

ISSUE 70

COMBAT



JUNE 2021

Land & Sea

magazine



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Centenary

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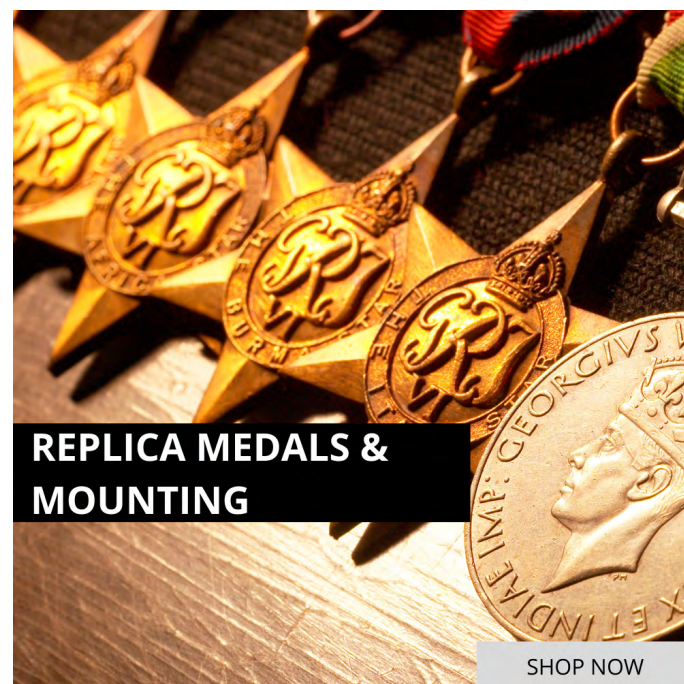
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READY. AIM. SHOP.



GEAR GALORE

EDITORIAL

Issue 70 – June 2021

CONTACT

AIR, LAND & SEA



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Photo by Sergeant
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Starts page 62

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appropriate.

The Royal Australian Air Force – the second-oldest air force in the world
after Britain's RAF – celebrates its centenary this year, and we heartily
congratulate them for the milestone and wish them well as they face the
challenges of the next 100 years.

That said, CONTACT has, for a long time, been monitoring a phenomenon
whereby numerous press releases and other communications we receive
from both the Department of Defence and the various ministers, seem,
more often than not, to refer to "Air Force" without any reference to "Royal
Australian Air Force".

The most striking example of this phenomenon recently was in the Air
Force News newspaper of 15 April 2021 – the edition that reported on
the RAAF centenary – which contained 149 references to "Air Force" and
only six references to the "Royal Australian Air Force" – four of which were
contained in advertisements paid for by external businesses.

I asked Defence for official clarification on this perceived phenomenon.

They said, "Defence can confirm that the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)
has not, and does not intend to discontinue the use of either the national
indicator 'Australian', nor the 'Royal' prefix approved by King George V in June
1921. However, it is also acceptable convention to refer to the RAAF as 'Air
Force'; particularly in the domestic context, or where mentioned in conjunction
with their sibling services Navy and Army" – except in [this case](#), apparently!

And yet, I have three problems with Defence's official assurances.

First, I have been contacted by several people who supported my
observation that 'Royal Australian' has been conspicuously absent from
RAAF communications for some time – and, more than one current-
serving RAAF member has told me (on condition of anonymity) about
several and regular instances of written work submitted for higher
clearance coming back with red pen stricken through all presentations of
the words [Royal Australian](#).

Secondly, while using the abbreviated form of a proper name is an
accepted convention, it usually occurs after first using the full name at
least once in a story – or a whole newspaper – in my humble opinion as an
editor trying always to follow writing conventions.

Thirdly – on 28 May 2021, just one day after receiving the official
assurance above, I received a press release from Defence that started off
with "After 35 years in the Australian Air Force..." – not using the name *in
conjunction with their sibling services Navy and Army* and, in this context,
feeling the need to clarify that they were referring specifically to our
domestic air force as opposed to any other air forces, pointedly excluded
the 'Royal' prefix approved by King George V in June 1921.

Now, I hadn't actually noticed the same phenomenon with the Royal
Australian Navy or Australian Army – in fact I'm confident they do, more
often than not, use their full and proper names in press releases, especially
on first occurrence.

But, for the purposes of fair and balanced research, I did the same scan
through recent editions of Navy News newspaper – and was surprised to
find just four reference to the "Royal Australian Navy" across three editions
of the newspaper – one in an advertisement, one in formal condolences to
the Queen on the death of her husband and two in a story where speech
was directed at a visiting US Navy officer.

I also did the same search in ARMY News newspapers – where I found 17
uses of "Australian Army" across the most recent three newspapers.

And in the three most recent editions of Air Force News newspaper? Just
one use of the proper name Royal Australian Air Force – in their formal
condolences to the Queen.

