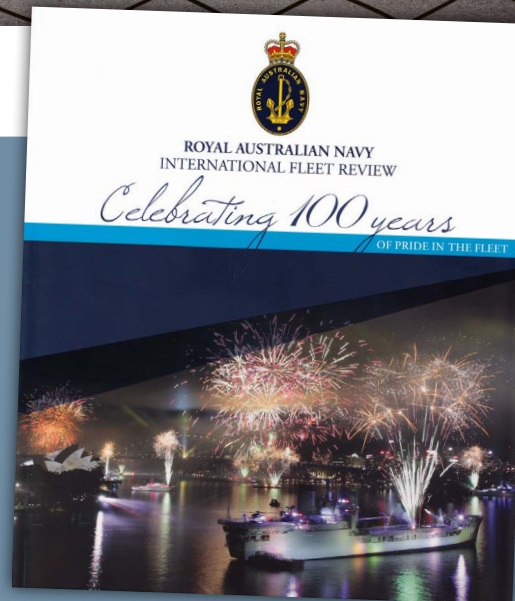
With a crowd estimated at well over a million watching from all the usual vantage spots, and many more watching on TV, the sky was lit up by a spectacular pyrotechnics and light show

the equal of any before in Sydney, as a city and a nation paid homage to a century of Navy service.

Royal Australian Navy International Fleet Review: Celebrating 100 years of pride in the fleet is a new and magnificent coffee-table book inspired by the amazing images captured by a plethora of Navy photographers that week.

But it's not just about that one week in October 2013. This book is a volume of immense weight and substance (both physically and metaphorically), which also covers 100 years of RAN history, and features a beautiful, informative and comprehensive catalogue of RAN establishments and current fleet.

At 272 pages of mostly colour images, rich stories and tabulated facts, this book is



definitely a 'must have' for any serious Navy collector or enthusiast.

This magnificent book – either or both a genuine souvenir of a magnificent event in Sydney's history or a beautifully presented history of the Royal Australian Navy – is available now in paperback at \$49.99 or limited-edition boxed hardback at \$149.99 from www.salt.asn.au

Kizlyar Phoenix-2

Despite constantly evolving technology allowing the modern infantryman to carry more with less weight, increase his war-fighting capabilities in the battle-space and allow him to respond to a wider array of scenarios, few things never change.

One of those things is his knife. Knives will always be a part of the soldier's kit.

However, these days, knives are not so much for offensive purposes, with rare exceptions. Large, Rambo-style knives are seldom ever used.

In fact, shorter-blade utilitarian style knives are what the modern soldier prefers.

This is where Kizlyar knives have come a long way. Instead of making knives that look good on film, Kizlyar field tests every single design for practicality, versatility, manoeuvrability, combat ability and, obviously, quality – which is paramount.

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The Green Army



This is the 12th installment of *Frontline Africa* in **CONTACT Air Land & Sea**.

We are proud to have done our little bit for the International Anti Poaching Foundation by covering their issues through this column and by carrying a free full-page ad for the organisation.

Having not received any feedback on this column, we weren't sure if the message was getting through – until we came across a testimonial from a young Aussie named Lachlan on the Green Army page of the IAPF web site.

So, well done to Lachlan for not only reading **CONTACT** and this column, but well done him even more for getting off his bum and actually doing something for a worthy cause.

If anyone else has a story to tell about the IAPF, do please write to us via editor@militarycontact.com

One of many initiatives of the International Anti Poaching Foundation is The Green Army – an opportunity for concerned world citizens to travel to Africa and volunteer their time and sweat on the ground to help save the rhino in a very practical way.

Rather than be a drain on IAPF resources, however, The Green Army initiative is actually an important funding source for the foundation, meaning all participants are charged for the experience.

But the cost is treated 100 per cent as a charitable donation to the foundation and, as such (depending on the tax arrangements of your home country), may be tax deductible.

Damien Mander, CEO of IAPF and a former Australian Special Forces soldier, said that by signing up for the IAPF's Green Army, volunteers

would be joining him on the frontline of conservation.

"Members will be integrated into the lifestyle of an anti-poaching ranger," Damien said.

"This means heading out on patrols with our rangers, checking for snares and ensuring the integrity of the property is kept.

"As custodians of a number of black rhino, this is a task we don't take lightly.

"During patrols Green Army members will learn bushcraft, botany and tracking with our experienced scouts while getting up close and personal with Africa's magnificent wildlife.

"But it's not a holiday. While the camp is comfortable, it is a working camp and members are required to pull their weight with daily duties and tasks.

"It's hard work, but they'll be able to go home afterwards and say that they have helped us conserve some of Africa's most pristine wilderness and wildlife."

Damien said that he was in Africa for something other than satisfying his own objectives and aspirations – and he expected Green Army volunteers to be equally passionate and committed.

"We are here to make a difference and create hope for tomorrow.

"This cannot happen without our Green Army.

"We will be grateful to have you join us here and you can

be part of a very positive step for our future.

"Regardless of how you think you might fit in, contributions to our mission come in many forms and your stay will be a journey you will always look back on with pride."

One Green Army volunteer, Lachlan, 23, from Australia said the first time he heard about the IAPF was when he read an article in **CONTACT** magazine a few years ago.

"Then I followed the IAPF on social media, and saw the 60 Minutes story," Lachlan said.

"I think it's a really worthwhile cause and I wanted to be involved and support it where I can, so I came over to see what it's all about.

"It's met all my expectations – it's pretty much exactly what I expected.

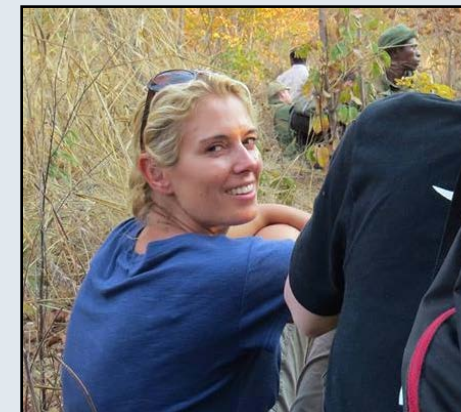
"I like the fact that we got to be out in the reserve. We got to see all the wildlife, and you can interact with them – and it's all to benefit them.

