

ISSUE 63



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SEPTEMBER 2019

THE AUSTRALIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

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# CONTENTS

## ISSUE 63 – SEPTEMBER 2019



- 10** The Big Picture  
French Air Support
- 12** Heads Up
- 18** C-27J Spartan  
Buzzes the Gold Coast
- 20** **TALISMAN SABRE**  
Australia's largest exercise
- 32** KC-10 Extender  
Dispensing freedom juice
- 36** **COMMANDOS**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Cdo Regt turns 10
- 48** New Recruit Training  
Big changes at 1RTB
- 56** C-130 resupply  
Air-drop on Kermadecs
- 60** **DANGER CLOSE**  
Movie review
- 64** *DFSW Club*
- 66** Just Soldiers  
WO2 Theo Gysin DCM, MM
- 74** Q Store
- 76** Melbourne's last hurrah





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## EDITORIAL

Issue 63 – September 2019

**CONTACT**  
AIR, LAND & SEA



**F-22 RAPTOR  
ON TS'19**

Photo by  
Christabel Migliorini  
Starts page 22

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appropriate.

Seven pages plus the front cover of this magazine are thanks to a young woman with a passion for airplanes.

Christabel Migliorini contacted me recently when I said on Facebook that I would love to but couldn't attend a Talisman Sabre media event in Queensland.

A few email exchanges later I knew Chrissie's heart was in the right place and, after seeing her work on line, I was confident she could do a good job for me.

And I certainly wasn't disappointed.

But here's the deal – I got some excellent, front-cover-quality photos, and Chrissie got to go for a fly on a USAF KC-10 Extender. And that's it. No money changed hands. Just some good old-fashioned back scratching.

It may or may not be well known to readers, but CONTACT is a one-man-band product of passion and (currently) makes barely enough money to keep the lights on. I can't even draw a wage. And that's why I can't afford to pay contributors, no matter how good or professional they are.

With that basic fact placed on the record, just a few people choose to walk away – and that's fine. But, everyone who does choose to contribute to CONTACT does so willingly and freely and for a myriad of reasons.

Chrissie wants to build a name for herself as an aviation photographer, especially around south-east Queensland. Others want to bolster a photography or writing portfolio. Some want to scratch a creative itch. Others get hooked on seeing their name in a by-line or caption.

I was one of those people 25 years ago. I went on an awesome exercise that everyone agreed should be written about. I volunteered, was published in The Norther Services Courier and ARMY Newspaper – and I was hooked.

CONTACT has accepted submissions since day one. In fact, issue number 1 was 90 per cent submitted materiel from a band of brothers who met, very cloak-and-dagger like, in a Canberra cafe to plot and plan against 'the man'. Good times.

I'm telling you this now for two reasons...

First, if you have a creative itch to scratch, or want to build a portfolio or for any other reason, CONTACT has an audience for you to talk to. Whether you get published in this magazine, or on our web site, the audience is the same. So, please get in touch if you would like to contribute to something good – without getting paid. Some rules and restrictions apply, but we're pretty flex.

Second reason is that I am more and more frustrated by the (low) quantity and quality of information being produced by Defence's official sources – more than 200 of them!

Take Talisman Sabre, for example. Australia's largest military exercise rated just six press releases – two of which were 'start ex' and 'end ex', another on 'Boss Lift' – a purely coincidental activity – and another about F-22s – a USAF specific.

The quality pee'd me off too. For example, a good percentage of each press release was copy-and-paste overarching interoperability BS common to them all, which meant there was little new/useful information overall. The 3000 words I managed to cobble together for this magazine came from a range of different sources.

Before I get too carried away on this topic (I could write a whole thome on what's wrong with Defence PR), I'm putting it out there that CONTACT would really like more audience participation – because the official/authorised stuff is poor quality, low quantity and increasingly unreliable.

And, as Mrs CONTACT said after proof-reading this mag, her favourite bit was Christabel Migliorini's personal touch at the end (page 35).

Sincerely,

Brian Hartigan, Managing Editor



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# FRENCH AIR SUPPORT



HMAS Toowoomba supports FS Charles De Gaulle as a Rafale F3 aircraft launches during Exercise La Perouse. The Royal Australian Navy frigate was deployed to Asia in support of Australian Defence Force regional engagement objectives, interoperability with international partners and participation in international exercises. During the wider deployment, HMAS Toowoomba participated in the French-led Exercise La Perouse, May 2019.





A Royal Australian Navy light landing craft transports an Australian Army M1A1 Abrams main battle tank during load trials with HMAS Canberra. RAN photo.

## LANDING CRAFT MBT READY

The landing craft aboard Australia's Canberra-class LHDs have undergone significant modification and testing over the past two years to make them capable of carrying M1A1 Abrams tanks.

Chief of Navy Vice Admiral Michael Noonan said via Facebook that an LHD landing craft had embarked an Australian Army M1A1 Abrams for the first time on 25 July 2019, paving the way for the Canberra-class LCHs' final certification.

"As we draw closer to achieving Final Operational Capability for Australia's Amphibious Task Group, [this activity] marked the first time LHD landing craft embarked an Australian Army M1A1 Main Battle Tank," Vice Admiral Michael Noonan said.

In 2017, media reports based on answers given in Senate Estimates, proved embarrassing for Navy when it was revealed that their landing craft were incapable of carrying a tank from ship to shore.

A Defence spokesman told CONTACT in July that, since 2017, Defence had made significant progress to develop and expand the LLC's ability to carry large, heavy loads – "in benign sea states".

"Navy has included engineered wooden dunnage across the LLC decks to spread the vehicle load and protect the steel deck," Defence said.

"Navy has also worked in partnership with industry to modify the engine-room bulkhead, which has increased the craft's stability – meaning it can carry a heavier load after sustaining damage.

"A series of tests – including a scale model of the LLC was wave-tank tested by Marine Research Institute of the Netherlands (MARIN) – has shown the LLC is able to carry the Abram's M1A1 main battle tank.

"Operational trials of the LLC in Townsville Harbour and in Shoalwater Bay in July enabled Navy and Army to test this in real-world conditions.

"These trials have proven the LLC is capable of carrying the Abrams MBT and heavier support vehicles across the full range of sea states expected to be operated by the amphibious force."



Australia's surface-to-air missile defence will see Norwegian rockets mounted on Hawkei utes with radars built in Canberra.

## KONGSBERG WINS NASAMS AIR COMPONENT

Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace has been awarded a contract by Raytheon Australia worth Aus\$270 million to deliver Australia's National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System – NASAMS – components.

Raytheon Australia is the prime contractor to deliver NASAMS to the Australian Defence Force's Project Land 19 Phase 7B.

President of Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace Eirik Lie said the company was pleased that Australia had chosen NASAMS.

"The continuous technical evolution of the system and addition of users confirms that NASAMS is the most modern and advanced air-defence system in the world," Mr Lie said.

"NASAMS, produced by Kongsberg and Raytheon, is the backbone air-defence system for many nations for decades to come."

Australia's NASAMS will be fielded by Army's 16<sup>th</sup> Air Land Regiment, replacing its current and ageing man-portable RBS-70 air-defence system.

The Australian system, worth around \$2.5 billion, will be mounted on Bendigo-built Hawkei utes and feature radars built by Canberra-based CEA Technologies.

## FIRST HOME-GROWN F-35 PILOTS

The first RAAF pilots to complete an F-35A Joint Strike Fighter transition course in Australia have flown the aircraft for the first time.

Two pilots conducted their first training mission on the F-35A at RAAF Base Williamtown on 15 July after undertaking an intensive two-month academic and simulator-training program.

Squadron Leader William Grady, a former F-22 exchange pilot, said the transition course had been tailored to leverage previous fighter experience.

"The F-35A training is unique in that there is no two-seat variant to aid airborne instruction," Squadron Leader Grady said.

"As a result, we do comparatively more simulator training before our first flight.

"It has been an intensive few months, but I'm happy to say the training is first class."

Commanding Officer Number 3 Squadron Wing Commander Darren Clare said the flights marked an important milestone in F-35A's introduction to service.

"Being able to watch the launch of the first two

Australian-trained pilots on their first flight was a proud moment," Wing Commander Clare said.

"Although we currently still send pilots to the US for training, this shows Australia is quickly becoming self-sufficient and it all contributes to our F-35A squadrons reaching combat readiness as planned."

F-35A Joint Strike Fighters from No.3 Squadron conduct instrument landing approach training at RAAF Base Richmond. Photo by Sergeant Christopher Dickson.



## RWANDA CITATION

Australian Contingents 1 and 2 to Rwanda on Operation Tamar were recognised with the award of a Meritorious Unit Citation on 25 July.

Tamar was Australia's contribution to a UN mission to Rwanda where around 800,000 civilians fell to genocide.

Approximately 700 ADF personnel deployed in two contingents from 1994 to 1996 to provide medical support plus security for the medics.

## BIGGEST MRF-D YET

The total number of US Marines rotated to Marine Rotational Force – Darwin hit a peak of 2500 in July.

This year's rotation features High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS), TPS-80 radar and an Aviation Combat Element of MV-22 Osprey and UH/AH-1 helicopters.

MinDef Linda Reynolds said the 2019 rotation represented the most capable and operationally focused deployment to date.

## BALLARAT HOME

HMAS Ballarat was welcomed home to Australia on 14 July following a highly successful nine-month deployment as part of Operation Manitou.

Ballarat spent 260 days deployed, patrolling from the North Arabian Gulf to the Southern Indian Ocean and nabbing 20 tonnes of illicit drugs worth AUD\$1.41 billion, plus half a million rounds of small-arms ammunition and 697 bags of fertiliser with a potential use in the manufacture of explosives.

Despite this success, Ballarat was not replaced on station, and her planned replacement next year has already been diverted to a new Iran-focused mission.

## REPLACING TIGER

Just two years after achieving Final Operating Capability – with nine caveats that could prevent its deployment on ops – the hunt to find Tiger ARH's replacement has started.

Defence's Capability

Acquisition and Sustainment Group issued a Request for Information on 1 July, with a closing date of 30 August.

Little detail was publicly available, but reports suggest Army is seeking 29 "proven and mature, off-the-shelf" helicopters to replace 22 Tigers.

## MIDDLE EAST

Australia is continuing and increasing its current contribution to the US-led Global Coalition against Daesh in Iraq and Syria, extending the deployment of a KC-30A air-to-air refuelling aircraft and redeploying an E-7A Wedgetail airborne early warning and control aircraft, which had supposedly flown its last mission in February.

Meanwhile, a frigate supposed to have replaced HMAS Ballarat on Op Manatu next year has been retasked to a new Iran-focused International Maritime Security Construct.

An unknown number of



Australia has loaned a VC to a museum in Ireland for 12 months – an event so unusual it required a change in legislation.

Defence personnel have also been promised to the International Maritime Security Construct HQ, as well as the short-term assistance of a P-8A Poseidon maritime surveillance aircraft.

For more info on all these stories, see the [News](#) section on our web site.



## HEADS UP

Photo by Corporal Tristan Kennedy



### JAP ARTY IN OZ

Japan Ground Self Defense Force (JGSDF) personnel successfully fired two FH-70 howitzers on Australian soil for the first time in June.

Firing their guns beyond 25km marked an historic first for the JGSDF as there is no military ranges large enough in Japan to conduct such a long-range firing activity.

Japan's firing of its howitzers took place at the Australian Defence Force's Shoalwater Bay Training Area during Exercise Southern

A Japanese soldier fires an Australian Army M777 in lead-up training.

Jackaroo, a two-week trilateral ground exercise involving Australia, Japan and the US.

Commander 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade Brigadier Andrew Hocking said Japan's first ever 25-km howitzer firing activity was a success for the JGSDF and the exercise.

"The JGSDF should be proud of the achievements it has made during this exercise and we were proud to be a part of it," he said.

"This capability is complex, so to prove that their munitions and guns are effective at that range is a real accomplishment.

"This not only gives the Japan Ground Self Defense Force confidence, but it also gives us even more confidence to work closely with each other."

Captain Yutu Goto, JGSDF, said he was grateful to be able to use the Shoalwater Bay.

"The opportunity to conduct this firing activity in Australia's large training area has been very beneficial," he said.

New Zealand's Defence Minister Ron Mark announced in June the selection of the C-130J-30 Super Hercules as the preferred option to replace the country's ageing C-130H aircraft.