Sincerely,

Brian Hartigan,
Managing Editor

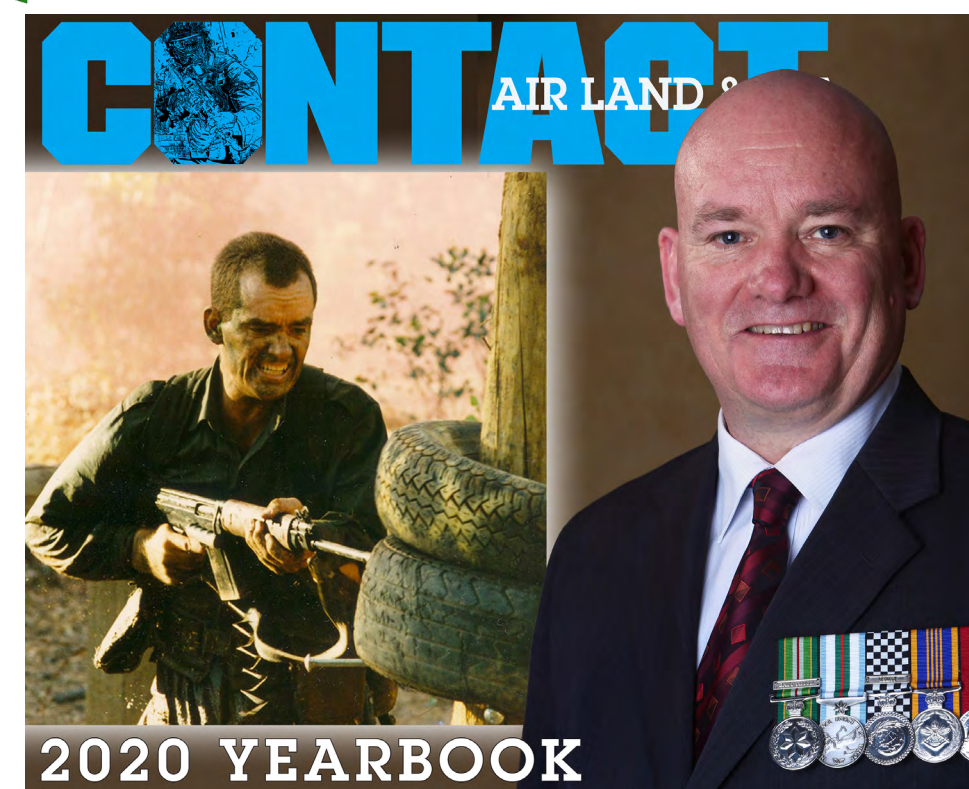
P.S. This 'error' was corrected throughout our reportage on the Royal Australian Air Force's
centenary, starting on page 50 :-)



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66



An Australian Army Staff Cadet fires an M72A1 66mm rocket launcher at Majura Training Area, Canberra.

Staff Cadets from III Class at the Royal Military College - Duntroon recently completed their initial training in high explosives, qualifying with F1 Grenade, 66mm Light Direct Fire Support Weapon, Claymore anti-personnel weapon and SL40 grenade-launcher. III Class is the first phase of officer training in the Australian Army, which lasts six months. This initial phase is designed to provide Staff Cadets the fundamentals of soldiering and the skills they will need for a career in the Australian Army.

ROBOTIC FUTURE?



Brigadier Jason Blain examines an armed autonomous robot at the Army Robotics Expo at the Brisbane Convention Centre. Photo by Private Jacob Hilton.

Autonomous armoured vehicles might seem like the stuff of sci-fi and brain-controlled robots the stuff of nightmares, but they were among some cutting-edge technologies on display at the Army Robotics Expo in Brisbane in April.

The expo was an opportunity for industry to show what they had available and for Army to see what might be worth pursuing.

With themes outlined in the Army Robotic and Autonomous Systems Strategy – such as lightening soldier loads, efficiency and decision making – 55 companies took the opportunity to attend.

With responsibilities for Army's robotics and autonomous systems Colonel Robin Smith said the Army couldn't afford to let technology move away from it.

"We can't control the rate of change so we need to stay abreast of it," Colonel Smith said.

Other technologies on display included remote-controlled underwater submersibles, autonomous multi-role vehicles, electric all-terrain vehicles and a hybrid rotary/fixed-wing drone.

Support functions were also represented, with autonomous plant equipment and logistic robots that automatically move pallets, all displayed.

An in-service MAN truck fitted with autonomous controls was demonstrated, which could potentially allow unmanned vehicles to form a convoy.

Numerous flying drones, augmented and virtual-reality systems were also demonstrated.

Colonel Smith said the expo was not a competition but a collaboration.

"It's for us to understand the state of technology, where it is, what it could do for us, where industry is moving, and to have the conversations with junior and senior leaders," he said.

"We're looking for what appears to be useful to us.

"There are opportunities in autonomy, but war is a human endeavour.

"There will simply be more and smarter tools available to soldiers in the future to be more lethal and present on a future battlefield."

LIGHTER 84MM

Carrying an 84mm Carl-Gustaf will become easier with the introduction of the new M4 variant.

Weighing 7.4kg and 99.9cm long, the new weapon is 2.6kg lighter and 6.6cm shorter than the M3 variant it will replace.

The M4 84mm also features an adjustable shoulder rest and grip, along with a 'transport safety' position for the cocking lever, enabling it to be carried more safely while loaded.

It can be fired via iron, telescopic or thermal sights or fitted with a high-tech fire control system.

The first of 600 new M4s were delivered in January with the remainder to roll out over five years.



Sergeants Anthony Martin (right) and Bryan De-Vall man a new Carl-Gustaf M4. Photo by Corporal Shane Kelly.

SUPPRESSORS FOR INFANTRY

Infantry scouts forced to open fire could be a lot harder to locate following rollout of EF88 suppressors.

Regular infantry battalions will be issued 500 suppressor kits to help Army develop doctrine and procedures for their use.

Weighing just 270g and measuring 160mm long, the suppressors are designed to reduce the EF88's audible and visible signatures, making it harder for an enemy to identify where shots are coming from.

A suppressor manufactured by New Zealand's Oceania Defence was chosen for its performance and weight.

Receiving units are expected to develop their own tactics, techniques and procedures, which may influence a wider rollout.

OZ LAUNCHES OWN GUIDED MISSILE INDUSTRY

The government announced in March it would accelerate the creation of a \$1billion Sovereign Guided Weapons Enterprise.

Prime Minister Morrison said Defence would select a strategic industry partner to operate a sovereign guided weapons manufacturing capability as a key part of the new enterprise.

"This new enterprise will support missile and guided-weapons manufacturing for use across the Australian Defence Force," Prime Minister Scott Morrison said.

"Creating our own sovereign capability on Australian soil is essential to keep Australians safe, while also providing thousands of local jobs in businesses right across the defence supply chain.

"As the COVID-19 pandemic has shown, having the ability for self-reliance, be it vaccine development or the defence of Australia, is vital to meeting our own requirements in a changing global environment.