"You're not there exploiting them and doing elephant rides or going to all the usual touristy places where animals are kept caged up.

"You're seeing them out in the wild and we're helping them stay that way.

"My least favourite part was the stink bugs! I was having a hissy fit with them at the waterhole!

"Maybe the heat too, that's the thing that bothered me the most – apart from the stinkbugs – but all that's out of IAPF's control.



Left: Carla from South Africa on patrol with IAPF's Green Army.

Far left: Another Green Army member gets into the swing of things on a wildlife patrol.

Below: Lachlan from Australia got involved with the Green Army after reading **CONTACT Air Land & Sea**.

"I don't think there was any part of the program I disliked."

Lachlan said he would recommend the Green Army program to anyone who wanted to do something a bit out of the ordinary and support a good cause.

Carla Janson, a 35-year-old physiotherapist from South Africa was another recent Green Army volunteer.

"There are so many efforts to save the black rhino, but I wanted to see first hand what is going on," she said.

"I also wanted to do

something 'real' and not touristic that involved conservation, as this is a life-long passion of mine.

"And the experience was absolutely amazing, better than I expected!

"My favourite part was the patrolling and practicing the ambush techniques we learnt about – and my least favourite part was leaving!

"I'd recommend this program to anyone with a sense of adventure and who wants to have a meaningful experience."



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CLOSE BUT NOT CLOSE ENOUGH

Australians recommended for the VC but not awarded

BY MAJOR DARRYL KELLY

Lieutenant Leonard Charles Boase DSO, MC

NEVER SAY DIE

The man held his wife as she sobbed. He fought hard to hold off his tears as he looked again at the telegram telling them of the loss of yet another son.

Leonard Boase was born on 5 July 1888, in the Queensland town of Gympie, to English-born parents Charles and Harriett Boase. He was the second eldest of four boys and a sister – Dolly.

Following his schooling at Maryborough Grammar School, Len, as he was known, became an inspector with the Northern Assurance Co Ltd in Brisbane¹. While there he met a sprightly young nurse, Ada Hoskings, whom he nicknamed 'Bill'². The pair soon became a couple and set about making definite plans for their future.

Len was very proud indeed when his older brother Allan (b1884), was accepted as a staff cadet at the Royal Military College, Duntroon. With the onset of war, Allan was posted to the 9th Battalion as a lieutenant¹.

Following his landing at Gallipoli, Allan and the youngest brother Colin (b1889) who was serving as a private in the 1st Battalion, would often write to their brothers, Frank (b1885) and Len, telling them of the war.

But terrible news was received by the family, when they learnt that Colin had been killed in action during the attack on Lone Pine³.

Charles was upset with the fact that instead of being told by the authorities of the loss of their son directly, it was decided that a local clergyman would break the news to the family. Charles wrote to Army headquarters, stating in no uncertain terms that, as he had another son serving, any news of him was to be conveyed to him directly and not by "a complete stranger"³. Charles and Harriet did receive news within weeks, that Allan had not only been wounded but almost drowned, when the boat evacuating him from ANZAC Cove capsized.

Len was tormented by the loss of Colin and the fact that Allan was in hospital, suffering from wounds. He wanted to enlist, but he had 'Bill' to consider. After all she was studying hard to become a nursing sister.

He discussed the matter with Frank, who worked the family orchard in the rural hamlet of Caboolture. Frank was more than understanding and let his brother in on a secret – he was planning to enlist following the completion of the picking season.

With that, Len made his mind up. Len and 'Bill' enjoyed New Years together, dancing and celebrating, until the clock chimed in 1916 – when Len whispered in her ear of his decision to join up. She couldn't speak as she fought off the tears and merely nodded her head in approval.

Len enlisted in the AIF, on 3 January 1916². He was sent firstly to the 11th Depot Battalion, then to the 8th Depot Battalion, for training. On 1 April he learnt that he was to be posted to the newly formed 52nd Battalion AIF, as a reinforcement. But first he was able to take a few days leave to visit his parents and say goodbye to 'Bill', before embarking for overseas.

On 20 April, Len held 'Bill' in his arms, as they stood on the dock. They could hardly hear themselves as the bands played and the crowds sang or yelled up too their loved ones lining the railing of the troopship⁴.

A young lieutenant came over to the couple – "Time to get on board Boase!"

With that, Len whispered in his girl's ear, gave her a final kiss and boarded the ship.

As the ship plied its way across the Indian Ocean, training continued. But, eventually, Len and his mates rushed to the railings, as the ship pulled into the Egyptian port of Suez. The Diggers were sent across to Cairo where more training was planned. But this was cut short when they were sent to Alexandria, to embark for England. It was thought that the English climate would be much better to train in, rather than the scorching heat of an Egyptian summer.

Len joined the ranks of the 52nd Battalion – which was recovering from the recent offensive at Mouquet Farm – in France on 28 September 1916. As he looked at the faces of the soldiers, he was shocked by the vacant stares and dark-ringed eyes. These men had been through hell and he realised now that he was at the front line.

Boase settled quite well into the battalion. He was keen and dependable and quickly showed his competence. He was promoted to lance corporal on 20 November¹.

The senior ranks identified that Len had all the attributes for further advancement and decided to send him off for officer training in England. He did well on the course and, following successful completion, was posted as a second lieutenant to the general infantry reinforcements. His old



Group portrait of the officers of the 52nd Battalion, 7 March 1918. Lieutenant Boase second from left middle row. Photo AWN E01722

CO saw Len's name on the list and snapped him up as a platoon commander. Second Lieutenant Boase marched back into the 52nd Battalion on 21 April 1917¹.

June 1917 saw the 52nd locked in battle around Messines. The Australian line was only feebly probed throughout the day but sniper fire against the battalion's portion of the line, known as Odour Trench, was near-on constant.