Mr Mark said replacing the five H-model Hercules was the highest priority in the NZ government's Defence Capability Plan 2019.

"Tactical air transport is one of the highest-value assets available to New Zealand, offering huge utility to the community and the

nation, enabling movement of personnel and cargo around the country, the South Pacific, down to Antarctica and all around the globe.

"We need a proven performer, and this aircraft is tried and tested."

Royal New Zealand Air Force currently operates five H-model Hercules, the first three of which were the first C-130H production models to roll off the Lockheed production line, in 1965.



New Zealand is set to replace its Hercules – some of the oldest in the world.

## COSGROVE'S LAST STAND

A ceremonial "Trooping of the Queen's Colour" was conducted by the Corps of Staff Cadets of the Royal Military College-Duntroon on 8 June to celebrate the Queen's 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

Reviewing Officer for the parade was His Excellency, the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove, AK, MC (Retd), Governor-General of Australia – at his final military parade in uniform before retiring.

A graduate of the college, Sir Peter said he was pleased to review the 65<sup>th</sup> Trooping of the Queen's Colour at RMC-D.

"It is more than 54 years since I put on a uniform here at the Royal Military College as a Staff Cadet," Sir Peter said.

"It is to me most apt and very nostalgic to wear my uniform here for the final time as Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief as we salute Australia's sovereign."

Commandant RMC-D Brigadier Rupert Hoskin said Governor-General Cosgrove had a special connection with Duntroon, being a graduate himself then later serving as its commandant.

"It is a privilege for us to be able to mark this historic occasion and to pay our respects in this very special place," he said.

## NEW COLOURS FOR 5RAR

Governor General General Sir Peter Cosgrove was on hand in Darwin in June to consecrate, dedicate and present new Colours to the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment.

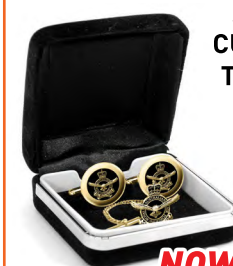
The Colours, which were last presented on 5 June 2008, are the symbol of the military unit and bear the battle honours granted in recognition of gallant deeds performed by its members.

5RAR laid up the old Colours in St Mary Star of the Sea Cathedral in Darwin the following day.

The battalion expressed its gratitude to the 5RAR Association members who joined them for the parade, and to the City of Darwin for their support.

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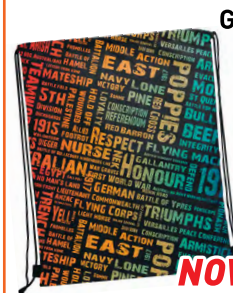
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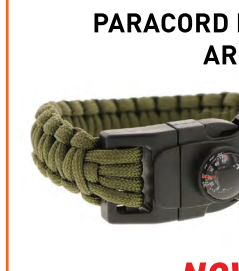
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Lance Corporal Steve Turnbull, 2<sup>nd</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> Royal New South Wales Regiment, in Tonga during Exercise Tafakula 2019. Members of the Australian Army took part in the Tongan-led exercise for the first time this year. Held every two years, the exercise is led by His Majesty's Armed Forces of Tonga with the New Zealand Defence Force, New Caledonian Armed Forces, Nevada National Guard and the United States Marine Corps joining to train together. The Australian contingent consisted of 16 personnel from 2<sup>nd</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment (Queensland Mounted Infantry) and the 1<sup>st</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> Royal New South Wales Lancers.

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# SPARTAN BUZZES GOLD COAST

PICS CHRISTABEL MIGLIORINI

A Royal Australian Air Force C-27J Spartan conducted low-level flying training in August between the Gold Coast and Moreton Island.

The aircraft flew from RAAF Base Amberley, commencing low level operations in the vicinity of Hastings Point, then travelled east from Coolangatta toward Stradbroke Island along the coast, turning back inland at the most-northern point of Moreton Island.


And CONTACT stringer Christabel Migliorini was in position to snap these great shots.

The ability to fly over different terrain in all weather conditions is essential to RAAF C-27J operations and aircrew training.

Australia purchased 10 C-27J Spartans at a cost of \$1.6 billion to fulfil Australia's mid-sized airlift capability following the retirement of the Vietnam-era Caribou in 2009.







More than 30,000 Australian, American, New Zealand, Japanese, Canadian and British sailors, soldiers, marines, commandos, airmen and coast-guardsmen came together for three weeks of high-end warfighter training in July. This was the eighth iteration of Exercise Talisman Sabre – a biennial joint-force shakeout, billed primarily as a bi-lateral Australian/US exercise, but with significant participation from a growing number of partner nations. India and South Korea were also present as invited observing nations – while China hovered up sig-int out at sea, as usual.

# TALISMAN SABRE

CONTACT Air Land & Sea – Issue 63 – September 2019

*HMAS Canberra, far left; the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, left-centre, the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp, right-centre and the Japanese helicopter destroyer JS Ise, right, break away from formation with 13 other ships from the US Navy, US Coast Guard, Royal Australian Navy, Royal Canadian Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force during Exercise Talisman Sabre 2019. US Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Kaila V Peters.*

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# TALISMAN SABRE

Running from 7 to 27 July, Exercise Talisman Sabre 2019 saw 36 ships and hundreds of aircraft converge mainly on Queensland for a massive military training effort.

Talisman Sabre 2019 was designed to improve combined and integrated training between US and Australian forces, focusing on combat training, readiness and interoperability, through realistic, relevant training.

Exercises of this scale are considered necessary to maintain regional security, peace and stability – and show the Chinese what we're all capable of as a group.

Rear Admiral Fred Kacher, commander US Expeditionary Strike Group 7, said Talisman Sabre became more valuable, more realistic, more challenging and made all participants better with every iteration.

"This year's Talisman Sabre was the culmination of months of planning spent preparing a challenging scenario and examining how, working together, we would respond to a tough and well-equipped adversary," Rear Admiral Kacher said.

"In addition to our Australian and US forces, I express my heartfelt appreciation to Japan, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom for sending their personnel to participate in this high-end exercise.

"Our experience here highlights the importance of exercising our combat skills together, so we have a better appreciation of each other's capabilities and how to combine into a lethal and cohesive force should we be called to do so."

Australia's deputy chief of Joint Operations Major General Roger Noble said Talisman Sabre 2019 – the eighth of the series – was the most demanding, the most complex and largest of the series to date.

*A 2RAR (Amphib)  
ASLAV drives off of a  
Royal Australian Navy  
LHD landing craft  
at Langham Beach,  
Queensland. Photo  
by Leading Seaman  
Craig Walton.*



"There are very few exercises of this size, scale and complexity where we operate in air, land, sea, cyber and space and we test the joint force and the combined-nation forces," Major General Noble said.

"This is the first time the Australian ships HMAS Adelaide and HMAS Canberra have operated together in a full tactical scenario doing amphibious landings as a combined force.

"It is the first time the US Army and the US Marine Corps, fired their high mobility artillery rocket system – HIMARS – in a live-fire setting in Australia."

TS19 emphasised developing short-notice contingency-response operations between the joint US-Australian forces in the air, on the sea, on land – and especially on shore where the latter two meet.

Amphibious landings were a prominent feature of Exercise Talisman Sabre 2019, hyped and promoted by the various PR cells covering the activities – though, despite the assurances of some PR teams, this year's amphibious landings didn't seem to have the same impact as in 2017.

Billed as the "Largest Australian-led amphibious landing and offensive assault since the Second World War", and with no supporting fact or figures provided, this year's photos did very little to support the hype or disprove the very similar size claims made in 2017 – which were backed up by impressive photographic evidence.

Despite this, however, landing craft air cushion (LCAC), amphibious assault vehicles (AAV) and

Australian LCH landing craft did indeed bring an unknown number of personnel, vehicles and equipment ashore at Shoalwater Bay Training Area and, a few days later, further up the coast at Bowen.

TS19 was also the first time Japan's newly established Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade participated, after travelling to Australia aboard the JMSDF ships Ise and Kunasaki.

Commander Landing Force, Japan Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade, Major General Shinichi Aoki said his contingent was excited to be part of TS19 and to prepare for the exercise's D-Day.

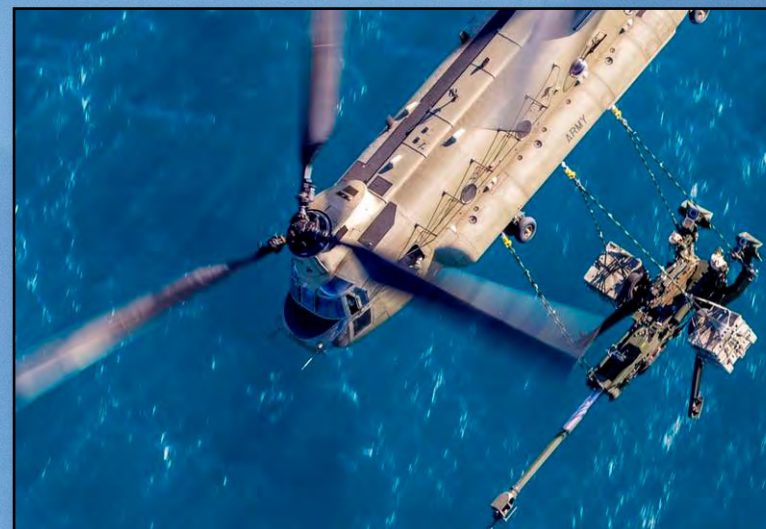
"We are able to enhance our amphibious operational capability, demonstrate it, and contribute to peace and stability in the Pacific," he said.



Main: Japan Self Defense Force members approach King's Beach, Bowen, on a reconnaissance mission. HMAS Adelaide in the background. US Marine Corps photo by Lance Corporal Tanner D Lambert.

Right: A CH-47 Chinook carries an artillery piece. Australian Army photo.

Far right: Leading Seaman Geoff Hermann supervises lashing a US Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey on HMAS Canberra. Photo by Richard Cardell.



British Royal Marine Commandos also played a key role, working alongside soldiers of 2RAR (Amphib), who are transitioning to a similar sea-based role.

Although joint training between the Australian Army and British Marines isn't new, Talisman Sabre 2019 was the first time a whole Royal Marine company joined the exercise.

The marines worked alongside 2RAR (Amphib) reconnaissance specialists and Navy clearance divers as part of a pre-landing force tasked to take out forward enemy positions and infrastructure and clear a path for the larger amphibious assault.

The Royal Marines were also testing and evaluating their own constructs on this exercise.

Lieutenant Simon Williams, 40 Commando, said the Brits were grasping new command structures, breaking their typical specialisation-exclusive troops into bespoke mixed-teams for specific tasks.

"This is all part of work on the 'Future Commando Force' concept, which will see Royal Marines embrace new technology and develop new ways of working," Lieutenant Williams said.

"It embraces a 'commando first' initiative where everyone is foremost a commando, but then handpicked for various skill sets required for the task, including snipers, signallers, reconnaissance and medics.

Extensive F-35B Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter and helicopter gunship support was provided for

the landings as MV-22 Osprey and CH-47 Chinook helicopters took up considerable air-mobility slack in the absence of Australia's MRH-90 air-lift support, after the entire Australian fleet of Taipan helicopters was grounded on day one, for the duration of the exercise.

Despite this setback, however, Colonel Matt Sieber, Colonel Amphibious for Australia's Deployable Joint Force Headquarters, from the United States Marine Corps, said the large-scale amphibious assault began three days out from the actual landing as troops prepared for the assault and surveilled the enemy.

"Once the beachhead was secured, the amphibious assault group moved in, using

amphibious assault vehicles, landing craft and simultaneous helicopter insertions into landing zones ashore," Colonel Sieber said.

Australian Army Colonel Kim Gilfillan, Commander Landing Force, Australian Amphibious Task Group, said that in a very short time, the various nations had come together as a cohesive team capable of executing complex amphibious actions.

"We launched a combined forcible-entry operation with teams from the US, Japan, New Zealand and the UK," Colonel Gilfillan said.

"The operation included simultaneous surface and air assault to secure key objectives and was preceded by sophisticated pre-landing reconnaissance and shaping operations."



Major General Noble said the amphibious assault was a key phase of TS19.

"Through exercises like Talisman Sabre, we demonstrate the strength, viability, and endurance of the alliance between Australia and the United States, as well as the varying levels of interoperability between our services.