HMAS Sydney fires an Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile. Photo by Matt Skirde.

"It's imperative we now proceed with the creation of a sovereign guided-weapons capability as a priority."

Minister for Defence Peter Dutton said the manufacture and supply of weapons in Australia would not only benefit and enhance ADF operational capacity but would

ensure we have adequate supply of weapon stocks to sustain combat operations if global supply chains were disrupted.

Defence Industry Minister Melissa Price said this new national enterprise could be worth \$40billion in local production and export over the next 20 years.

AFGHANISTAN END

Australia's drawdown plans from Afghanistan have been formally announced.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said we had been reducing our military presence in Afghanistan over the past two years, from a high of more than 1500 personnel to around 80 currently.

"In line with the United States and our other allies and partners, the last remaining Australian troops will depart Afghanistan by September 2021," Mr Morrison said.

SPACE DIVISION

Defence will establish a Space Division HQ within the Royal Australian Air Force in early 2022, with personnel from all areas of Defence.

Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld said assured access to Space was critical to enabling Defence's multi-domain operations.

"We use space daily for understanding weather, navigating, sharing information across Australia and the world and a range of other applications," he said.

"Defence will need capabilities that directly contribute to outcomes in space as a contested domain."

Air Vice-Marshal Cath Roberts will be the first head of Space Division.

FIRST FEMALE DCA

Major General Natasha Fox will be appointed Australia's first female Deputy Chief of Army in January next year.

Major General Fox joined the ADF in 1988, graduating from Duntroon in 1991.

Her early career consisted of logistics, specialising in combat supplies and logistics planning, and in training positions, including CO and Chief Instructor at ADFA.

She has deployed to Lebanon, Syria and Israel and was Chief of Staff for JTF 633 in the Middle East.

PIRIE SCRAPPED

HMAS Pirie (II) will be broken up for scrap after formally decommissioning in March.

Pirie is the first of 13 remaining Armadale-class patrol boats to be disposed of over the next four years, and

the first to 'die of natural causes' after HMAS Bundaberg was retired in 2014 because of fire.

Defence told CONTACT there was currently a tender process underway for HMAS Pirie's recycling.

MERITORIOUS UNIT CITATION SAVED

Defence Minister Peter Dutton has definitively overruled the Chief of Defence Force's threat to revoke the Meritorious Unit Citation for Special Operations Task Groups in Afghanistan.

General Campbell had already deferred his threat after a strong public backlash, but the minister's announcement secures the award for all but a few who may be convicted of war crimes in the future.

EXPORT RECORD

Australian Munitions set a record \$30million in export orders to the US, NZ, Canada, Asia and Europe in 2020.

The Thales company is Australia's largest manufacturer of munitions, propellant and military explosives, at Benalla, Victoria, and Mulwala, NSW.



Saab MCS Desert landscape vehicle camouflage. Image supplied.

SAAB PICKS NSW

Saab has selected New South Wales-based Global Defence Solutions as its Australian-industry partner to locally manufacture its combat-proven Mobile Camouflage Systems and multispectral camouflage screens.

Saab Australia MD Andy Keough said the deal would bring world-class capability into Australian industry with the transfer of global camouflage technical knowledge and expertise.

HEADS UP



MQ-9B.
US Air Force photo by
Senior Airman Haley Stevens.

READY TO BUY

The United States recently approved several Foreign Military Sales requests from the Australian Government.

On the A\$4.5billion Aussie shopping list was – up to 12 weapons-ready MQ-9B 'SkyGuardian' drones and sundary equipment worth an estimated US\$1.6billion – four CH-47F Chinook helicopters for US\$259million – and US\$1.7billion-worth of M1A2 SEPv3 Abrams tanks, plus 53 Abrams variants and assorted spares (see page 48 in this magazine).

MQ-9B will be a completely new capability for the RAAF when delivered and, in conjunction with their other coming-soon unmanned-aircraft system – MQ-4C Triton – will massively boost RAAF capabilities.

The four new Chinook helicopters are expected to increase the Army's 5th Aviation Regiment's fleet to 14.

The new tanks are expected to replace Australia's current fleet of Abrams – but most of the variant vehicles will represent a new capability for the Australian Army.



HMAS Supply sails through Sydney Harbour for her first trials at sea.
Photo by Leading Seaman Christopher Szumlanski.

The Royal Australian Navy's operational support capability received a significant boost with the formal commissioning of HMAS Supply on 10 April 2021.

HMAS Supply is the first of two new Supply-class auxiliary oiler replenishment (AOR) ships.

Sister ship Stalwart will join the fleet next year.

AORs will enhance fleet capability by extending the time a task group can spend at sea.

Carrying fuel, water, food, spare parts and dry cargo, the AORs will primarily provide logistics replenishment to naval combat units at sea.

Minister for Defence Peter Dutton said the AORs were a critical support element to contemporary maritime operations.

"With regional security challenges on the rise, it is more important than ever to have robust operational support capabilities for Australia's maritime assets," he said.

"Supply will help sustain our lethal naval capability and will play a critical role in enabling our Joint Force to maintain the security, sovereignty and prosperity of Australia and our partners."

HMAS Supply is homeported in Sydney while the future HMAS Stalwart will be based in WA.

GRADUATING WITH A BANG

Army and RAAF students literally graduated from their close air support course with a bang during Exercise Black Dagger in May.

The exercise is held twice a year as the final activity for students on the Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) Course.

The latest exercise was held from 3 to 14 May at RAAF Base Tindal and Delamere Air Weapons Range, and provided the students an opportunity to coordinate aircraft and ordnance in simulated and live air-to-ground strikes.

F/A-18 and PC-21 RAAF aircraft, Tiger helicopters and 81mm mortars supported the exercise.