A two-man team was sent out to try and neutralise the troublesome snipers. As they crawled forward, they came across a large party of Germans, numbering approximately 80, sheltering in shell holes. From their position, the enemy party were able to fire into the rear areas of the unit protecting the 52nd's flank. The Australian commander was sure that this tactic was being used to screen the movement of a much larger force, which he was sure was moving to a point where they could launch a strong counter-attack against the allied front line⁵.

Captain Maxwell of the 52nd approached Boase in the forward trenchline.

"Take a party of blokes, get out there and get rid of those buggers!" Maxwell said.

Len gave a quick set of orders to his party. The plan was simple – go over the top and throw as many bombs as they could at the enemy and force them to retire!

The Diggers steadied themselves and, seeing that all were ready, Boase gave the order – "Go!"

The enemy was taken by surprise and the Diggers were onto them within seconds. Some of the enemy succumbed to the Australian onslaught, while others tried to escape across the open ground. Maxwell ordered his machine-guns to open up on the fleeing Germans, so as to reap as many casualties as possible as they tried to withdraw.

Meanwhile, Len's party consolidated in the newly captured position and, using a supply of captured bombs, continued to pound the enemy, who tried in vain to establish a defensive position. But when an Australian artillery barrage rained in, the enemy were forced to again withdraw. As an allied patrol swept through no-mans' land, they picked up more than 40 shocked and dazed German prisoners⁵.

In the days following the Odour Trench action, Len Boase was again instrumental in harassing and frustrating the enemy. He and a party of troops went forward to an

isolated position and engaged the enemy so as to allow Aussie troops to operate more freely. He held this position until all his party's ammunition was expended, and then successfully withdrew to the safety of the 52nd's line⁶.

For his actions at Messines, Leonard Boase was awarded the Military Cross, for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty⁶.

Len received some great news when in late 1917 he learnt that his beloved 'Bill' had enlisted in the Australian Army Nursing Service, and would embark soon for overseas service in India.

In April 1918, the allied armies were struggling to contain the massive German onslaught, hell bent on seizing the channel ports and cutting off the allied forces. On 5 April 1918, the 52nd was in action and held the line from the villages of Dernancourt to Buire. Len's platoon was tasked to defend the most vital of all positions on the British front, the railway arch almost opposite Dernancourt⁶. This was key terrain, as it was seen to be the weak spot of the British line. Its capture by the enemy would give them a perfect funnel where their troops could get in behind the allied front. If it was to fail, then the allied line would surely fold.

Len faced a formidable problem – he held only one side of the railway embankment. The enemy could use the village of Dernancourt to screen their movements right up to the launching-off point for any attack. He had no real fields of fire available to him and, except the embankment itself, which was a mere 20 feet in height, no form of defensive obstacles to his front. If his men were to engage any advancing troops, they had to expose themselves above the ridge of the embankment, which made them susceptible to enemy fire.

One portion of no-mans' land was concealed by an old disused POW cage. Len knew that this would be a thorn in his side and he would need to be ever mindful of this blindspot. He did however have a concealed Lewis Gun position in front of the embankment covering the adjacent road. The 52nd was lucky enough to have two machine-guns and two Stokes mortars in support. He felt that his left flank was relatively intact, as it was being manned by the neighbouring 47th Battalion.

Under cover of darkness, the Australian units sent out patrols. Len led one. They advanced towards the



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river Ancre and could hear considerable movement on the other side. As they approached one of the enemy footbridges, they could hear a dog growl and bark, indicating they were not alone⁷. When he returned to his headquarters, he learnt that the other patrols had heard similar signs of movement right along the front. A stoush was coming their way.

As dawn broke, a heavy mist shrouded the front. The enemy used the fog to move up their attacking force, which consisted of units from four different divisions. The Diggers scanned hard into greyness. They knew something was happening – they just didn't know what.

Then, all hell broke loose as an intense artillery and minenwerfer (mortar) bombardment rained down. The Diggers huddled in the bottom of their weapon pits, doing their best to shelter from the shrapnel and splinters from bursting rounds.

Len was said to be an inspiration to his troops demonstrated by his "quiet conversation and the example of his own perfect coolness, calmed and encouraged his men and nursed their fire"⁶.

No sooner had the barrage lifted, than the Germans attacked with full fury. Len rallied his troops and they put down withering defensive fire, especially from the mortars and machine-guns, which soon broke up the enemy attack. Subsequent attacks were repulsed in the same manner. Len was wounded during one of these attacks but his leadership was magnificent.

He now faced the problem of mounting casualties among his platoon. His men had inflicted enormous casualties on the enemy but his numbers were dwindling, and dwindling fast⁶.

The enemy summed up their own situation. Boase and his platoon had held them up for more than two vital hours and they were well and truly behind schedule. Their attacks against the railway arch had been repulsed time and again and their own casualties too, were mounting.

The German commander was intent on destroying Boase's platoon so as to capture the arch and break the British defensive line. He chose to exploit the blind spot near the disused POW cage and attack the Australian's rear. He would do this as a last-ditch attack and keep the Diggers heads down by use of another concentrated Minenwarfer bombardment.

There was an uneasy stillness. Then Len heard it – the unmistakable sound of incoming Minenwarfer rounds. "Take Cover! – Take Cover!" he ordered, sending his few remaining men to the relative safety of their pits.

As the barrage lifted, Boase's platoon came under fire from the Germans, who had successfully snuck through to the rear of the Australian positions. Also, a strong party was advancing up the roadway directly towards the concealed Lewis Gun, while others were streaming forward from the houses and backyards of the village.

The Lewis Gun opened up and quickly dispersed the advancing Germans. But now the gun's position had been revealed.

The remainder of the Lewis Gun team were forced to use their rifles and bombs, to keep the enemy advance from the village at bay⁷. If the position fell, then the Germans had a clear run through the arch, enabling them to attack

in each direction. The situation was desperate. Boase knew it and so did his men.

Len rallied the remainder of his platoon, which now only numbered two or three, and charged down the forward edge of the embankment towards the enemy. Len and his valiant Diggers dashed among the enemy, throwing bombs as they went⁷. Yet, the ferocity of the meagre counter attack started to break up the German assault.