"Australia's defence policy continues to be based on the three interconnected strategic interests of a secure, resilient Australia, with secure northern approaches and sea lines of communications; a secure nearer region, encompassing maritime South East Asia and South Pacific; and a stable Indo-Pacific region and rules-based global order.

"To ensure these three interests, the Australian Defence Force must be capable of operating as a joint force across sea, land and air domains, maintaining high-end capabilities to act decisively when required.

"The relationship between Australian and the United States is the cornerstone of our regional stability.

"Practicing interoperability builds our flexibility to achieve our shared aims.

"A credible amphibious capability significantly broadens the options for Australia and the United States to fulfill these requirements."

A few days later in Bowen, south of Townsville, US Marines, Australian soldiers, and Japan Ground Self-Defense Force members conducted multi-national amphibious, mechanised and direct-action raids on the small township and its beaches.

Assault amphibious vehicles loaded with Fox Company, Battalion Landing Team 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Marines, 31<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit, launched from the amphibious transport dock USS Green Bay, landing on the beach in waves along with Australian soldiers assigned to the Amphibious Task Group and Japan Ground Self-Defense Force service members with the Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade.

Following the landing, Force Reconnaissance Marines with 31<sup>st</sup> MEU's Maritime Raid Force pushed inland on Light Armored Reconnaissance Vehicles and up-armored Humvees, brought ashore by hovercraft from the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp, to conduct a simulated, limited, small-scale raid on a factory as a culminating event for the exercise.

Major Mike Mroszczak, 31<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit operations officer said the Marine Corps and Navy relationship was inherent to amphibious operations and, during a large forcible entry it became much more deliberate and focused to accomplish that objective.

"But, the fact that US Marines, the Australian Army and Japan Ground Self-Defense Force conducted an amphibious combined joint forcible entry into the same objective area cannot be understated," he said.

"Alongside the landing force, the US Navy simultaneously tied-in with the Royal Australian Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force to make this large scale amphibious operation happen."

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After completing simulated actions on objectives, the combined force rapidly withdrew from the beach-landing site, returning to amphibious shipping in preparation for the next potential mission.

A new and impressive element of TS19 this year was the first time US Army and Marines conducted a HIMARS live-fire serial.

US Marines with 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division, soldiers with 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division and the Australian Defence Force conducted the long-range High Mobility Artillery Rocket System raid near Bundaberg.

The training event began with Marines on MV-22B Ospreys from Marine Rotational Force Darwin seizing the airfield, allowing two HIMARS launchers from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division and two from 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion to be inserted into Bundaberg by two US Marine Corps KC-130Js from Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR) 152 and two Royal Australian Air Force C-17 Globemasters.

Major John Huenefeld, operations officer for 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 12<sup>th</sup> Marines, said Q Battery, a HIMARS unit from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division, demonstrated the flexibility and lethality of the combined joint force by conducting the HIMARS rapid infiltration from the air.

"That mission type gives commanders the ability to quickly deploy an extended-range precision-strike capability," Major Huenefeld said.

"The employment of HIMARS in this manner – also known as HIMARS rapid infiltration or HIRAIN –

*Below: An amphibious assault vehicle nears the shore near Bowen, Queensland, with USS Green Bay in the background.*

*US Army photo by Sergeant 1<sup>st</sup> Class Whitney C. Houston.*

*Far right: A Japan Self Defense Force member comes ashore at King's Beach, Bowen, on a reconnaissance mission.*

*US Marine Corps photo by Lance Corporal Tanner D Lambert.*







gives commanders the ability to shape the battle space and engage high value targets.

"HIRAIN missions also significantly increase the survivability of the launcher, crew and aircraft due to the reduced exposure to hostile fires."

He said this raid was just one of many opportunities the forces had to use and demonstrate HIMARS during their time in Australia at Talisman Sabre.

"With the range of the HIMARS and the ability to insert it wherever we want, we can hit targets just about anywhere in the world, in a very short time.

"The muscle of this system is just extraordinary."

US Marine Corps Sergeant Waikin Tee, a HIMARS operator with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division, said he and his colleagues controlled one of the most accurate weapon systems in the world.

"With HIMARS we can ensure that all of our high-value targets or positions of interest are destroyed effectively," Sergeant Tee said.

"And once we destroy our targets, we can quickly move on to the next ones."

Coincidentally, Australia is currently in the market for a self-propelled artillery system – and CONTACT is just putting it out there that these HIMARS demos may have been as much about strategic marketing as a warfighter interoperability demonstration.

Aside from the rockets and myriad helicopters and tilt-rotor action down low, air spaces over Queensland and its oceanic neighbourhood were also heavily active with fighter jets, bombers, air-to-air refuellers, reconnaissance and airborne warning and control-system aircraft.

Up to 12 USAF F-22 Raptors from 90<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, based in Alaska, were based out of RAAF Base Amberley for the duration of Talisman Sabre 2019.

Australian aircraft participating alongside the F-22s included F/A-18F Super Hornet, EA-18G Growler, F/A-18 Hornets and E-7A Wedgetails.



Commander of the Amberley-based Australian-US task unit for the exercise Group Captain Stephen Chappell said training with the F-22 stealth fighters would help to hone Australian fifth-generation integration and provide valuable training for RAAF pilots and support staff.

"Talisman Sabre builds on the regular exercises we do at Amberley, in the United States and the key training programs and exchanges with USAF and US Navy that we use to develop our tactics, techniques and procedures," he said.

"Integration with fifth-generation platforms such as F-22 and F-35 are key to how we will do our job both now and in the future.

"We train with Raptors annually, and this is a continuation of that journey and the ongoing pursuit and maintenance of full air-combat integration.

"For Talisman Sabre, we focus on how we operate and train on our F/A-18 classic Hornet, F/A-18F Super Hornet, EA-18G Growler and E-7A Wedgetail in the same theatre as this advanced F-22 stealth fighter."

Colonel Barley Baldwin, Amberley USAF Group Commander, 13<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Air Force, said his personnel appreciated the opportunity to exercise in Australia.

"Exercises and training opportunities like Talisman Sabre 2019 foster stronger relationships and increase interoperability with our Australian allies, as well as enable our aircrew and support personnel to become familiar with conducting operations out of Australian air bases," Colonel Baldwin said.

"I am excited for the 90<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron to return to Queensland where the squadron first established its long-term relationship with the Australians in 1942.

"During TS19, RAAF and USAF airmen trained for high-end, modern combat as we continue to build upon our 70-plus-year relationship."

Alongside the F-22 Raptor from 90<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, the US Air Force also deployed E-3C Sentry from the 962<sup>nd</sup> AACS, KC-10 Extender from the 6<sup>th</sup> Air Refuelling Squadron, and B-52 Stratofortress bombers from the 69<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Bomb Squadron.

Above: A RAAF C-17 Globemaster. Photo by Christabel Migliorini.

Below x 2: USAF F-22 Raptors arrive at RAAF Base Amberley to participate in Exercise Talisman Sabre 2019. Photo by Christabel Migliorini.

Opposite main: A High Mobility Artillery Rocket System – HIMARS – launch. US Army Photo by Staff Sergeant Nicolas A. Cloward.

Opposite top: An Australian Army officer watches an M142 HIMARS launch. Photo by Corporal Tristan Kennedy.

Opposite centre: Australian soldiers watch HIMARS action. US Air Force photo by Senior Airman Ashley Maldonado.

Opposite far bottom: US Army soldiers prepare a HIMARS vehicle for C-130J transport at Williamson Airfield in the Shoalwater Bay. Photo by Sergeant David Hicks.

Opposite near bottom: HIMARS vehicles leave the field after a fire mission. Photo by Leading Seaman Craig Walton.







United States Marines set off on a night training exercise onboard HMAS Canberra. Photo by Able Seaman Leo Baumgartner,

Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan added another 90 aircraft to the busy air picture.

Multipurpose amphibious assault ship USS Wasp's F-35B Lightning II fighters – the short takeoff, vertical landing variant – would have been an impressive sight too, when it used its GAU-22 cannon against a simulated target at sea.

During the training flights, F-35B jets fired the 25mm cannon in coordination with MV-22B Osprey tiltrotor aircraft and Navy MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopters firing 7.62mm machine guns – and dropped a GBU-32 1000-pound Joint Direct Attack Munition, and a GBU-12 Paveway II 500-pound laser-guided bomb.

After expending all ordnance, the fighter jet performed a vertical landing on the Wasp, reloaded and refueled with engine running, and had a second crack at the seemingly indestructible 'killer tomato' floating target.

Major Jeffrey Davis, F-35B detachment officer-in-charge said the execution of hot-reload procedures while afloat demonstrated 31<sup>st</sup> MEU's ability to surge offensive air support for kinetic missions.

"Our organic MEU assets and personnel demonstrated the ability to reload and refuel F-35Bs when executing surge operations," Major Davis said.

"With the direction of controllers on ground or ship, targets can be prosecuted with semi-armor-piercing high-explosive incendiary tracer 25mm rounds."

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Daniel Sallesse, aviation ordnance officer with the 31<sup>st</sup> MEU, said employing

four barrels in rotation, the GAU-22 was able to fire 3300 rounds per minute with deadly accuracy.

"Our skilled controllers and pilots combined with these systems, take the 31<sup>st</sup> MEU to the next level of what it means to be lethal as we are now able to rain destruction like never before.

"My ordnance team proved efficiency with these operations, and I couldn't be prouder of them."

Colonel Robert Brodie, commanding officer of 31<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit said the recent F-35B strike rehearsals demonstrated 31<sup>st</sup> MEU's lethality and readiness to address potential adversaries.

"The speed that we can conduct precision strikes with devastating effects while providing close air support to our Marines is nothing shy of awesome," Colonel Brodie said.

"Bottom-line – the F-35B defines shock and awe!"

Whether it was F-35s or F-22s, aircraft carriers or hovercraft, HIMARS or Hellfire, the array of platforms, equipment, weapons and professional users was pretty awesome all round – especially for those who got a good close look at it all.

Rear Admiral Kacher said he believed all observers and participants left Exercise Talisman Sabre 2019 smarter, better trained and more confident than when they started.

"We also conclude this exercise, with an even better appreciation for Australian hospitality.

"For so many Americans, Australia is a dream destination, and I can promise you that our sailors and marines visiting for the first time won't forget it."



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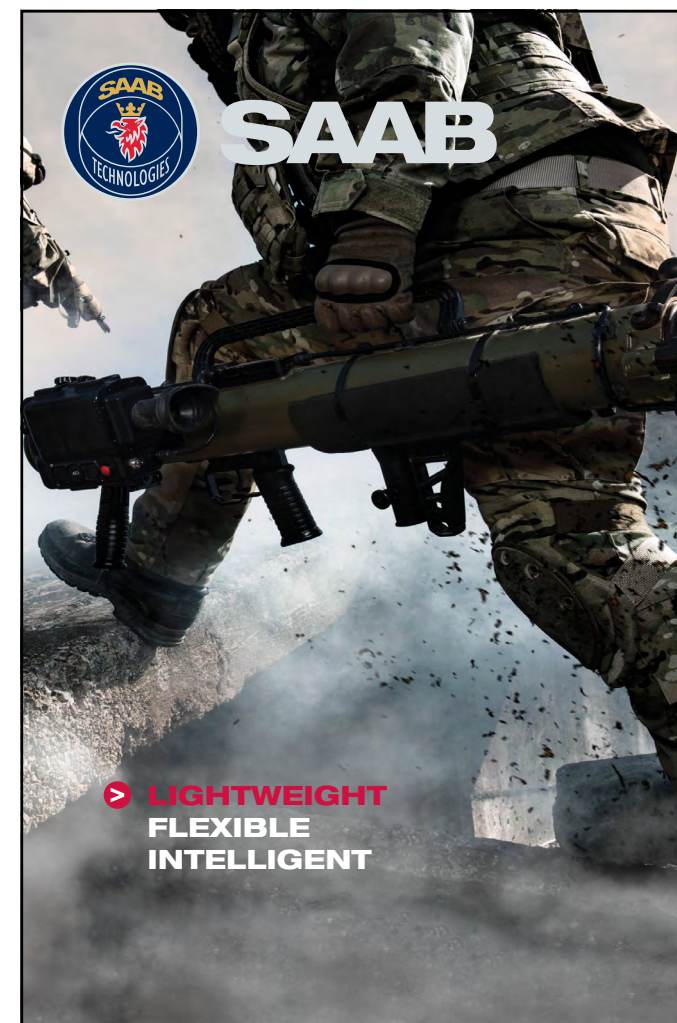


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One person who got a good close look at one small but important aspect of Talisman Sabre 2019 was CONTACT photography stringer Christabel Migliorini, who volunteered for the arduous task of flying in a US Air Force KC-10 Extender while it refueled American and Australian fighters high above Queensland's coastal waters.