RESCUED

ADF deployed two P-8A Poseidon sorties to deliver life rafts to 20 stranded fishermen clinging to their sinking vessel 670nm west of Perth on 14 and 15 May, working closely with other aircraft coordinated by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

HMAS Anzac, which was just hours away from docking in Perth after a recent deployment, was diverted to the task on 14 May.

The following day, Anzac transferred the Indonesians from a Japanese fishing vessel that arrived on the scene that morning.

After assessing medical needs, one fisherman was transferred to Perth when the ship was within helicopter range – then the rest were taken home to Bali.

HMAS Anzac eventually arrived home to Perth and waiting families on 24 May.

NULKA PLANT

An Indigenous construction company was awarded head contract to build a \$24million assembly and maintenance facility in NSW for one of Australia's most successful defence exports.

National Aboriginal Construction Partners (NACP) Projects is expected to employ around 200 workers during construction of the Nulka Missile Assembly and Maintenance facilities at Defence Establishment Orchard Hills.

Nulka is currently deployed on more than 150 Australian, US and Canadian warships.

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VET VISIT

Royal Australian Air Force military working dog Ulf of No. 3 Security Forces Squadron is off to see the veterinarian – an annual event held at all military working dog sections across Australia, to ensure that all RAAF MWDs are fit for duty. MWDs and their handlers provide security, crime prevention patrols, emergency response and intruder detection on RAAF bases and in deployed locations.

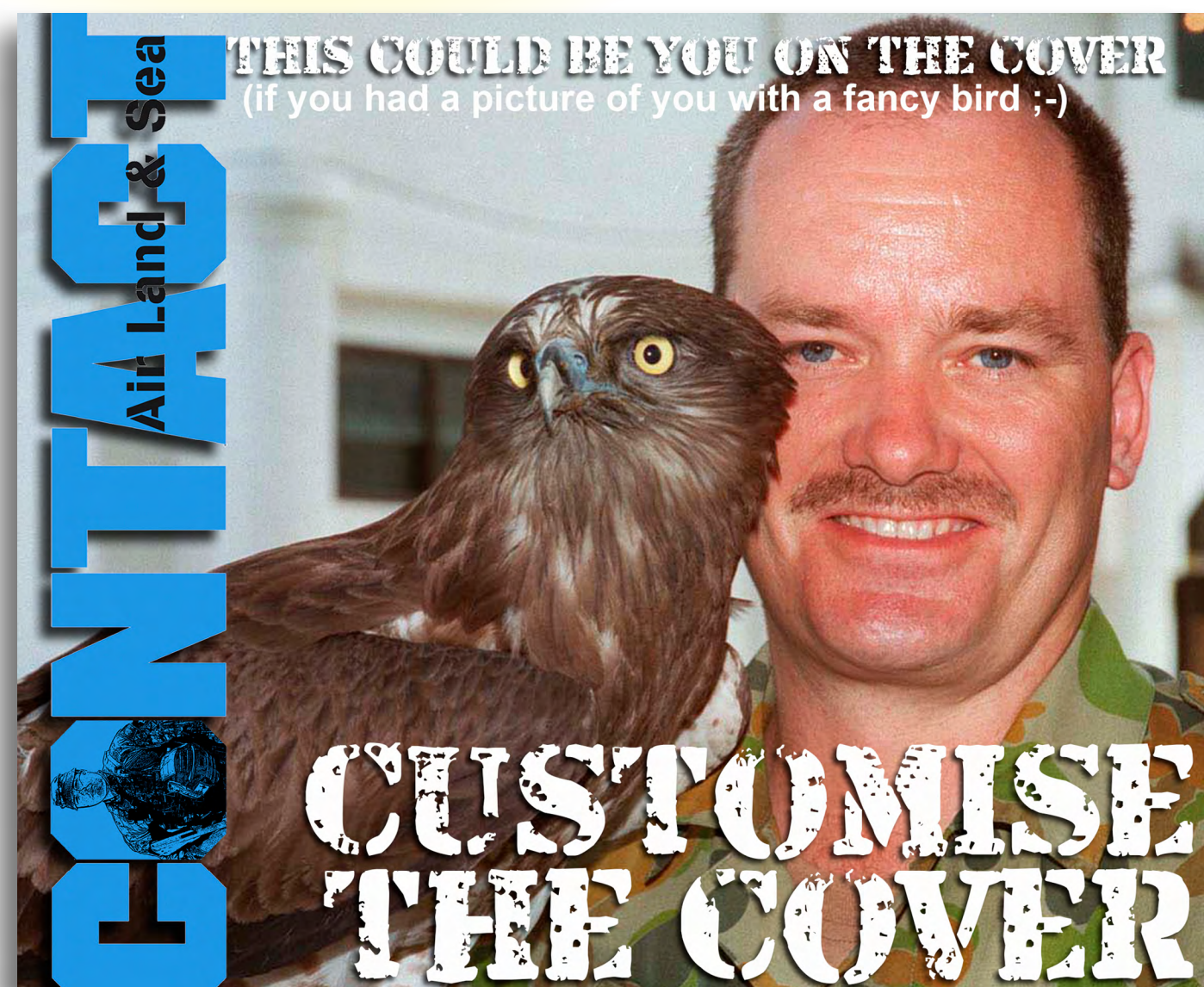


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ANZAC DAY TRADITION REBORN 2021

PHOTOS BY CHRISTABEL MIGLIORINI

After being locked down and locked out in 2020, ANZAC Day was back as big as ever – or bigger – in towns and cities all around Australia in 2021.

With COVID restrictions all-but lifted nation wide (with a few notable exceptions), veterans and supporters were out in droves to mark that most special day of the year for those who have served in our nation's defence and those who are grateful for their sacrifice.

As many as 20,000 current-serving ADF personnel were out in uniform supporting vigils and ceremonies big and small.

Defence members took part in commemorations in communities where they feel a strong connection – the place they think of as home, the community they currently serve in or communities they bonded with during recent emergencies.