As Len urged his men forward, a German bomb exploded right between his legs, thrusting him rearwards. His body lay there without moving. Len's platoon sergeant, Bill Murray, immediately took command and continued to attack, only to be severely wounded himself.

But the aggressive actions of Boase and his men had done the trick, even if it was just for a short time. The Germans withdrew momentarily, rallied and again attacked. The concealed Lewis Gun was taken out by a mortar round but another gun was able to move up and take up a firing position above the arch. It fired directly into the massed Germans, as did the supporting machine-guns and Stokes mortars, finally breaking up the attack⁷.

As the Germans retired, they dragged the body of Len Boase and the severely wounded Bill Murray as they went.

The battle was by no means won but, thanks to Len's actions and those of his platoon, it bought the Australians valuable time.

Witnesses to the action reported that Len had been killed instantly while valiantly leading his men. Another report said he was killed while manning a German machine gun he'd captured and turned on the enemy.

Len's mates got word to Allan, to inform him of his brother's tragic loss. About a week later, Harriett Boase sobbed as she read the telegram telling them of the death of their son. Allan sent a telegram to India, breaking the news to 'Bill'.

The Commanding Officer of the 52nd, Lieutenant Colonel John Whitham, immediately wrote up a citation recommending Len for the Victoria Cross⁸. The citation was extremely detailed in its description, not only of the action but its importance to the operation overall.

Unfortunately, the recommendation was downgraded and Len was instead awarded the Distinguished Service Order.

A number of officers wrote to the Boase family, telling them of their admiration for Len. One letter even had Len's identity disc and a few other small pieces of his personal belongings enclosed.

Meanwhile, behind the enemy lines, Sergeant Bill Murray lay critically ill in a German hospital. In between bouts of consciousness he would look across at the unconscious, bloodied and heavily bandaged figure laying in the next bed. One day the wounded form woke and uttered a few feeble words to the injured sergeant – "How you doin', Bill?"

The patient in the next bed was none other than his platoon commander, Len Boase.

Len was badly wounded due to a gunshot wound to the left arm, and shrapnel wounds to both legs and his head. But at least he was alive.

It was now 6 June 1918 and the clerk at AIF Headquarters, London, scanned a cable from neutral

Full caption for photo on previous page: Left to right, back row: Lt VE Denne MM [KIA 26 May 1918]; Lt W Creech; Lt G Lee; Lt A McIntyre; Lt L Bibby; Lt RF Lade; Lt A Dyos; Lt WH Conwell MC; Lt HJ Air; Lt Rodger; Lt E R Hockings; Lt J Bonnilly. Middle row: Lt R Dickson; Lt LC Boase DSO MC; Lt E Harris; Lt AB Spiers; Lt GM Travers; Lt F Fearnside; Lt MC Croker MC; Capt WF Wilmot [died of wounds 25 April 1918]; Lt AO Bilson MC; Lt A Rowe; Lt Ivory; Lt R Barton; Lt C Marshall [KIA 25 April 1918]; Lt CW Wilson. Front row: Lt IJ Barton MC [died of wounds 5 April 1918]; Capt F Wilson; Maj WA Craies [KIA 25 April 1918]; Capt WH Christophers; Capt A Fraser MC; Chaplain DB Blackwood MC; Maj RF FitzGerald DSO; Lt Col JL Whitlam CMG DSO; Maj LG Tassie DSO [MO]; Capt CH Stubbings MC; Capt W Kennedy MC; Capt RH Williams.

sources in Copenhagen addressed to the Australian Red Cross, regarding an Australian prisoner of war. As he read the name Boase, he was confused and took the cable to his officer. As the captain flicked through a nearby file, his face suddenly went blank. Picking up the file he scurried off to his commanding officer.

"How the bloody hell did this happen?" the CO asked.

"There were eye witnesses saying that Lieutenant Boase was killed. This was backed up by the CO of the 52nd Battalion's report, and hence we informed his death to the family!"⁸, the Captain sheepishly replied.

"Get this report verified and bloody well let the family know he's alive – and fast!" the CO growled, thrusting the file back at the captain.

The Boase family were confused. Was Leonard alive or dead? Where was he? What if it was another mistake?

Allan had also received word of his brother's return from the grave and wrote an impassioned letter to headquarters seeking clarification⁹.

Meanwhile, Len was slowly recovering from his wounds in a German hospital in Kreigs-lazarett. He'd been saddened when his mate Bill Murray passed away on 19 May, finally succumbing to his wounds.

He wrote to the Red Cross indicating that he had lost nearly all of his uniform when he was captured and requested another issue. He also stated that he wanted two pounds per month drawn from his pay, so as to pay his own way as a prisoner. Most important of all, he was able to send a brief telegram to his family. It read simply, "Well. Don't Worry. Love To All – Len"².

On his release from hospital in mid July, Len was transferred to the officer POW camp at Schweidnitz¹⁰. He received regular letters and parcels from his beloved 'Bill' and his health slowly improved.

The officer prisoners monitored the changing mood of their captors as the tide of war went against them. Then on 11 November, the camp went wild when they learnt of the armistice.

Len was repatriated to England, arriving on Christmas Day 1918. It was a great Christmas present to say the least.

On 28 February 1919 Len Boase boarded the troopship which would take him to Australia.

Arriving in Brisbane on 20 April, Len ran down the gangway to the waiting arms of his beloved mother and father. It was great to be home and he anxiously awaited the arrival of his fiancée from India, scheduled for later the next month.

On 20 May 1919, Len paced nervously as the troopship approached the dock, and then he heard her voice – "Len! Len!" – and there she was waving from the rail.

The pair were married at St Mark's Anglican Church on 31 May.

Len's military service was terminated on 4 June and he returned to his job at Northern Assurance.

He lost his dear old father, Charles, on 23 February 1920¹¹.

In October 1922 Len and 'Bill' were blessed with the birth of their first child, a son, Peter Leonard Boase, followed later by a daughter.

Len became a foundation member of the Legacy Club of Brisbane in 1928, which cared for the widows and orphans of lost mates¹.