The tanker was in Australia supporting Exercise Talisman Sabre 2019 and regularly refueled a range of Hornets, Super Hornets, Growlers, Raptors, Wedgetails and anything else that needed a top up with 'freedom juice'.

KC-10 lead aircraft commander Major John Langley said the flight up the Queensland coast from Brisbane International Airport – with Christabel Migliorini aboard – was a pretty routine sortie for him and his colleagues.

"Today was honestly pretty simple for us, but there was a ton of logistics and planning that went on behind the scenes to make it all happen," Major Langley said.

"Our piece is just a small part of a much bigger picture. Our part is pretty transparent – we go up with plenty of gas and whoever wants it comes and gets it."

"We had F-22s and F-18s come up to us today, some off carriers and some out of Amberley, to get fuel before going into their fight."

Major Langley said the airspace for Exercise Talisman Sabre was divided into different sectors – part of it where the fighter aircraft go to fight – and other areas are divided into corridors for transit and climbing and descending.

"Then, way out on one edge, there's this separate area set up for the tanker."

# TALISMAN SABRE



Above: A KC-10 Extender from McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey, lines up to receive fuel from another KC-10 Extender from Travis AFB, California.  
Top left: United States Air Force KC-10 Extender air-to-air refueller aircraft parked at Brisbane International Airport during Exercise Talisman Sabre 2019.  
Photos by Christabel Migliorini.





"So really we're just orbiting out there, racetrack shaped, waiting for someone to come up to us for fuel.

"It's pretty cool knowing that they can't do what they do without us being there doing what we do.

"Really, we're just a very small piece in a much bigger exercise – and I like my piece."

Modesty aside, Major Langley and his colleagues' piece of the bigger picture is super important – literally billions of dollars worth of fighter aircraft would much prefer to splash and dash way up there than be forced to fly back to Amberley or an aircraft carrier to top up with fuel.

It's all about keeping the fighters in the fight longer.

Group Captain Stephen Chappell, Amberley's task unit commander, said it was always a pleasure to fly alongside the United States Air Force.

"Exercise Talisman Sabre is an extension of our 'Enhanced Air Cooperation program'," Group Captain Chappell said.

"To use a sporting analogy – we are two football teams, who not only can play the same game, using the same tactics, against the same opponent, but we can both win and do well, and also swap in and out.

"Australians and Americans are training to be in the forward pack, so we can win every day."

And what did Chrissie think?

"Wow what an amazing experience!"

"We received fuel from another KC-10 Extender, I got the F-22 shots I really wanted and I even got to fulfill a bucket-list shot – a Super Hornet pilot waving at me high in the sky," she said.

"The Super Hornet pilot, Lieutenant W Travis Johnson, from Strike Fighter Squadron TWO SEVEN,



off the USS Ronald Reagan, actually gave me some stick – in jest – for not waving back.

"And when I did wave back, our flight engineer, Technical Sergeant John Loera from Travis AFB, California, was ready to take that shot.

"I didn't even know he was doing it, and that's a picture and a memory I'll treasure forever.

"It has been a great two weeks.

"Thank you so much for allowing me to share my pictures with you and giving me the chance to show my abilities.

"It was an amazing experience, but also a huge privilege to be able to observe and be part of such an important exercise – especially on board the KC-10."

Far left: A KC-10 Extender feeds fuel to a USAF F/A-18 Super Hornet, with a second Super Hornet waiting his turn, below.

Bottom: Lieutenant W Travis Johnson, Strike Fighter Squadron TWO SEVEN, off the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, waves from his F/A-18 Super Hornet, to CONTACT photography stringer Christabel Migliorini.

Left: Christabel Migliorini waves back to Super Hornet pilot Lieutenant W Travis Johnson out the window of a USAF KC-10 Extender. This photo by Technical Sergeant John Loera, an Instructor KC-10 Flight Engineer from Travis AFB, California. All other photos on this page and previous, by Christabel Migliorini.



CONTACT extends a very special "Thank You" to Christabel Migliorini for volunteering to be our photography stringer at this event. Follow Christabel on [instagram.com/aussielifethruphotography/](https://www.instagram.com/aussielifethruphotography/) – where, if you find her latest tattoo photo, you'll appreciate this girl has a thing for airplanes ;-)





# Evolution of Australia's

# COMMANDOS



**WORDS** Corporal Sebastian Beurich

**PHOTOS** Corporals Sebastian Beurich and Kyle Genner, and Leading Seaman Craig Walton



After officially becoming a special-forces unit in the middle of Operation Slipper, years of overseas service have transformed the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment – 2 Cdo Regt – into one of the Australian Army's most experienced units.

Celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, the unit has undergone many changes since it changed its name from 4RAR (Cdo).

Following the announcement of a significant funding boost for Australia's wider counterterrorism fraternity, Corporal Sebastian Beurich spent time with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment to find out how the organisation has evolved over its 10-year history.



# 2nd Cdo Regt

**S**ergeant L said 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment had grown and adapted in every area, from equipment to training facilities, to suit its changing mission profiles since he arrived in 2006.

"Initially, there were a lot of changes in the gear we were using, because of our experiences on Operation Slipper," Sergeant L said.

"We learnt a lot throughout that era and needed to change our weapons, body armour and ammunition, among other things, to suit our mission profiles.

"The unit went from young to very senior, with a lot of experienced commandos, in a short timeframe, because of the multiple deployments we were doing in Afghanistan.

"We've transitioned that knowledge, experience and equipment back into the domestic counterterrorism mission profiles we conduct as part of 2 Cdo Regt's hostage-recovery and counterterrorism (HR/CT) role."

Training for those roles, as well as general commando training, is conducted at the Special Forces Training Facility (SFTF) – a collection of ranges that has grown alongside 2 Cdo Regt and evolved to meet contemporary demands.

Range manager Sergeant J said the SFTF, originally comprised of 10 ranges, now had 43 ranges spread across the Holsworthy Training Area and encompassed the HR/CT role as well as the commando's 'war roles'.

"SFTF comprises two training areas," Sergeant J said.

"The indoor range complex gives us the ability to conduct the full spectrum of our responsibilities within the CT space and consists of multiple ranges which can be linked together to make one large live-fire range – which is unique to this facility.

"The second encompasses the external areas, which allow us to conduct training ranging from breaching, long-term surveillance and sniper engagements through to urban warfighting using live or non-lethal man-marking munitions.

"It also covers the full spectrum of units within Socomd (Special Forces Command) – 2 Cdo Regt and SASR, through to SOTEC, 6 Aviation Regiment, SOER, 1 Cdo Regt and all of the other units that provide training and support."

Although it opened 12 years ago, the SFTF has gone through numerous upgrades, culminating in what Sergeant L said was a world-renowned training centre.

"The SFTF has put us leaps and bounds in front of other special forces," he said.

"With so much packed into such a tight area, we can do a vast range of training, allowing us to advance our tactics quickly.

"We have flat ranges and a 'method-of-entry' house, we've conducted driver training and we've even done free-fall activities in there.

"All the partner forces who train with us love the facilities.

"They all wish they could have what we do, which allows our relationships with them to mature as they come back."

Although the SFTF is equipped to deal with several different training scenarios, the facilities – which Sergeant J described as "humble rather than lavish" – were only as good as the soldiers who made use of them.

"You can't buy excellence," Sergeant J said.

"The ranges enable the development of modern warfare techniques, so we can learn what fails before we even enter combat, which lets us prepare for the unexpected."

Creating and sustaining a fighting force was as much about what you did after training as it was the training itself, according to Sergeant M, who set up and manages 2 Cdo Regt's Rapid Recovery and Reconditioning Centre (R3) as part of the unit's human performance program.

"The term we use is 'operator availability', which is about the commando's ability to rest, recover and get back online quicker, enabling them to train smarter and shorter and recover better and more efficiently," Sergeant M said.





# 2nd Cdo Regt

"What that means is the physical requirements of our job can be achieved through training less.

"But, the R3 is only one part. We also have a big focus on nutrition, sleep and biomonitoring.

"I did a benchmarking tour around sporting organisations in Australia and looked at what peer nations like the US were doing, which helped me frame how we were going to design the facility and make it attractive to people who are time poor.

"That information let us design a relevant facility grounded in good, evidence-based research, enabling the commandos to be better in role both physically and mentally.

"The commandos love it – and the workplace is demonstrating they have a vested interest in not only the wellbeing of the operators, but also their performance."

## Real-world training

Sailing through Sydney Harbour, the first sign things were amiss was the dull thump of helicopter blades, barely audible over the water rushing past the bow of the Sydney Harbour ferry.

Moments later, 2 Cdo Regt soldiers disembarked from rigid-hulled inflatable boats – RHIBs – and climbed over the side rails, while their comrades fast-roped on to the deck from a hovering Black Hawk, supported by snipers in another Black Hawk providing aerial fire support.

The commandos stormed through the ferry and subdued all threats they encountered.

Within minutes they had the ferry under control, threats neutralised and hostages saved.

This scenario was part of Exercise MARS Rotor Anchor Toothfish (RAT) – a key exercise for the Sydney-based Tactical Assault Group – East (TAG-E) – the ADF's "in extremis" counterterrorism force drawn from 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment.

Along with the maritime counterterrorism exercise on Sydney Harbour, MARS RAT also included a ship-at-anchor recovery of a large merchant vessel off Port Kembla, New South Wales, plus a coordinated assault on two linked cells, in a high-rise building in Melbourne's CBD and a shipping facility in Hobart.

Lead-up component and refresher training meant the commandos were "fully versed" in the activity,





# 2nd Cdo Regt

according to Corporal B, who said increased access to training resources was great for the team.

"We moved TAG-E down to Melbourne for the high-rise scenario, with some of the team driving and others flying," he said.

"From there, we assaulted the building from both ends, using Black Hawks to get us on top, while other call signs moved up through the building's stairwells.

"This sort of training only happens once or twice a year, usually during these big exercises, but having real infrastructure to train on – like a high-rise building in the middle of Melbourne – is a real benefit."

The regiment's HR/CT company that makes up TAG-E includes a RHIB boat team, commando assaulters, commando snipers, a dedicated medical team, supplemented by Navy clearance divers.

This mix of skills gives ground commanders many approach options, with Captain N saying the addition of Navy clearance divers added flexibility.

"The exercise is really about consolidating our key domestic counterterrorism skills," Captain N said.

"Part of that is the maritime counterterrorism piece, where we have a remit out to 200 nautical miles.

"We covered off on ship-alongside and ship-underway assaults, including sub-surface approaches with our divers.

"We were also working on force projection, using helicopters to launch us into top-down assaults to achieve vertical envelopment and using Royal Australian Air Force assets to deploy interstate.

"2nd Commando Regiment companies rotate onto HR/CT duties on TAG-E every few years at the moment, so it's a good opportunity for us to consolidate our core skills."

While MARS RAT gave the company an opportunity to hone its maritime counterterrorism and aerial insertion skills, it wasn't the culmination of their training program however.

Because of their unique mandate, 2 Cdo has to be prepared for any eventuality.

"TAG is basically the Australian government's fix for any situation that is beyond the capability or capacity of state police," Private R said.

"I can put my hand on my heart and say the guys I work with are the best.

"You want to come to work every day and you want to push to achieve your goals because you're with like-minded people."





# 2nd Cdo Regt



## Funding boost

The Australian government has approved the first stage of a multi-billion dollar investment in cutting-edge equipment for Australia's special forces.

Project Greyfin will deliver \$3 billion to special forces over the next 20 years, with an initial investment of \$500 million over four years, so they can better respond to threats, including terrorism.

While making the funding announcement, Prime Minister Scott Morrison met with 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment soldiers for lunch in Sydney and watched several training demonstrations showcasing the unit's counterterrorism skills.

"We're ensuring the men and women in our special forces have the equipment and training they need to succeed in their operations," Prime Minister Morrison said.

"Australian special forces undertake complex, highly demanding operations in high-threat environments.

"Global threats will continue to evolve in ways which threaten Australia's interests.