About 130 officers and soldiers travelled back to communities they assisted during Operation Bushfire Assist 2019-20, such as Eden on the NSW south coast, Mallacoota in Victoria and Kangaroo Island off South Australia.

Commander Forces Command Major General Matt Pearce said it was important for soldiers to preserve the connections they built in some of the worst fire-affected areas.

"As the COVID-19 restrictions eased, this was an opportunity to strengthen Army's commitment and contribution to our community," he said.

"Many of those communities asked us to make a particular effort to get our people back so the community could show their appreciation for the work they did."

Troops from brigades, training centres and units in Brisbane, Darwin, Adelaide and Sydney gladly participated.

"While we're always working hard to connect with everyone who lives nearby, there is of course often another place we think of as home, or where we have a deep connection with a community that time and distance cannot erode," Major General Pearce said.

"As we get back to our core business of training for war, it's good for us to pause and gather with





"The pride and happiness on that man's face, saluting his brothers and sisters of service, brought tears to my eyes and filled my heart.

"People like him are what makes me proud to be an Aussie."

Chrissie said there was a wonderful turnout of support and respect for those who have served our nation at both the dawn service and the march in Brisbane.

In CONTACT's home town, Kiama, NSW, I estimate the Dawn Service crowd was the equal of 2018 – the last year of the 'ANZAC Centenary' – and the crowd lining the street and clapping as we marched our usual route was bigger than I'd ever seen before.

From all accounts, most centres, big and small, reported similar.

ANZAC Day 2020 was very special and memorable for me – so much so, I thought I wanted to do the private driveway remembrance again this year.

But I'm glad I didn't – ANZAC Day 2021 turned out to be very special too – a pressure-valve release and return to (near) normal in a turbulent world.



Centre Left: Corporal Daniel Keighran VC marches with 6RAR veterans. Above: Emile Smets. Below: A veteran family at Brisbane's Dawn Service. All photos by Christabel Migliorini in Brisbane

the communities we are from, and where we have served during these extraordinary times.

"It's an opportunity to return, reunite and remember."

Minister for Defence Personnel Darren Chester said this ANZAC Day, tens of thousands of Australian Defence Force personnel provided ceremonial support to regional towns, schools, veteran and community groups, local memorials and aged care facilities.

"The ability to gather in person to honour our service men and women is a welcome return," Mr Chester said.

"I am proud of all personnel who played a part in services across the country."

ADF support ranged from catafalque parties and marching contingents to musicians, wreath layers and guest speakers.

Major David Coleman, 1st Armoured Regiment, who travelled to Kangaroo Island said the return involved unexpected moments for the members of the 1st Armoured Emergency Support Force.

"The first thing we saw was how the resilience of the locals had transformed the tragedy of last year into a sense of optimism this year," Major Coleman said.

"Then, as we walked through the streets, we had people come up to our soldiers and thank us – people we didn't personally know, but who knew about us and knew what we had done.

"The respect and appreciation shown by members of the community was fantastic, and it is something that will stay with our soldiers for a long time to come."

For Craftsman Cameron Powell, 1st Aviation Regiment, his return home was an opportunity to march with veterans and discover the rich military history of his home town, in Broomfield, Victoria.

"There was a particularly important moment for me when I met George Hepburn, nicknamed Tiny, who was not only in my trade, but also served in the same squadron I am now serving with," Craftsman Powell said.

"Meeting Tiny was one of the highlights of my day. He is 90 years old, and served in Vietnam as a maintainer in 161 Independent Reconnaissance Flight.

"Being able to enjoy and commemorate ANZAC Day in my home town was something very special."

Another 'old soldier' who thought it was important to parade with his home battalion was Corporal Daniel Keighran VC, who marched in Brisbane with his 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment comrades, instead of his usual VIP duties at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

"I felt it was important for me to be back in Brisbane this year for ANZAC Day, especially to do a mental-health check-in with those I served with," Corporal Keighran told CONTACT's Queensland 'stringer' Christabel Migliorini.

"It was a truly special day to be able to connect with those who have served, and to remember some not making it home."

Christabel was also emotionally touched by 85-year-old Malay and Vietnam veteran Emile Smets.

"He was so happy to be able to attend. His carer said he was very emotional getting ready this morning," Chrissie said.

"He wore his slouch hat with such pride and stood up and saluted as best he could with each Corps that went past for as long as he could before needing to sit again.



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Family heirloom rescued from the ashes

Over the normally 'festive season' of 2019 and well into 2020, large swathes of Australia were devastated by the worst bushfires to sweep through Australian communities in years.

Among them was Batemans Bay, New South Wales, and one home in particular where a treasured family heirloom was thought lost forever.

A ceremonial sword, belonging to one Lieutenant Commander GH Starling, who joined the Royal Australian Navy in or about 1968 when he was not much more than 17.

Originally hailing from Goolwa, South Australia, the young man served at sea, posted to HMA ships Tobruk, Vendetta and Supply. He also did a posting to Papua New Guinea, mapping the Sepik River, and an ANZUK deployment in 1974.

When Lieutenant Commander Starling was diagnosed with cancer in 1981, he continued to work on shore as a training officer at Creswell, Penguin and Watson.

Despite treatments and yearly surgeries, he continued working until his last year, succumbing to the insipid disease in 1992 after an 11-year battle.

His many photos, mementos – and his ceremonial sword – were treasured heirlooms in his family home – until the home and all of its contents were destroyed by bushfire on New Year's Eve 2019.

A proud family's home leveled by bushfire, on New Year's Eve 2019.

Or so it was thought.

While the house was certainly razed to the ground, and with the family slowly recovering from the loss, thoughts turned to what, if anything, might be salvaged from the site before bulldozers came to clear it.

Family and friends hoped beyond hope that, with most photos and memorabilia certainly gone, the patriarch's ceremonial sword might yet be found.

A current-serving chief petty officer and friend of the family drove through the night to spend the last day before excavators arrived looking for the sword.