In July 1935, Len laid his mother to rest.

With the onset of the Second World War, young Peter enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force and was finally posted as a flight sergeant, air gunner, to 467 Squadron, which operated the four-engined Lancaster bomber from an airbase in England. Unfortunately, Peter was posted as "Missing in Action - Presumed Killed" in April 1943 when his plane crashed in France returning from a mission¹. The loss of their only son hurt Len and 'Bill' terribly.

Len rose to the position of company manager, eventually retiring in 1950.

He and 'Bill' led a quite life in south-east Queensland, firstly in the Gold Coast suburb of Southport and later in the rural hamlet of Buderim, in the Sunshine Coast hinterland.

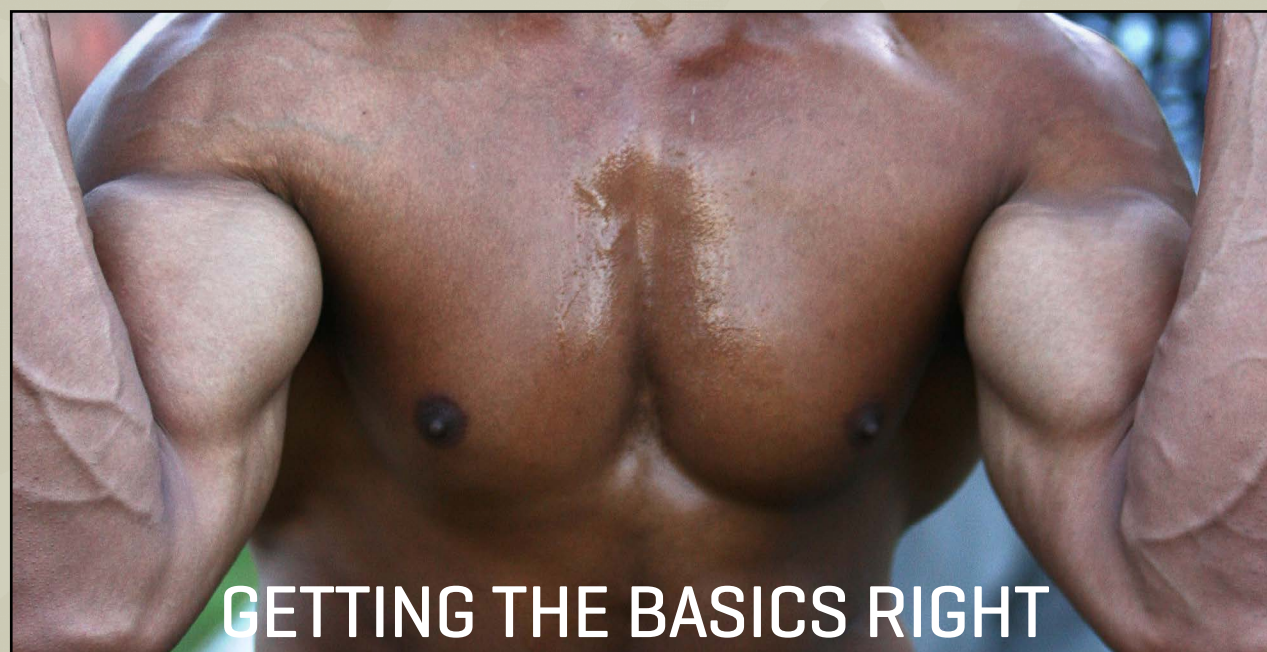
This gallant old soldier passed away in Nambour on 6 August 1975.

Testament to Len Boase's bravery and courage can no better be summed up than in the final paragraph of the citation recommending him for the Victoria Cross, which reads:

"To obtain a proper appreciation of the importance of his conduct, it is necessary to remember that the battle of Dernancourt resulted in a decisive defeat of the enemy and definitely stopped the German advance on Amiens. It is probable that no individual did more towards ensuring the success of this battle than Lieutenant Boase".

Notes

1. **Australian Dictionary of Biography, online edition – Australian National University**
2. **National Achieves of Australia: B2445, WWI Service Records, Lieutenant L. C. Boase DSO, MC**
3. **National Achieves of Australia: B2445, WWI Service Records, Private C. A. Boase**
4. **AWM 8, Unit Embarkation Rolls, 52nd Battalion, 1914-1918 War**
5. **Bean, CEW, Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume IV, Australian War Memorial 1936**
6. **AWM 28, Recommendation Files for Honours and Awards, AIF, 1914-1918 War - LT L.C. Boase**
7. **Bean, CEW, Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume V, Australian War Memorial 1936**
8. **Field Service Proforma – Report of Death of Officer - Lieutenant Leonard Charles Boase, dated 24 April 1918**
9. **Letter Major A. J. Boase to C.G.S Branch, Dated 21 .6. 18**
10. **AWM 1DRL /0428, Australian Red Cross Society, Missing and Wounded Enquiry Bureau**
11. **State Library of Queensland – Births, Deaths and Marriages**



GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

In this article I want to lay out some very basic principles of building muscle mass in the military-fitness environment. But before we dive into the big principles I just want to cover off the issue of when military members can realistically add muscle mass.

If you are an office worker in civvy street and you decide that you want to build some muscle, you probably have the luxury of choosing where and when you train, what you eat and to some extent how much rest and recovery you can get.

For most military members these conditions only exist in a barracks environment and for significant periods you may, if you're out bush, have limited resources.

For muscle building this is really the touch of death, and so a major consideration should be that if you want to add muscle you can only do so when you are in barracks and your tactical training tempo isn't too high.

Basic Principles

No matter what your situation the three basic principles of building muscle mass are always the same.

The first principle is to create fatigue in the working muscles with a moderately high volume of moderately heavy weights.

In general, strength is optimised with a low number of reps and weights that are close to your one-rep max.

For muscle mass the equation changes and it becomes important to increase the number of repetitions performed.

When starting out on a muscle-mass program it is a good idea to aim for about 40-50 reps per target muscle group with weights that can be handled for 8-12 reps in each set.