"This funding will ensure our special forces have cutting-edge capabilities to stay ahead of those who might threaten Australia's interests.

"Our Special Forces are at the leading edge of the world and in fact, are sought after both for their expertise and advice with our partner forces all around the world.

"What I've seen on display today is a level of expertise, a level of capability that Australia should feel very proud of – but equally, one that should also make them feel safe.

"It's our special forces' job to keep us safe – it's my job as Prime Minister – our most important priority – to keep Australians safe.

"And these are the people who are doing that job, not just overseas, but also through their capabilities here to deal with domestic counterterrorism.

"We want to thank them very much for their service, and the best way to do that is by making sure they have the capability to continue to do that job for the next 20 years."

Defence Minister Linda Reynolds said Project Greyfin would ensure our Special Forces have the best body armour, weapons, diving, parachuting, roping and climbing systems, medical search and rescue, communications, human-performance training and support, and everything else they needed to help ensure Australia's security.

"Our special forces, now more than ever, need to be ready and able to deploy on operations anywhere in the world, at short notice, and in very uncertain conditions," Minister Reynolds said.

"This first stage of funding enables our special forces to engage with intelligence, science and technology, and innovation organisations to ensure future threats and opportunities are assessed, to make sure we are delivering them the capability they need in the future."

Prime Minister Morrison said the special-forces funding package formed part of the government's commitment to increasing defence spending to 2 per cent of GDP, which would ensure that our Defence Forces are ready and fit and able and capable of being able to keep Australians safe in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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Major changes to Army

# RECRUIT TRAINING



*A collection of related stories published in ARMY Newspaper, 30 May 2019*

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ON  
COMBAT  
LETHALITY*

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MORE  
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## Revised recruit course

A modern recruit course will reflect a modern force, reports Captain Aaron Oldaker.

**Hand-to-hand fighting and combat-focused marksmanship now feature on a revised Army recruit course after changes were approved at the end of last year.**

Recruits will also receive foundation training in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence and be required to pass a PESA (physical employment standards assessment) before marching out of Kapooka.

The Army swim test and the basic fitness assessment are conducted, but are diagnostic assessments only.

Commanding Officer 1RTB Lieutenant Colonel Roger McMurray said the course was modified to prepare every soldier to be ready for the physical, mental and moral rigours of close combat.

"Our goal is to deliver world-class foundation combatants who are physically robust, possess grounded combat behaviours, ethics and values

and be set up to succeed at their initial employment training," Lieutenant Colonel McMurray said.

"We are very fortunate to live in an advanced, respectful and relaxed modern society, so our challenge is to draw people from that society and transform them into confident and capable soldiers."

While drill and navigation remain in the course, some elements have been removed – including movements in slow time, and, aiming off, bypassing and conducting resections have been removed from the navigation syllabus.

1RTB plans to process 4500 part-time and full-time recruits in 2019.

"That's an enormous responsibility that necessitates a considerable workload for staff," Lieutenant Colonel McMurray said.

"But, the opportunity to train the next generation of Army's soldiers is one of the most worthwhile and rewarding opportunities that Army offers."

CONTACT Air Land & Sea – Issue 63 – September 2019

## Combat shooting

**The Army Recruit Course has modified shooting lessons to exploit the enhanced lethality of the EF88 and place greater emphasis on combat marksmanship.**

1RTB Master Coach WO2 Anthony Pratt said the new series of rifle practices was intended to replace the legacy live fire (LF) series and place the focus on combat.

"The purpose is to engender a conceptual shift in Army's approach to small-arms live firing.

"They will enhance the shooting skills of Army while instilling a combat mindset and building combat behaviours," he said.

"Rifle practice 3A is the new gateway for field firing that recruits must pass, replacing the old LF6.

"All recruits are trained on the EF88 and the Combat Marksmanship Continuum (CMC), and must achieve an RP3A pass standard as a march-out requirement.

"Rifle practices provide graduated combat marksmanship training, designed to develop soldiers' combat-shooting skills at ranges from 100m to 300m using a combination of static and moving targets." WO2 Pratt said.

"Recruits respond well to the new methods despite the challenge of progressing trainees to a state of 'unconscious competence' during the course.

"The major differences between the legacy LF program and the CMC is the intensity of shooting and the level of survivalist combat behaviours expected to be displayed by the firer.

"The CMC program places an increased responsibility on the firer to make decisions that are not unlike the decisions that would need to be made in actual combat – for example, the firer decides on how many rounds to fire to neutralise a threat, when to apply safe, when to use cover and when to conduct tactical or emergency reloads.

"The end-state is far superior to what was produced under the legacy shooting program – recruits have demonstrated higher levels of weapon confidence, proficiency and safety.

"Skill degradation between the completion of the qualifying practice and Exercise Challenge is minimal, demonstrating that the level of training and repetition is more than sufficient and beyond expectation for the all-corps environment.



## Combat mindset

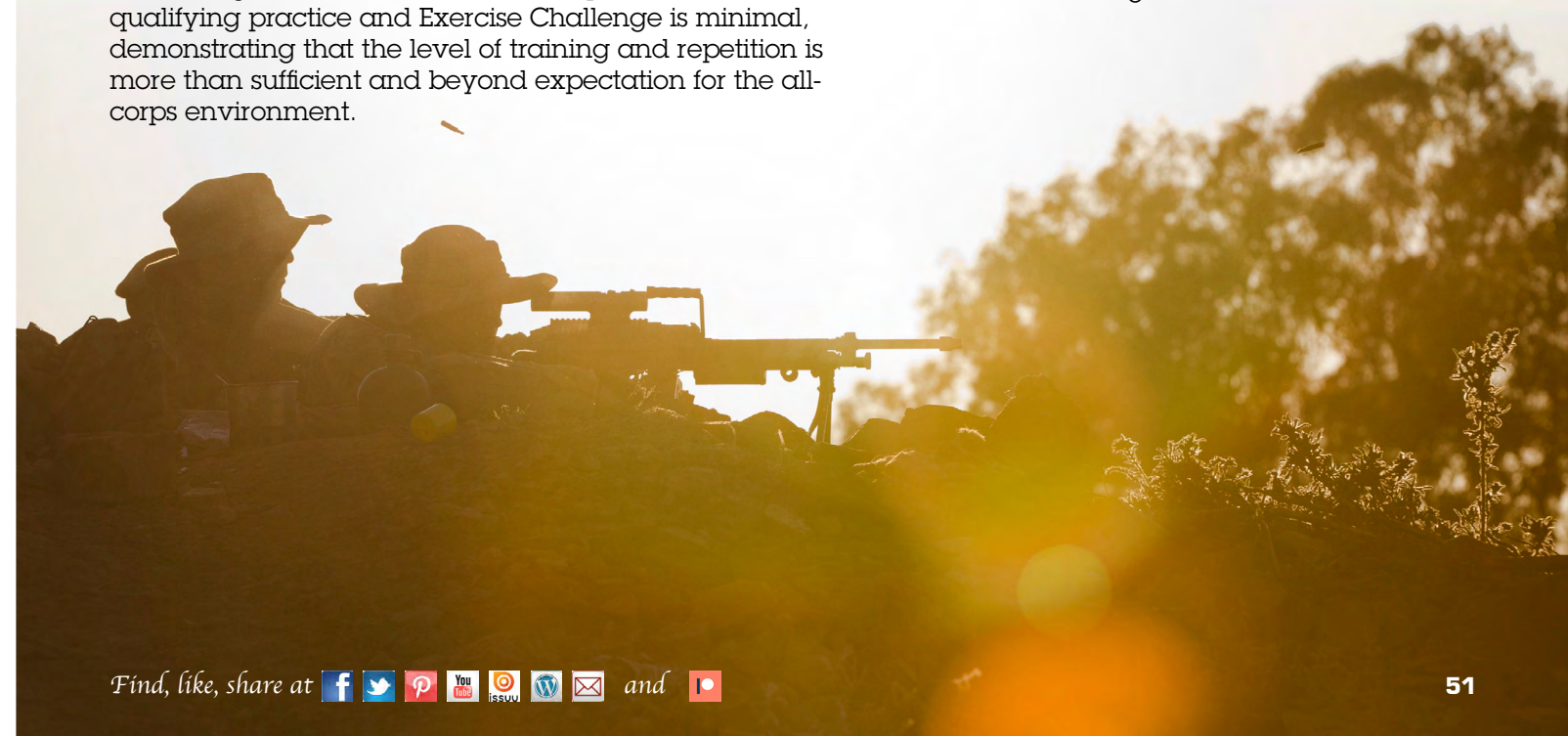
**The Army Combatives Program (ACP) aims to promote combat effectiveness, increased lethality and survivability through the development of combat skills, instilling a combat mindset and building combat behaviours.**

Lieutenant Rhys Faulder, Platoon Commander, 2 Platoon, A Company, 1RTB, said instilling combat behaviour in recruits was a key foundation of recruit training.

"The ACP is a safe and effective hand-to-hand fighting program," Lieutenant Faulder said.

"It provides a structured and graduated progression of self-defence and non-lethal response options, through to lethal fighting techniques.

"The focus is on instilling recruits with basic skills to survive a close fight through a combat mindset and the development of combat behaviours, with the goal of bringing the recruits to a level where they could survive an encounter, retain their weapon and continue the fight."



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## CBRN protection



1RTB has introduced basic operator training to prepare soldiers to use future chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) protective gear.

Lieutenant Colonel McMurray said the training conducted at 1RTB was an introduction to self-protection skills and individual equipment.

"Recruits are instructed on the basics of CBRN to provide foundation skills that are further developed at initial-employment training schools or in units," he said.

"They learn the basics on CBRN threats, practise individual drills and complete a respirator confidence test using a mask-test facility [which is Army's nice way to say, they get first-hand experience with tear gas].

"The use of a riot-control agent to confirm drills is a daunting prospect for recruits, but they gain complete confidence in their equipment – and there is universally positive feedback on the experience."

## Physical conditioning

Applying a single fitness standard across a diverse range of people is difficult and, at the start of military training, this difficulty is coupled with the added risk of injury to new, unconditioned trainees.

The Army swim test and the basic fitness assessment are still conducted at Kapooka, but they are now used only as diagnostic tools.

Instead of the old-school BFA (basic fitness assessment consisting of pushups, situps and 2.4km run) recruits are now required to pass a PESA (physical employment standards assessment) before marching out of Kapooka.

1RTB warrant officer physical training instructor WO2 Dean King said the all-corps PESA coupled with Army's recent emphasis on conditioning helped deliver soldiers fit for the rigours of their future roles from a wider pool of recruits.

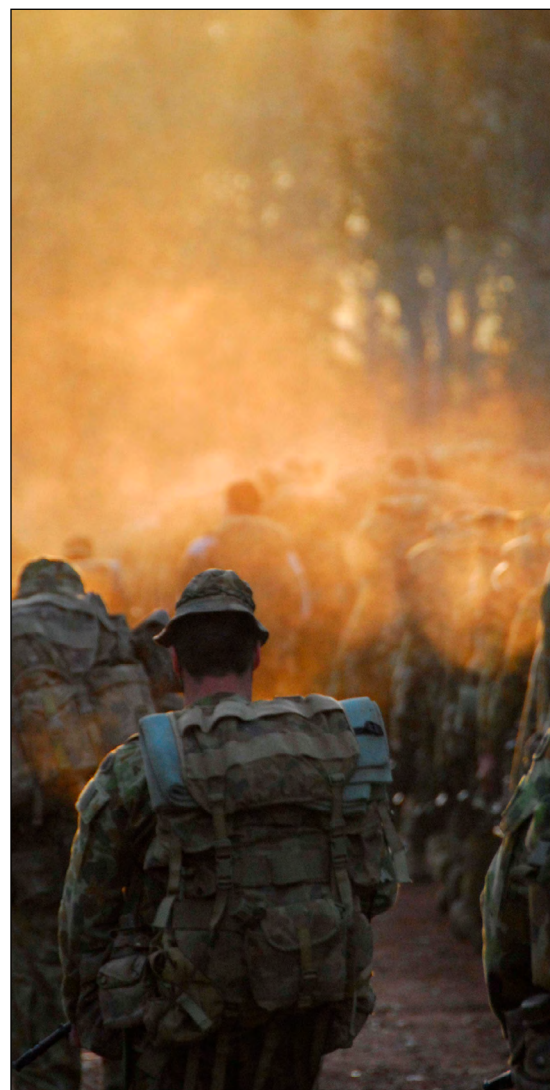
"PESA provides a field-ready indicator for recruits by assessing job-specific aspects of fitness through the use of occupational tasks," WO2 King said.