Initially, the tip of the scabbard was found buried under collapsed and twisted roofing – but, the absence of the more substantial blade in or near the same spot was baffling.

As the search dragged on into the night, the sword was eventually found – wrapped around a tree at the bottom of the property. The theory is that it had been blasted there by exploding gas tanks in the house.

Later in the year, Canberra-based ceremonial sword retailer, the Military Shop, was approached for a replacement sword and, as staff fondled the sad-looking remnants of the original, they also listened intently to the moving story of its demise.

Sales Manager Arthur Mitchell said the family explained how the sword was basically an almost unrecognisable black U shape when they located it and, that while they were able to straighten it to a degree, they wondered what if anything could be done with it now.



Military Shop made contact with their expert sword refurbisher who, in true Aussie spirit, agreed to “give it a crack!”

While the family purchased a new ceremonial sword, inscribed to identically reflect the one that was considered lost, Arthur Mitchell suggested that if the fire damaged sword could be cleaned up, the two swords together would tell a powerful story – a bit like a Phoenix rising from the ashes!

Weeks later, Arthur said the overly modest refurbisher had done a wonderful job.

“All he said was that he had “cleaned it up and re-tempered the steel”, but it was amazing to see the drastically improved condition it now presented in.

“We could even read the original inscription, and

the sword was straightened to near perfection.

“It was an amazing feat, considering how it first presented and the hellfire and explosion it had suffered.”

The sword is now presented in tandem with its modern replacement and the family is very grateful for the work undertaken to preserve its significance.

Arthur Mitchell said the joy of returning the sword to the family after all they had been through brought tears to his eyes.

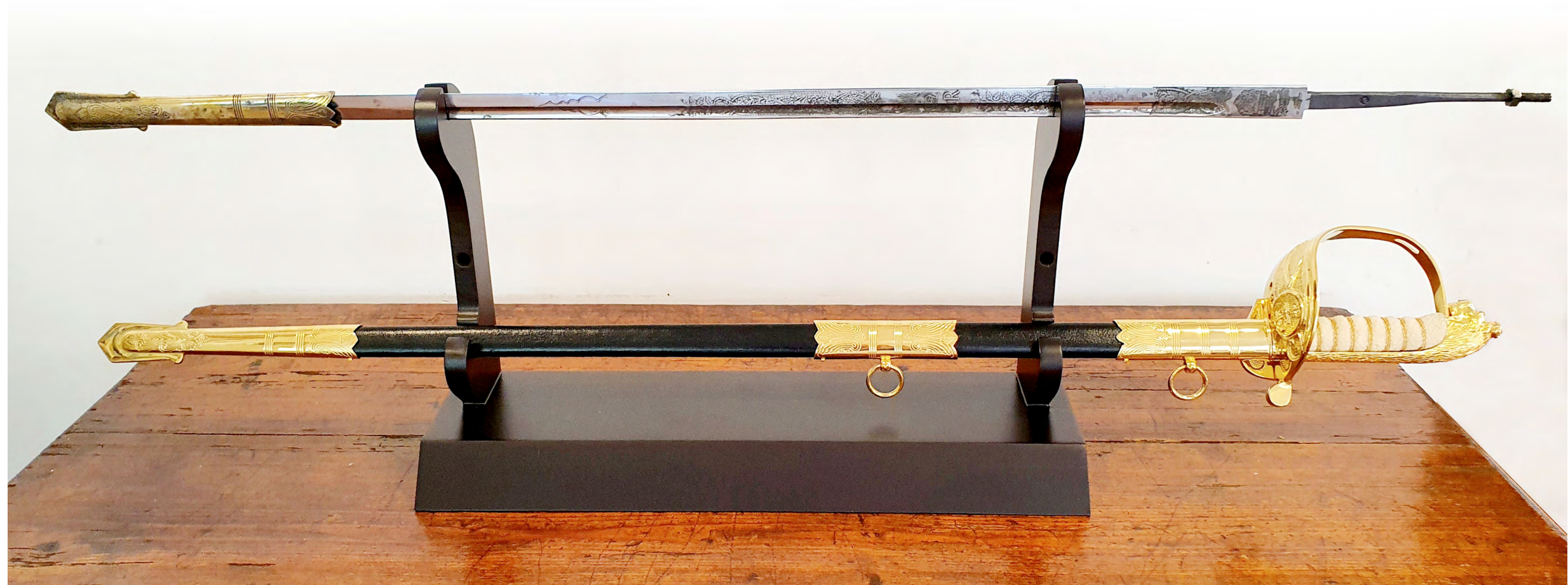
And, as for what the family thinks – “The sword has remained a big part of our special memories of him and now that most of the photos, books and so on have gone, this is the one thing that we will honour for generations to come”.

ABOVE LEFT: A ruptured gas bottle in the rubble of what was once a family home – the explosion of which is thought to have expelled the sword out of the burning house and across the property, causing it wrap itself around a tree.

ABOVE RIGHT: The family home, near Bateman's Bay, New South Wales, left in ruins by the New Year's Eve 2019 bushfire.

FAR RIGHT: First attempt to straighten the sword, which had been wrapped around a tree by the force of a gas explosion.

RIGHT: Old and new swords now add to a powerful narrative to a proud family's military heritage.



NEW RIDE FOR 51FNQR



Aussie built 12.5m Naiad

A new regional support craft destined for Army's 51st Far North Queensland Regiment (51FNQR) underwent sea trials in Yamba on the NSW north coast, as boat manufacturer Yamba Welding & Engineering (YWE) prepared to hand over the craft to the ADF in April.

Heralding a new maritime capability for the Regional Force Surveillance Group (RFSG) fleet, the 12.5m Naiad was designed for a number of mission

sets, including boosting Army's sovereign border protection activities in north Queensland.

This new watercraft is a sister vessel to a series of Australian Border Force (ABF) Naiads that were delivered by YWE in 2019 for use in a variety of Australian coastal regions as part of Operation Sovereign Borders.