This tends to give you programs such as 4 sets of 12 or 5-6 sets of 8 reps, but it is also possible to move outside these bounds and do 10 sets of 5 or even a couple of big sets of 20 but these tend to require some fiddling with the loading parameters to make them work reliably.

Unlike strength programs where it is generally best to avoid training to complete muscular failure and the same body parts can be trained several days in a week and even on consecutive days, when training for muscle mass you can work to the point of momentary muscular failure but this will result in muscle soreness and a need to train each body part a maximum of twice per week with adequate rest in between.

This leads to body-part split programs with alternating upper and lower body days or, as seems to be popular in most gyms, an upper body day and then forgetting about the lower body altogether!

For military members, one thing to keep in mind is that while muscle mass is important in the military context, that muscle must also be able to perform useful functions.

Traditionally, bodybuilders have adopted a lot of single-joint isolation exercises (think bicep curls) to attempt to 'shape' and 'target' each individual muscle.

This is fine for getting up on stage covered in fake tan and wearing a posing pouch, but for military personnel I recommend the emphasis be on the big functional movements such as squats, deadlifts, overhead presses and chin-ups.

These exercises are the most time efficient way to achieve the level of fatigue required for muscle growth and they have direct carryover to the kind of tasks you'll do in the field or on deployment.

A limited amount of isolation training can be useful to bring up lagging areas or where compound movements exhaust one muscle before others (and I know you are all going to do some curls anyway so why fight it!).

Feed the beast

Once you have your training plan sorted its time to make a plan for your food consumption.

As I mentioned in part one of this article it is very difficult to gain muscle mass without adding some fat unless you are a complete novice.

The key to building muscle mass through diet is to eat an excess of calories to fuel growth and extra protein for use in muscle building.

To build muscle mass you will need to consume about 300 (women) or 500 (men) extra calories per day as a minimum.

This equates to about one full extra meal or two protein shakes per day on top of what you would normally eat.

While I don't recommend going crazy on the junk food, it is ok on a muscle-mass diet to include some of your favourite treat foods to push your calorie intake up.

Once you've got your diet beefed up a bit, you can add a basic protein supplement to make sure

there are enough structural proteins floating around your body to be used in muscle repair and building.

The most critical times for protein consumption in a muscle mass diet are early morning, immediately post workout and just before you go to sleep, as muscle building is done mostly at rest.

Sleep

The final piece of the puzzle is sleep.

I could write a whole article about sleep, but suffice to say that when you are building muscle mass the more sleep you can get the better.

Seven hours is the absolute minimum, eight is better and nine to 10 is optimal if you can swing it.

OK, so that's just a quick snapshot of the principles behind building muscle mass. If you want a full six-week program with sample exercise prescriptions and meal plans, email me at octogenstrengthcoach@gmail.com

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Cadets in beach 'rescue'

Cadets from 110 Squadron Australian Air Force Cadets were in high spirits and brimming with excitement as they participated in a high-flying opportunity during a bivouac at Yeates Creek south of Bowen in August.

More than 30 cadets and staff attending the activity were lucky enough to enjoy a helicopter flight over the property they were using for their survival-training activity.

During the activity, the cadets, of different levels of experience, were learning fieldcraft, navigation and survival skills.

Skills taught included the use of ground-to-air signals, shelter and campcraft, improvised fire lighting methods, as well as techniques for gathering food and water in the bush.

Senior cadets had to set up a landing zone for the helicopter, including smoke signals and ground-to-air signals to indicate they required food and medical supplies in a mock 'survival situation', to which chief pilot of Helibiz, Jenna Ryan and her Robinson R44 responded.

Flying Officer (AAFC) Adam Bradley, Commanding Officer of 110 Squadron said it was amazing for the cadets to see everything put in place by the survival section, which enabled the pilot to find us on the beach and land safely.

Cadet Corporal Craig Dorrian, a member of the survival section, said that putting their training to a practical application gave cadets a sense of urgency and determination to get it right.

"Failure would have affected all of the cadets who were looking forward to a helicopter flight," Corporal Dorrian said.

"When the helicopter landed I felt a sense of accomplishment for the effort."

Flying Officer (AAFC) Bradley said Helibiz had provided fantastic service for the cadets and he was very thankful for their support over past years.



500-day count

The Australian Air Force Cadets launched a 500-day countdown to their 75th Anniversary at the Gold Coast Show on 29 August.

The launch was attended by Surgeon General ADF Reserves Air Vice-Marshal Hugh Bartholomeusz and Commander Australian Air Force Cadets Group Captain Ken Given.

A team of more than 30 cadets set up a display at the show and performed an honour guard for Queensland Governor Paul de Jersey.

Top right: Air Vice-Marshal Hugh Bartholomeusz talks to Cadet Corporals Erin Labuschagne and Ethan Klingenstein.

Right: Cadet Corporals Lachlan Chadwick and Erin Labuschagne in the RAAF balloon with Air Vice-Marshal Hugh Bartholomeusz and Group Captain Ken Given at the Gold Coast Show.

Below: Cadet Under Officer Jason Huerto, Leading Cadet Martin Hume, Cadet Flight Sergeant Tasman McMillan, Leading Cadet Caitlin Avery and Cadet Corporal Erin Labuschagne man an AAFC recruiting display at the Gold Coast Show. Photos by Leading Aircraftman Michael Green



Pilot Camp

Australian Air Force Cadets from 2 WG attended the 229 Flt Gliding Camp at Warwick, Queensland, during the first week of their September school holidays.

Cadets achieved significant personal milestones in relation to their pilot qualifications.

Two cadets from the camp were selected to represent 2 WG at the National Aviation Flying Competition hosted by HQAAFC at 3 WG, Bathurst, New South Wales, during November.