"It sets a standard of physical preparedness that is gender and age neutral, providing confidence that recruits can perform to standard without sustaining injury."

PESA standards were developed with the assistance of human performance scientists, to maximise individual performance, rather than focusing on collective physical training methods.

PESA is based on muscular strength and muscular endurance, aerobic and anaerobic capacity.

The standards for measuring each of these four capabilities were developed based on the requirements of typical military tasks and are not based on gender-specific criteria.



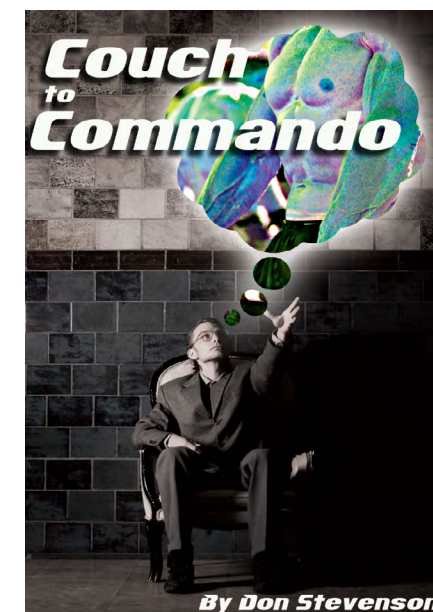
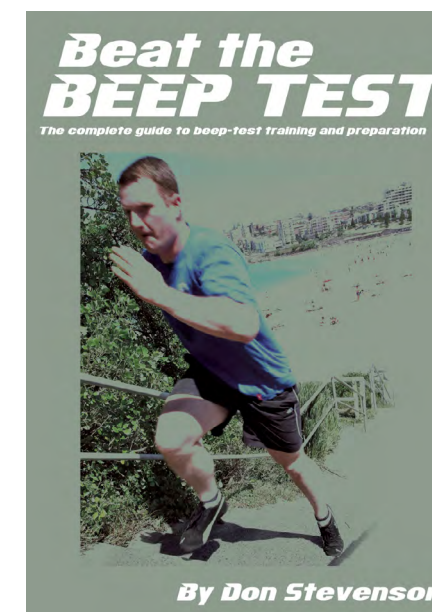
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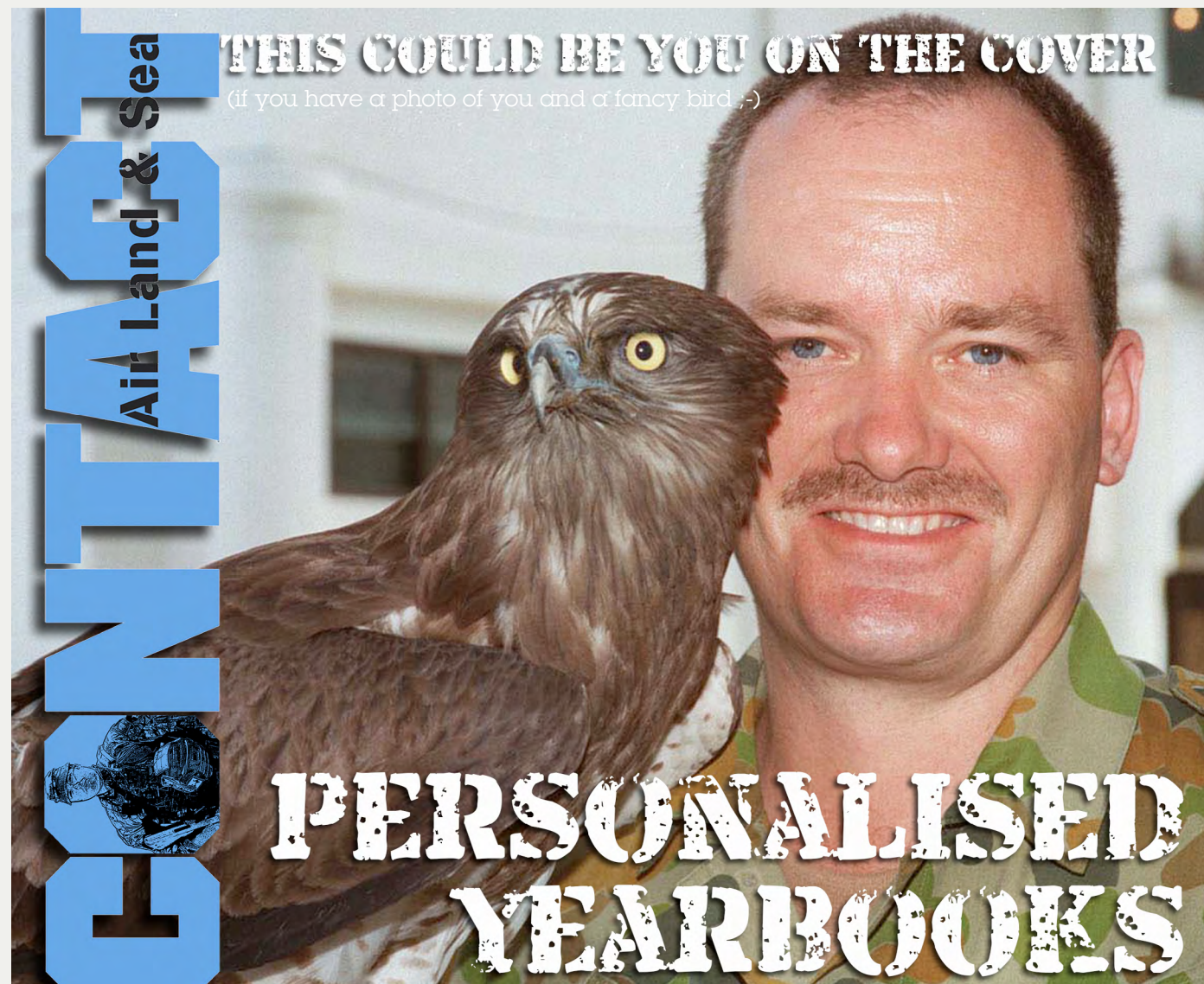
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# RNZAF SUPPLIES REMOTE NZ MISSION

PICS NZDF

The New Zealand Defence Force airdropped 3.1 tonnes of food, mail equipment and supplies to support the work of government agencies on Raoul Island.

Air Component Commander Air Commodore Tim Walshe said a Royal New Zealand Air Force C-130H(NZ) Hercules dropped supplies 7 August to support operations of the Department of Conservation (DOC), MetService and GNS Science on the remote island, 1100km north-north-east of New Zealand's North island.

"Our Defence Force has supported the work of other government agencies in the Kermadecs for years," Air Commodore Walshe said.

"We recognise that their work is important for our country's biosecurity and public safety, and for scientific advancement."

About 2.5 tonnes of the supplies consisted of cement, which will be used to install new equipment to improve safety.

Flight Lieutenant Tristan Nysse, the co-pilot of the Hercules, said the heavy pallets were dropped from 1300-1600 feet and the lighter ones from 300 feet while the aircraft was travelling 140 to 150 knots.

"Raoul Island's drop zone poses particular challenges because it is small and bordered on both sides by a cliff and the sea," Flight Lieutenant Nysse said.

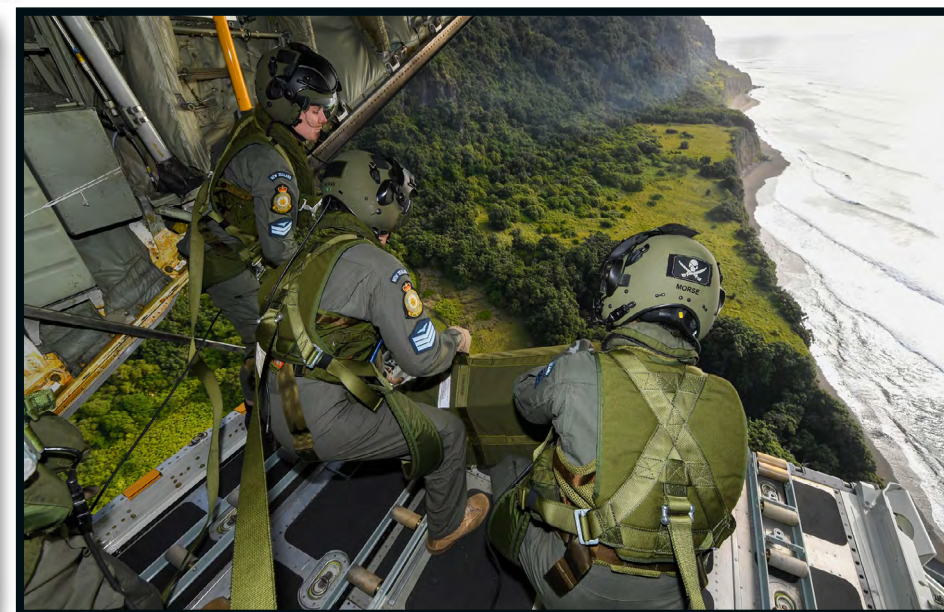
"Even in favourable weather conditions, as we had on this flight, airdrops are technically complex, but, given the location of the drop zone, precision was more crucial than ever."

For the six government staff based on Raoul Island, the NZDF is their main means of getting food, supplies and mail.

A Royal New Zealand Navy vessel visits the missions twice a year.



*This photo by Morag Turnbull, Department of Conservation, on the ground.*







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# DANGER CLOSE

THE BATTLE OF LONG TAN

THE MOST FEROCIOUS ANZAC BATTLE OF THE VIETNAM WAR  
SCREEN QUEENSLAND SCREEN AUSTRALIA SABOTEUR MEDIA PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH RED DUNE FILMS AND DEEPER WATER FILMS A HOUSE OF MICE PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH INGENIOUS MEDIA DANGER CLOSE - THE BATTLE OF LONG TAN  
TRAVIS FIMMEL LUKE BRACEY DANIEL WEBBER ALEXANDER ENGELAND AARON CLEAVANE NICHOLAS HAMILTON MYLES POLLARD MATT DORAN WITH ANTHONY HAYES AND RICHARD ROXBURGH  
WRITTEN BY KIRSTY MACGREGOR CO-PRODUCED BY STEVE RAY CO-PRODUCED BY LAM EKAN PRODUCED BY PLATON YEO  
DIRECTED BY SCOTT ZEDD  
CASTING BY LUZZY GARDINER  
EDITED BY SAM HOBBS  
PRODUCTION DESIGNER VERONICA JENET  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS BEN MOTT A.C.S. PETER ROSS  
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IN CINEMAS NOW



# DANGER CLOSE

## THE BATTLE OF LONG TAN



**I was nervous going to see this movie. Not because I had any doubts about its quality – but because I had seen the trailer and I expected it was a 'raw' war movie, about a battle that happened not that long ago.**

In fact, the Battle of Long Tan was so 'recent', there are heaps of that-war's veterans around – and I drink coffee with a handful of them twice a week every week.

I'm not old enough to remember Long Tan – I was three years old, and living in Ireland back then, where Vietnam wasn't the 'issue' it was here in Australia.

But now, having been an Australian soldier myself, knowing some boys who were over there, and being of a more sensitive nervous disposition than I used to be – I was a little trepidacious going in.

But, I survived – and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Quite simply, I call it a proper, *PROPER* war movie – full-on action from go to whoa with no Hollywood sentimentality.

As a war movie, they don't come much better. It's brilliantly made, with all the brutality and special effects of that now-famous opening scene in *Saving Private Ryan*.

It's a high-quality Australian production with an Aussie (and a few Kiwi) cast and, as is the way with most Australian movie and TV productions these days, it is world class in terms of cinematography and production values.

Speaking of cast – the lead actor looked very familiar, but I couldn't quite place him – and I won't spoil it, in case you want to guess too. Getting quickly immersed in the movie, however, I stopped trying to guess and did a Google search after. Aah! That's who he was! And I never knew he was Australian in that show. Fascinating biography on Wikipedia too.

Anyway, when I say 'no Hollywood sentimentality' I mean there was no getting to know the characters back home in Australia, saying goodbye to girlfriends as they went off to war – no exploration of the politics of the war or conscription or any of that stuff – just a pure, unadulterated war movie.