It will also join an 11.3m Naiad in operation on Thursday Island by Queensland Police.

The regional support craft will provide a spectrum of marine support operations to Regional Force Surveillance Units (RFSU) including search, rescue and recovery, casualty evacuation, stores and equipment transfer, community engagement and surveillance.

A key capability of this vessel is its performance and handling in complex bodies of water and highly variable maritime conditions, as it facilitates

personnel movement within the Torres Strait and Cape York area of operations, enabling engagement with local communities and other government agencies.

Managing Director of The Whiskey Project Group, parent company of Naiad and YWE, Darren Schuback said that for more than 20 years, Australia and New Zealand's coast guard, rescue, patrol and Defence agencies have relied on Naiad's

performance and handling in some of the world's most challenging maritime conditions.

"The recent extreme weather events experienced in northern NSW provided opportunity for the Naiad to demonstrate its performance and handling in elevated sea states, with sea trial operations undertaken in up to sea state 5," Mr Schuback said.

"As an Australian defence-industry business, Whiskey Project Group is proud to deliver a 100% sovereign capability advantage to Army.

"We are delighted to demonstrate how all of Australia benefits when the solution is a superior-performing vessel, built from the ground up, right here in Australia.

"It benefits our regional Torres Strait neighbours and far-north Queensland communities, it benefits the regiment, it benefits Operation Sovereign Borders and it benefits Australia's maritime industry, our manufacturing skills, training and employment.

"But most importantly, it benefits the end user who receives a fit-for-purpose vessel that will enhance their ability to safely undertake the variety of maritime missions they perform each day."

The regional support craft will be based on Thursday Island, a remote locality that influenced a number of key capability requirements including stability, safety, consistent performance and handling in difficult sea states, and the necessity for the vessel to operate on diesel fuel.

To best meet the performance capability requirements of the vessel with a diesel fuel system, Army selected COX CXO300 outboards – a new generation of diesel power, which is a light-weight and robust marine propulsion option that requires 25% less fuel than an equivalent gasoline outboard but offers 650Nm of engine torque and 300 horsepower at the propeller.

The first of their type in Australia, these COX diesel outboards are designed to last three times longer than a gasoline equivalent, and combine exceptional performance with the reassurance of proven V8 diesel technology.

A spokesperson from Power Equipment Pty Ltd said the CXO300 diesel outboard had been designed and built specifically for marine use – the first of its kind.

3 x 300hp outboard diesels





RNZN and NZ Police hone search skills for when divers get

LOST

Teams from the Royal New Zealand Navy and New Zealand Police recently combined for a series of exercise scenarios in the Marlborough Sounds, including a search and recovery scenario of a missing recreational diver.

Every year, around 10 underwater fatalities occur in New Zealand, with many victims found relatively quickly, thanks to the prompt actions of the Police National Dive Squad, which is on call to respond immediately to any incident in New Zealand.

But there are cases where a more specialist response is required, based on the depth the diver was at and how large the area is that needs to be searched.

Senior Sergeant Bruce Adams of the Police National Dive Squad that even with an immediate deployment, by the time the squad arrives at the scene, the task has already moved to search and recovery rather than search and rescue.

"This is complicated by the fact the lost diver may have moved a considerable distance from their last known position, with sea currents and the like," he said.

"That's why we call the Navy in – they have the equipment, personnel and expertise to narrow down any search area and quickly identify an object of interest – such as a missing diver, unexploded ordnance or discarded evidence such as knives or firearms."

Chief Petty Officer Coady Clark of the RNZN's Military Hydrographic Group is well aware of the pressure placed on the team in these situations.

"Anyone missing underwater is a tragedy that will have a devastating impact on friends and family, so we do everything we can in the shortest amount of time using our specialist equipment to find the person and have them returned to their loved ones," he said.

The Hydrographic Group is part of HMNZS Matataua from the Devonport Naval Base.

Able to respond at short notice, the group uses state-of-the-art autonomous underwater vehicles that can remotely dive to depths of 100 metres under the command of a team member using a control panel and video screen.



Main – crew from HMNZS Matataua's Military Hydrographic Group deploy a REMUS 100 AUV to begin a search – and above, a HMNZS Matataua crew member points out a potential object of interest to a Police National Dive Squad member. NZDF photos.

The AUV, which can travel at five knots, has a sophisticated side scan-sonar that can detect objects of interest on the sea or lake floor, or even drifting in the water, up to 50 metres in any direction.

Chief Petty Officer Clark said that once the sonar had identified the missing diver and his team ascertained the exact depth and search co-ordinates, the information is given immediately to the Police dive team who then effect the recovery.

"It's obviously a sombre time for everybody when the person we're seeking is found, but we also take quiet satisfaction in the fact we have found them."

Senior Sergeant Adams agreed – "These are never easy tasks for anybody involved, particularly the family of the missing diver."

"But it's because of the families that our dive team and the Navy's hydrographers are doing this training to keep our skills honed for whatever task comes our way."

The Military Hydrographic Group is primarily tasked with the surveying of sea beds, harbour entrances and beach landing sites to ensure RNZN vessels can access an area where safety of navigation is uncertain, such as following a natural disaster.

They also work with a range of other government agencies on survey projects spanning from Ross Island to the Equator.

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DISSUB

SUBMARINE IN DISTRESS

Following the recent loss of an Indonesian submarine with all hands, the importance of Australia's submarine-rescue system is brought to mind.

PICS LEADING SEAMAN RICHARD CORDELL

BACKGROUND: An image of HMAS Farncomb sitting on the sea floor is relayed back to the rescue ship by a remotely operated underwater vehicle during Ex Black Carillon 2013. All other images from Black Carillon 2020 by Leading Seaman Richard Cordell.

OPPOSITE: The LR5 submersible is lowered into the sea from MV Stoker.

PREVIOUS PAGE: The LR5 submersible conducts night operations during Exercise Black Carillon 2020.