Personal achievements from the camp: CCPL Oweria Janlongsin, 214 SQN, achieved Gliding "C" Certificate and was successful with her flight test for the awarding of AAFC Pilot Wings. CSGT Christopher Olive, 219 SQN, went solo and was presented with the AAFC first solo badge and was selected to represent 2 WG at the National Aviation Competition. CSGT Rory Duncan, 203 SQN, went solo and was presented with the AAFC first solo badge. CCPL Katherine Rummenie, 209 SQN, achieved Gliding "A & B" Certificates and was also selected to represent 2 WG at the National Aviation Competition. CSGT Brayden Clark, 213 SQN, went solo and was presented with the AAFC first solo badge. CCPL Miles Peric, 224 SQN, was selected as a reserve pilot to represent 2 WG at the nationals.



Further information on Cadets can be found at
www.cadetnet.gov.au

Rare Dutch encounter

Photo by Corporal Jake Sims



Twenty-seven air cadets from across the globe got a rare first-hand glimpse inside a Royal Australian Air Force aircraft in August – during a visit to Eindhoven Airfield in the Netherlands.

The cadets, including three Australians, were participating in an international exchange program.

Three C-17A Globemasters and a contingent of ADF personnel were operating out of Eindhoven, providing air-lift support to the international investigation and recovery effort for the MH17 disaster in Ukraine.

Air Force Cadet Casey Piket, from Hobart's 502 Squadron AAFC, said the impromptu opportunity to visit the Globemaster

and its crew was one of the highlights of his 16-day visit to the Netherlands.

"I really enjoyed looking over the C-17," Cadet Piket said.

"Actually it's been great visiting all the different Dutch Air Force bases and seeing their operations.

"The Chinook and Apache helicopters were also really interesting."

RAAF pilots and ground crew guided the cadets on a tour through their C-17, including the cockpit.

Exchange coordinator Peter Herbert from Canada said the overall program was designed to give young participants a wide range of experiences.

"While this type of activity with the Royal Australian Air Force is great, we also try to provide the cadets with a mix of cultural and educational experiences, such as visits to museums and to the Dutch Parliament," he said.

"But, they are air cadets, so this plus a gliding opportunity, they all loved."

For Cadet Piket though, the exchange has only increased his ambition to be an Australian military aviator, although not flying C-17s.

"I really want to be an Army pilot, hopefully flying the new MRH-90", he said.

Tiger drops in on bivouac



It's always nice when friends drop in for a visit, especially during a bivouac – and especially in a Tiger.

Where else but in the bush would you expect to see a 'Tiger' from Oakey Army Aviation Centre?

East Brisbane-based 203 SQN wrapped up a five-day annual camp on 1 October at Karingal Scout Grounds at Mount Cotton when the chopper dropped by.

The camp covered fieldcraft and survival activities, with some cadets also undertaking activities associated with the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

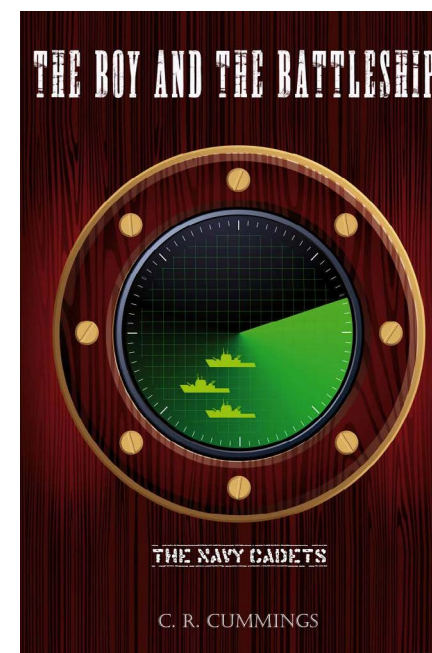
Image supplied by 203 SQN.

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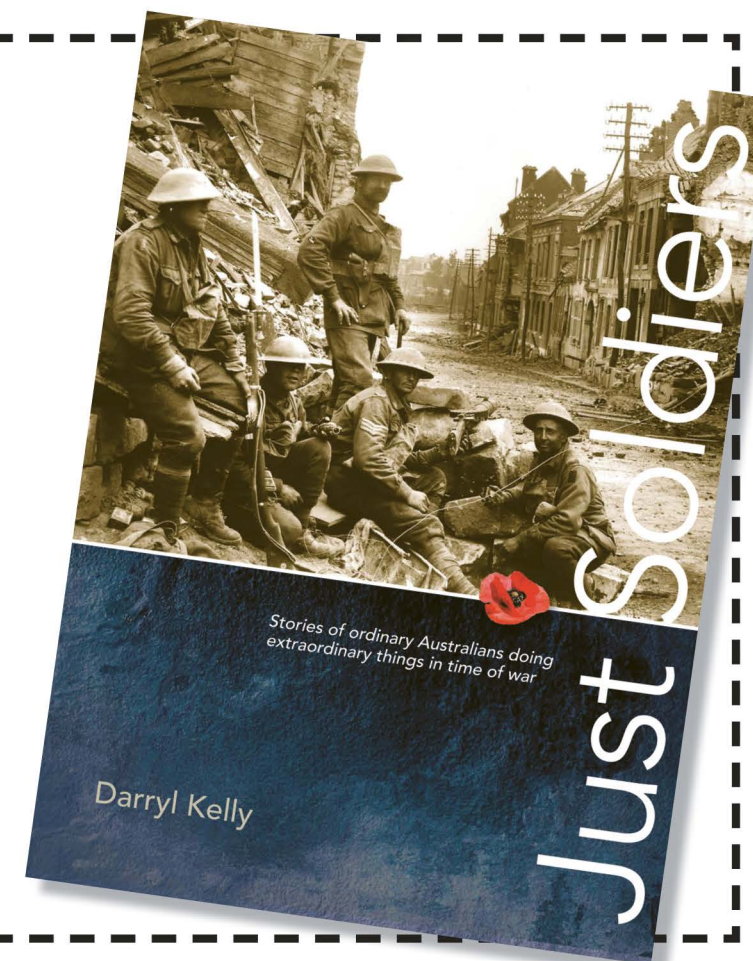
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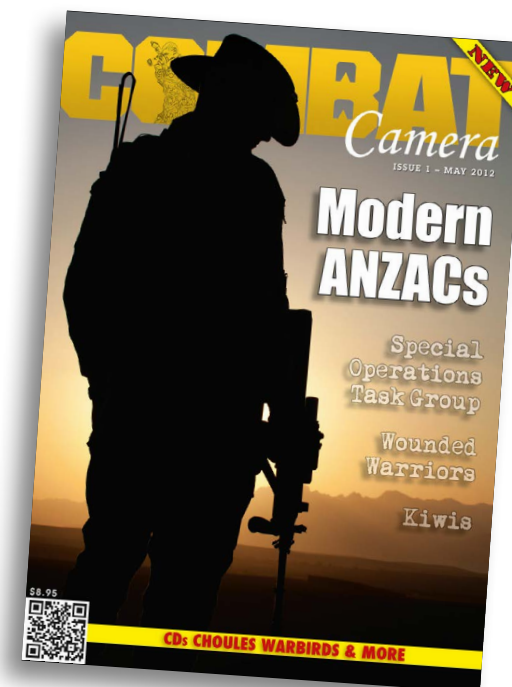