If I was to pick one negative though, it probably does actually fit into the 'Hollywood' mould in one important regard – the truth of the story and 'playing with history'.

The Battle of Long Tan is an amazing story of survival against overwhelming odds. 105 Aussies and three Kiwis, against an estimated 2000+ battle-hardened enemy, with 'only' 18 friendlies killed, while taking out an (official) estimate of about 250.

But, apparently, the real story of the Battle of Long Tan wasn't good enough for the big screen – it had to be embellished in key details, to make it a better story – to make it 'more Hollywood' – more sellable.

And, while I appreciate the fine-line balance between historical fact and making a quid, between telling a story that sells and telling the

truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth – it's a shame it has to be so.

That said though, I don't think there are too many people grossly upset by the 'poetic licence'.

Major, now Lieutenant Colonel (retd) Harry Smith, the central character in the movie and the man who 'led the charge' on the battlefield – and for years after, fighting for proper recognition for his men – was interviewed by ARMY Newspaper after watching the movie.

"I am proud of my men and those who supported us, and to see the battle portrayed on the big screen, albeit after 53 years, is indeed wonderful," he said.

"The movie demonstrates the courage, gallantry, mateship and determination of my company in fighting off odds in the order of 20 to one.

"The four-hour battle was brief, but was the most savage combat action of the war. I lost 17 men – the enemy lost hundreds."

But, of the ultimate battle scene, now Lieutenant Colonel Smith said the APCs racing to the rescue did not happen as depicted.

BELOW: Travis Fimmel as Major Harry Smith awaits a resupply by helicopter.

OPPOSITE: Sergeant Bob Buick (Luke Bracey) and WO2 Jack Kirby (Alexander England) make a sad roll call.







ABOVE: Bombadier Ray Ngatai (Uli Latukefu), directs 161 Battery, Royal New Zealand Artillery. BELOW: 'Little Pattie and Col Joye' in concert (left) while Major Harry Smith (Travis Fimmel) and Lance Corporal Willie Walker (Jay Kiriona) call in fire support.



"The enemy had withdrawn by the time [the APCs] arrived 300m south of our defensive position.

"[The enemy were] defeated by the magnificent 3500 rounds of artillery support and 10,300 rounds fired by my machine gunners and riflemen," he said.

Despite this change in script, however, Lieutenant Colonel Smith still believed the battle scenes in *Danger Close* were excellent.

ARMY Newspaper reporter Sergeant Dave Morley says the former Officer Commanding D Coy, 6RAR, had tears in his eyes after seeing his soldiers shot and killed in graphic scenes.

"The Australian public should go to see this movie, as it demonstrates what all our battalion soldiers went through during the long war," Lieutenant Colonel Smith said.

I went back for a second viewing, this time with a couple of older vets, one of whom had worked with one of the key characters.

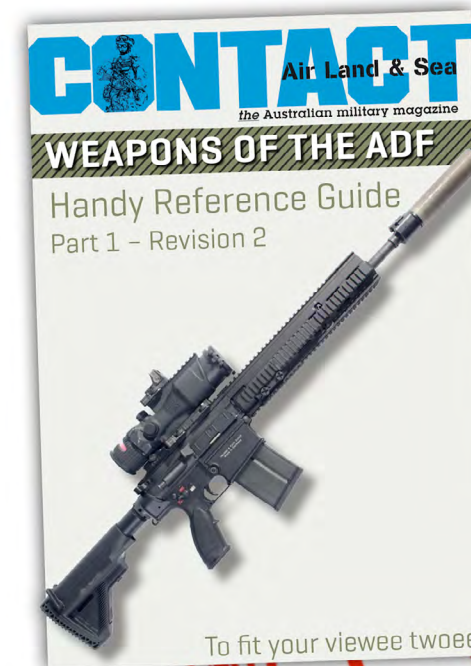
Afterwards, we sat down for a debrief and, while the history-changing poetic license in the script was generally dismissed as necessary or warranted for the sake of making a viable movie, nit-picking minor details were discussed in depth – though generally laughed off. But, the consensus was overwhelmingly positive.

And that's where I sit too. A brilliant movie, beautifully made – whether you know (or care) nothing about the battle itself, it's a proper, *PROPER* war movie – or if you do know and care about the history of this dreadful battle, and are prepared to accept the poetic license – then **DANGER CLOSE, The Battle of Long Tan** is well worth seeing.



ABOVE: Private Paul Large (Daniel Webber) during the Battle of Long Tan.

If you do want to know more about the real history of the Battle of Long Tan, I highly recommend the [Wikipedia entry](#).



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With their support, **CONTACT** can continue to deliver what we already deliver – plus a few extra rewards exclusive to **DFSW Club** members.

Unfortunately, the one big reward we wanted to deliver – printing **CONTACT** again – did not happen, because the level of support required just didn't materialise.

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## A BRIEF HISTORY OF CONTACT

Have you ever wondered where **CONTACT** came from and why? I've written a [longer history](#) on our web site – but here's a synopsis...

After seven years as a helicopter mechanic in Townsville, and after tying for a long time, I eventually got a Corps transfer to **ARMY Newspaper** as a reporter in 1998.

But, I lasted less than five years at the paper – 'the powers that be' took away our unit status, civilianised the editor's job, gutted morale and squeezed me out for rebelling against the changes.

After deciding on about day three at Kapooka that I was going to be a 'career soldier' – and having eyes on the **ARMY Editor's** job from early on too, this was a very painful exit – in only my 11<sup>th</sup> year in the Army, forced to quit by a weasel civilian editor who didn't know shit from clay about anything military.

About a year after leaving, a corporal who still worked at the paper told me the weasel civvie editor was shutting down **ARMY Magazine** – for "staffing issues".

So, that corporal and I started **CONTACT Magazine** as a "fcuk you – just two staff could do it, and do a better job, on our own time, with our own money, as a hobby, in secret".

And when, with great pleasure, I handed that weasel editor the first ever issue of **CONTACT**, in March 2004, he ran straight to his boss to plot shutting us down!!!

Fifteen years later, **CONTACT** is still here, still a 'hobby' (though my corporal partner-in-crime has moved on).

Mr Weasel civvie editor is long gone – and so too is **ARMY Magazine**.



**CONTACT Air Land & Sea** magazine – issue 1, March 2004. Click on the cover to read our very first effort – and [let us know](#) what you think.

## Our most appreciated PayPal members

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## What is DFSW Club?

While **DFSW** is an Army acronym, we hope our Navy and RAAF fans will forgive us for moulding it to our needs too – **Direct Funding Supporters** of our **Work**.

Membership of the **DFSW Club** is completely voluntary and, while it does have some perks, **CONTACT** would definitely seem to be getting way more out of this relationship than members are – and we hope to redress that imbalance as time goes by.

Joining the **DFSW Club** can only be done via [Patreon](#), an American platform designed to help fans support 'creatives'.

We tried running a 'subscription' model via [PayPal](#) too – but that didn't work for purely technical/software reasons. Anyone who 'subscribed' via [PayPal](#) will still receive the membership benefits we initially promised – except, of course, newly printed magazines.

We are so grateful to our amazing supporters who joined our **DFSW Club** in the hope that we would print **CONTACT** again – and gobsmacked that so few of them left after we announced the decision not to proceed with that plan.

We thank all our past and present members most sincerely for your ongoing support – and if you would like to join them, please check out our [Patreon](#) page, [here](#).

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# JUST SOLDIERS

BY MAJOR DARRYL KELLY

## The Artificer

**WARRANT OFFICER CLASS ONE  
THEODOR EMILE GYSIN DCM, MM**

The man walked up and stood in front of the sergeant. Without raising his head from the form and with pen in hand, the sergeant curtly blurted, "Name?"

With a heavy accent, the potential recruit answered, "Gysin."

"God mate, are you joining the right side? You sound like a bloody Hun?"

"I am Swiss, sergeant, not German!" the man growled.



**Theodor Gysin was a proud man with a proud heritage. Soldiering was in his blood. Born in Maldenburg, Switzerland, he could trace his family's military history back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, including some who served in Napoleon's famous Swiss Guard<sup>1</sup>.**

His teenage years found Theo roaming the world, plying his profession as a motor mechanic, specialising in mining and mechanical engineering. He worked all over Europe, first as an apprentice, then as a tradesman in the industrial heartland of England. He worked the oil fields and logging camps of North America and deep in the jungles of the Amazon rainforest. He sought passage for Australia and eventually made his way to Perth, in June 1911.

It was there he learnt the Aussie way of life, working 16 months in the bush. He worked on a number of jobs over the next six years, along the west's famous 'Golden Mile'. It was there Theo also learnt the true characteristics of the Australian demeanour.

One day as the men sat around enjoying their smoko, Theo heard a cheer go up. Walking up to the group, Theo asked one of them what was going on.

"We're in the war mate, we're in the bloody war!" the man answered excitedly.

As men, young and old alike, clambered aboard trains that would whisk them off to the recruiting depots of Perth, Theodor contemplated his future. He had a good job with good prospects. Besides, the papers said, "It would be over by Christmas". With that, he decided to remain in his civil employment.

In early April 1916, he could stand it no longer. He knew that he needed Australian citizenship before joining the Army. He sought and was granted citizenship on 21 March<sup>2</sup>. His next stop was the recruiting desk, where he presented himself for enlistment into the Australian Imperial Force.

Following his successful enlistment, he was allocated as a gunner to the 118<sup>th</sup> Howitzer Battery<sup>1</sup>.

Theo thrived on the mechanics associated with the guns and his intricate understanding of both the ordnance, the sighting system and other associated instruments soon came to the fore.

Early in his training, Theo was summoned by one of his officers.

"Yes Gysin, we've watched you over the past couple of weeks and we're of the belief that you'd be better served repairing the guns than firing them".

With that, Theo was appointed as the battery fitter.

By June of 1916 he was already promoted to the rank of wheeler sergeant and instructing the other ranks on all facets pertaining to the gun, the

ammunition limbers and the instruments. He had found his niche.

In October 1916, Theo embarked for overseas, arriving in England about five weeks later. In January 1917, with his final training complete, he arrived in France and was posted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battery, 1<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery Brigade. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battery was armed with the deadly 18-pounder quick-firing gun.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery Brigade had only just been withdrawn from the front lines, after surviving the worst winter for the past 50 years. The guns were tired and in bad need of repair. Theo Gysin gladly accepted the challenge and set about getting the guns back into peak condition. His enthusiasm was infectious as he imparted his knowledge onto those around him. He begged and borrowed parts from base workshops, and what he couldn't scrounge, he manufactured or salvaged from the battle-damaged guns behind the lines.

He was a scrounger in every sense of the word, often stashing additional parts in his wagon, just on the off chance they would come in handy.

"Jez Sarge! We'll have to strengthen the axles on the old buggy if you keep going," his assistant once said.

On 21 April 1917, the 1<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery Brigade was in action at Lagnicourt. In a surprise counter attack, the German infantry were able to catch

the Australians off-guard and penetrate to a point where the Australian guns became untenable. The order came for the temporary abandonment of three of the four batteries.

Gysin was determined that his guns would not fall into enemy hands intact and set about ensuring that the firing locks and other vital components were removed. As he moved from gun to gun, he found that the gunners had done their job well. Making the guns useless to the enemy, yet also allowing them to be brought back into action quickly on recapture.

Suddenly, a German shell landed close by, wounding Gysin in the chest and jaw. As he made his way to the last gun, Gysin could feel his energy wasting from him. Stumbling up the hill, he collapsed in the arms of a stretcher-bearer.

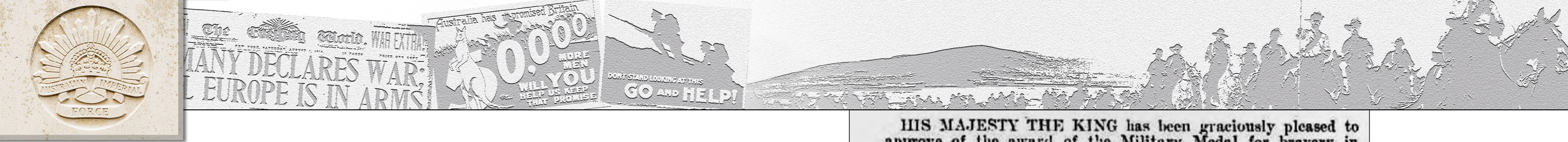
"Come on Sarge, we'd better get you out of here," the medic said thrusting the sergeant over his shoulder.