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AN INTERESTING YEAR

THINKING ABOUT WHAT TO WRITE FOR THIS EDITION OF GEAR INSIDER HAS MADE THIS ONE OF THE HARDEST INSTALMENTS TO WRITE. WHY? WELL, TO PUT IT SIMPLY, NOT A LOT HAS HAPPENED RECENTLY. WE ARE TRANSITIONING INTO A PEACE-TIME MILITARY AND THIS MEANS THAT OPERATIONAL DEMAND HAS SHRUNK MASSIVELY, AND SO HAS THE FUNDING THAT GOES ALONG WITH IT. DO NOT GET ME WRONG, DEVELOPMENT OF GEAR IS STILL CONTINUING. BUT THE PACE OF DEVELOPMENT WILL SURELY SLOW AND THE INCENTIVE FOR PRIVATELY FUNDED INNOVATION WILL DRY UP.

So, at the end of 2014, where do we stand?

— In September, we saw the formal launch of the Australian Multicam camouflage uniform (AMCU) and if you read the last edition of Gear Insider, you'd know that this was coming whether we needed it or wanted it or liked it or not.

— TBAS and the jacket, general purpose were a success.

— We're still waiting for feedback on the new combat footwear. Being that the Terra was chosen again, however, we're pretty confident that the same issues will continue because Defence has not made any significant modifications or improvements to the Terra that we're aware of. In fact, it is our understanding that Terra won the contract not because it was the best boot, nor even the best-value boot on the market, but simply because a whole host of other manufacturers didn't bother responding to Defence's request for tender because of the way that paperwork was written.

— Speaking of boots, the Chief of Air Force has issued a directive allowing Air Force personnel to privately purchase at their own expense, black boots for wear with new General Purpose Uniform (GPU) or DPCU until a GPU-friendly boot is issued.

CAF Directive 11/14 lists the manufacturers and models of boots that may be purchased and the conditions for wear. Sensibly, the instruction advises that if approved boots go bust on operations, members can be issued standard boots, unless the member can procure their own replacements by their own means.

So what black boot will the Air Force eventually issue? Probably black Terra because the contract with Redback for Terras includes a provision allowing Defence to order the Terra in black. So, if you're in the RAAF and you don't like Terras, at least you now have an approved alternative. Now let's see if the Navy does something similar when they get their version of multicam!

The future for new gear?

Combat undergarments is a procurement that is underway right now. Let's hope for some decent technical materials, although I did like the old cotton boxer shorts! There are also combat helmets, gloves, hydration systems, multi-tools and the usual re-tendering for other current items coming up.

We also hear that a refresh of cold-weather clothing is due next year, and with programs like Diggerworks keeping up to date with the industry, it's likely we'll see the most effective and functional cold-weather clothing yet. While that sounds pretty good, you need to remember that the ADF has always lagged behind when it comes to equipment for cold climates. Even the items purchased for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan were miss-matched off-the-shelf products with varying performance. What we should be seeing is an integrated, layered clothing system for cold weather. And let's hope that someone has the foresight to consider that we may be back in the cold again, sooner rather than later.

The future generally

Since East Timor, we have seen rapid growth in aftermarket military gear, which has just about peaked. Why? Demand was driven by operations and a deficit in suitable, modern, issued gear, brought about by a protracted period of peace.

Commercial interests did most of the development work when soldiers turned to them for equipment they couldn't get through the system, or just for better equipment. After all, it's your life on the line and you want to know you have the best gear.

Defence has finally twigged to this and, from the list of gear above, you will find some of the

best-selling aftermarket items are now standard issue. Of course, they can still stuff it up, but that is getting a bit less likely.

However, this improvement in issue gear and the recent massive reduction in deployments will see aftermarket demand and innovation fall off.

But it won't go away, because soldiers and the military have now become serious consumers, much the same as any civilian consumer, in that we respond to marketing, fashion and trends.

And that's a bit scary too!

Speaking of soldiers as consumers – a couple of retailers have mentioned an odd phenomenon in soldier spending habits, especially among young soldiers.

Diggers' after-tax and living-in expenses leave them with a disposable income second only to people living with their parents.

But, while they have no problem spending a couple-of-hundred dollars on beer and partying on a Saturday night, they are far less likely to spend as lavishly on a bit of gear, even something that will last a couple of years and make their life easier.

And many of them go for the cheaper, dodgy item!

So, as we move to the end of another year and we get ready for BRL, stuffing our gear away without a second thought, I recommend we all stop and take a good look at our gear.

Look at what has worn out, what it cost and how long it lasted.

If you really want to save money, consider that better gear lasts longer and is therefore better value in the long term.

And the best thing about good gear is that it won't fail when you really need it.

Have a safe and happy Christmas and remember to do your homework on gear.



I hope you have had a great 2014 and, wherever you are this Christmas, I wish you a safe, happy and healthy festive season – and an even better 2015. See you next year. GI



As always, you can send questions, comments, critiques, criticism and death threats about this column to gearinsider@militarycontact.com

WRAP UP

RIMPAC



2014

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US Navy video by MCS 2nd Class Corey T Jones
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