Later, in the aid post, Gysin regained consciousness. His vision was blurred but, after blinking a few times, Theodor made out the fuzzy shape of his battery commander.

"Well Sergeant you certainly gave us a fright. Why didn't you obey orders and withdraw?"

"I had to make sure the guns were out of it sir. Did the Germans get them?"





Notes:

1. Extract NSW Returned Services League, Reveille Magazine, date unknown
2. National Archives of Australia: Al Theodor Emile Gysin – Naturalisation, Certificate 23322, 1916
3. National Archives of Australia: B2455, WWI Service Records, 29460 Private T.E. Gysin
4. AWM 28, Recommendation Files for Honours and Awards, AIF, 1914-1918 War
5. AWM 28, Recommendation Files for Honours and Awards, AIF, 1914-1918 War
6. New South Wales, Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

**HIS MAJESTY THE KING** has been graciously pleased to approve of the award of the Military Medal for bravery in the field to the undermentioned non-commissioned officers and men:—

**No. 117 Corporal L. T. BINNS, Infantry; No. 6156 Corporal F. BOTHAM, Artillery; No. 4071 Sergeant P. J. BOYCE, Infantry; No. 7103 Lance-Corporal H. G. BROWN, Infantry; No. 3916 Private G. W. BURNS, Infantry; No. 3068 Lance-Corporal F. COLE, Infantry; No. 7212 Private J. COX, Infantry; No. 11943 Gunner F. R. G. DALY, Artillery; No. 2857 Sergeant C. EDWARDS, Infantry; No. 6519 Private W. H. GLOVER, Infantry; No. 16100 Private J. GRIMSLOW, A.M.C.; No. 29460 Fitter S/Sergeant T. E. GYSIN, D.C.M., A.O.C.; No. 1113 Sergeant J. G. HENDRY, A.M.C.; No. 4458 Sapper C. R. B. JOHNSON, Engineers; No. 1767 Sergeant A. KEELING, Infantry; No. 1960 Sergeant F. E. LAYTON, Infantry; No. 4278 Sapper W. G.**

**Extract from the Commonwealth Gazette No. 173 dated 7<sup>th</sup> November 1918.**

National Library of Australia

“Yeah they did, but we got them back and they’re fine. Banging away like the clappers!”

In July 1917, Theodore Gysin was promoted to the rank of fitter staff sergeant.

On 6 October 1917 the brigade was in action at Westhock. The batteries were engaged in a desperate counter-battery duel with their German counterparts.

Eventually, the Germans found their mark on the brigade with a mixture of high-explosive and gas shells. Razor-sharp and red-hot splinters slammed into the gunners and their guns, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battery’s responsive fire began to dwindle. Many of the gunners dragged their way back to the guns, doing their best to get them back into action. Gysin and his tradesmen ran forward with their tool bags ready to assist.

Running from gun to gun, Gysin quickly assessed the situation and started allocating his priority of tasks, all the time hampered by the cumbersome gas respirator covering his face.

“Right, that wheel is bugged. Get it jacked up and get some sandbags under the axles.”

At the next gun, “The recoils been damaged but you can still fire, just watch the oil”.

One of the tradesmen came running over, paused and pointed to the distant gun.

“Staff, the arcs on No. 2 gun have been hit by shrap and it can’t be elevated,” he said.

“Right let’s go!” Gysin said on the hop.

As the shells continued to fall around him, Gysin discovered that a deadly gas cloud was hugging the ground between him and the troubled gun. He immediately told his subordinated to remain with the other guns while he worked his way to No. 2 gun.

As Gysin ran through the gas, he could feel it saturating the legs of his woollen tunic and burning into his skin.

Reaching the gun, he looked at the bent metal teeth. Ignoring the pain, he rummaged around in his bag until he found his hammer and cold chisel and proceeded to cut away the troublesome pieces.

“Right, try to elevate,” he ordered.

“No good,” the gun sergeant replied.

Again, Gysin went to work.

“Try it now?”

“A bit tight, but it will do,” the gun sergeant replied.

A young lieutenant ran over to the gun.

“Staff, the fitter wagon at No. 1 Battery is done in – three wounded – they need you over there to assist with the guns!”

As he ran the 250-yard gauntlet of gas to the adjoining battery, Gysin found they had been hit just as bad as his blokes. He set about trying to assist the gunners in getting their equipment back into action, while the gas continued to burn further and further into his skin.

As the battle continued, Gysin monitored the situation between the batteries – and found time to assess his own injuries. After unwinding his gas-saturated puttees, he pulled up the legs of his trousers.

His legs were red raw and badly blistered. Taking out his water bottle, he tried in vain to ease the terrible pain by pouring water over the burns.

Spying the cringing NCO, the gun-position officer came over to check his fitter’s plight.

“Crikey mate, you’re in a bit of strife. We’ll get the stretcher-bearers over and get you to the aid post”.

“Sir I can’t, not yet!” Gysin protested. “The guns are still in action, but only just. I’ll be fine until the battle dies down.”

For his actions that day, Theodor Gysin was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal<sup>1</sup>.

In February 1918, Gysin was appointed to the position of armament artificer. It did require him to transfer to the Australian Army Ordnance Corps, but that enabled him to remain within the brigade.

In March of that year the brigade was deployed south-east of Zillebeke, Belgium, overlooking an area known as Battle Wood.

One of the tasks for the gunners called for a gun to be manhandled to a concealed position. From

here it could engage the enemy tanks that were expected to attack the following morning.

As the move required that the gun be partially stripped down, moved by hand and reassembled before going into action, Gysin immediately volunteered to accompany the detachment.

As they struggled over the boggy and broken ground, the gunners found the going was tougher than expected. Time was now of the essence, and it was fast running out.

Finally, as dawn was breaking, they made it to the desired gun platform and Gysin went to work to get the gun into action.

Unbeknown to the detachment, a German observation party had detected them and hurriedly called down artillery fire upon the Aussie position. As the shells burst around them, the Diggers struggled to complete their task but, true to form, they kept at it. Gysin was as cool as ever as he supervised the gun’s assembly.

Finally, the gun was ready and the gunners went about destroying first the OP with direct fire and then switching onto their main mission – engaging the enemy tanks.

Gysin was awarded the Military Medal for his work in bringing the gun into action and his fine example of leadership and courage throughout the deployment of the gun<sup>1</sup>.

In June of that year, Theodor Gysin was promoted to the rank of warrant officer class one. He returned to England, where he assisted in supervising the maintenance of artillery equipment for the British Expeditionary Forces.

At last, on 11 November 1918, peace came and the battlefields fell silent once more.

Theo returned to Australia where he was discharged on 8 March 1919.

He settled back into civilian life quickly, as engineers of his calibre were in high demand. He also became one of the first members of the fledgling Returned Services League, today’s RSL.



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# AIR LAND & SEA

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## NEW MORTAR AMMO

The latest Mortar Anti-Personnel Anti-Material (MAPAM) ammunition from Saab offers improved lethality (up to 100%) over conventional mortar ammunitions.

It is 40 per cent lighter than current ammunitions and delivers twice the lethality.

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The pre-fragmented payload also provides the advantage of precision control over the danger zone, giving friendly troops much more responsive fire support in danger-close combat.

The ammunition is available in 60mm and 81mm calibres and is compatible with all current in-service launch tubes.

Learn more about this new MAPAM ammunition on the SAAB web site, [here](#).



## DANGER CLOSE – official merch

To coincide with the theatrical launch of **DANGER CLOSE – The Battle of Long Tan**, NAKED ARMY has released hand-crafted 300mm and 180mm NAKED ARMY cold-cast bronze figurines featuring an early-Vietnam War digger in patrol order with L1A1 SLR.

They have also re-released the popular 300mm RAAF Crewman Vietnam figurine to coincide with the **DANGER CLOSE** movie release.

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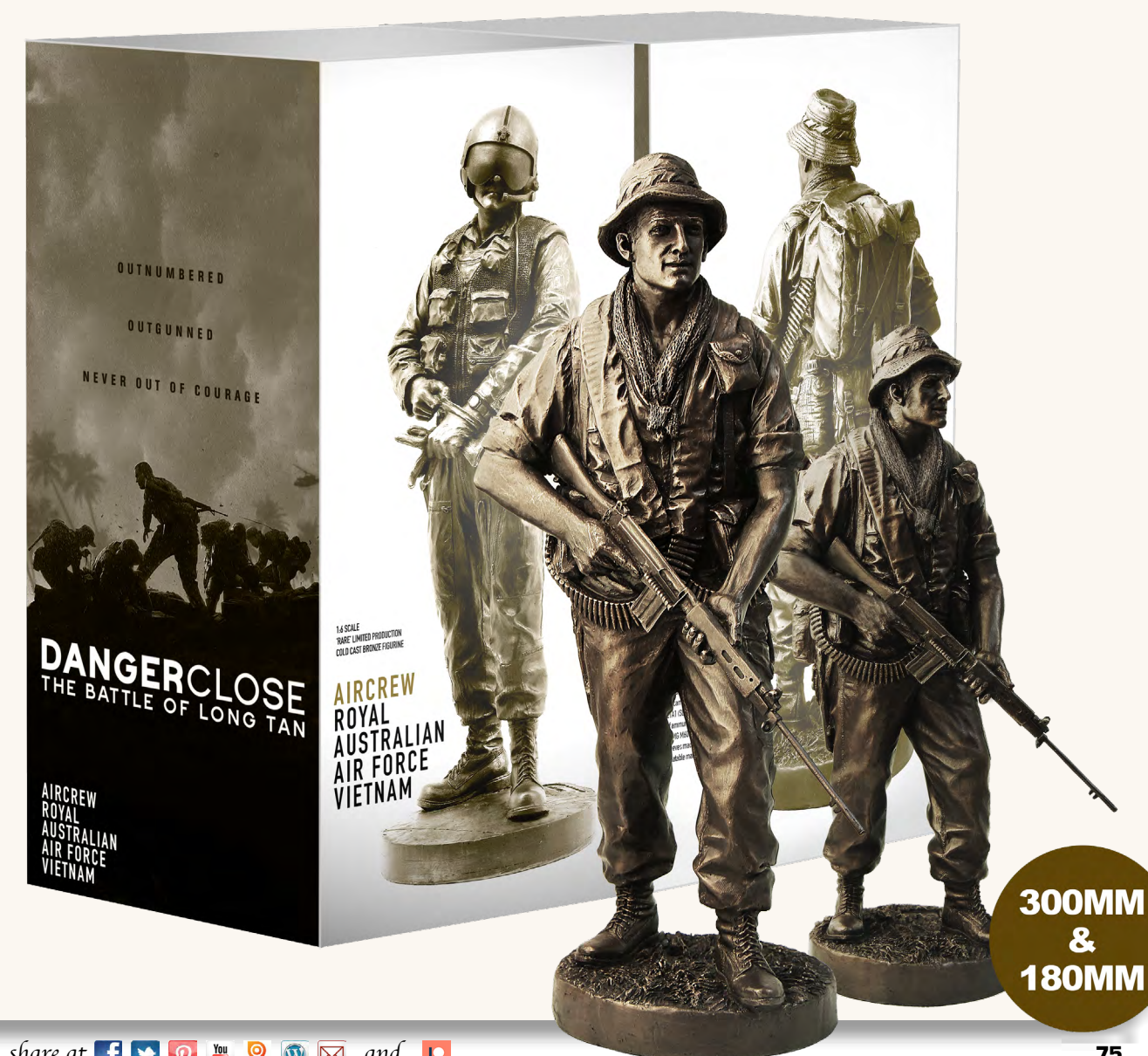
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# MELBOURNE'S LAST HURRAH

HMAS Melbourne fires her 76mm main gun during her decommissioning trip around Australia. She is visiting ports in Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria before she decommissions in Sydney on 26 October. The 138-metre long guided missile frigate will visit her namesake city, where she was built, where her ship's company will exercise their right to Freedom of Entry, commencing at Melbourne Town Hall at 11am on Saturday 14 September 2019. The ship will also host a public open day in Melbourne.

HMAS Melbourne was commissioned in 1992 and has sailed more than 780,000 nautical miles (1.4million km). She deployed to the Middle East eight times and earned battle honours for her service in East Timor, the Persian Gulf and the Middle East.





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