JFD Australia has been the Royal Australian Navy's submarine rescue system supplier for more than 12 years and recently marked a decade of successful participation in the RAN's yearly Black Carillon submarine rescue exercises off the coast of Western Australia.

Held once a year in some of the world's most challenging ocean environments, Black Carillon is designed to thoroughly test every aspect of Australia's submarine rescue system in a series of scenarios that replicate a real-life submarine emergency as closely as possible.

These scenarios include several dive rotations in shallow and deep water to demonstrate the capability of JFD's fully-integrated system, which includes a submarine rescue vehicle – or mini submarine, with pilot and crew – a transfer-under-pressure chamber to bring submarine personnel safely to the surface, and a hyperbaric suite where rescued submariners can receive immediate and often life-saving medical treatment once they are out of the water.

Importantly, with this capability, the entire crew of up to 60 personnel from any Australian Collins-class submarine can be rescued and treated at the same time, if required.

Retired rear admiral and Chair of JFD Australia Allan du Toit said the highest priority for JFD had been and always would be to keep Australia's submariners and other defence force personnel safe.

"In an emergency situation, human life is the only thing that matters," Dr du Toit said.

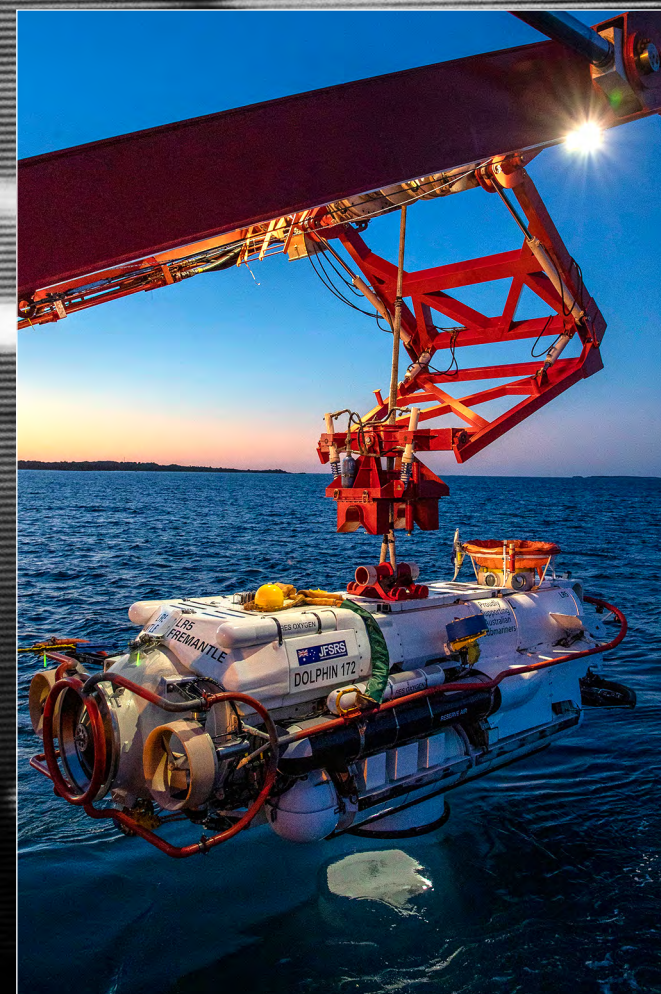
"That time to first rescue is critical, and being on stand-by to respond and mobilise our air-transportable system and team could not be more important.

"That is why exercises such as Black Carillon, as tough and demanding as they are, mean we are rescue ready at all times and proud to be the world's 'safe pair of hands'.

In 2020, JFD Australia was awarded a contract extension from the Royal Australian Navy to continue to operate Australia's submarine-rescue system for another four years, with a one-year option.

JFD Australia is part of a huge Scottish-based underwater capabilities and training provider, serving the civilian oil, gas and other marine engineering industries as well as defence, with diving, submarine and hyperbaric rescue, technical solutions and services.

JFD provides subsea rescue services, engineering services and training to 80 countries and 33 navies including the UK, Australia, Singapore, Korea and India, plus NATO's Submarine Rescue System.





Medical/survival stores

SMERAS

SUBMARINE ESCAPE, RESCUE, ABANDONMENT & SURVIVAL

All submarine-operating nations place great emphasis on submarine safety. Submarine design, build and operating procedures are carefully developed and controlled to reduce the risk of an accident occurring to as low as reasonably practicable.

Nevertheless it is recognised that the possibility of an accident can never be entirely dismissed, and that there is a duty of care to provide systems, equipment and resources to minimise the loss of life in the event of a submarine in distress – DISSUB.

SMERAS is an internationally organised 'capability' which will involve almost any nation that can provide some assistance to the nation that owns the submarine. This will include assets, people and support to the Submarine Search and Rescue Authority (SSRA) – the command and control organisation that will direct operations from naval headquarters, and the on-scene commander – the senior naval representative at sea.

A DISSUB incident will require the assembly of a wide number of assets, people and organisations to undertake a successful recovery operation, as illustrated.

Courtesy JFD



Command/coordination

Surface abandonment

Multi-man liferaft

All aspects of SMERAS must be understood and regularly trained for, not just by the rescuers, but also submarine crews.

Exercise Black Carillon is the Royal Australian Navy's annual, whole system shakeout – but group and individual training is also conducted regularly – most notably for Navy personnel at the Submarine Training and Systems Centre at HMAS Stirling, which includes the Submarine Escape Training Facility's 22m-deep tanks.

Australia's submarine escape training 'tower' is the only one in the Southern Hemisphere and one of only six in the world.

DISSUB location/survey

DISSUB

Shallow escape

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LAND 400 BATTLE REGINS

Both contenders for the largest acquisition project in the history of the Australian Army were officially unveiled in Canberra in March.

Two infantry fighting vehicle contenders are currently undergoing evaluation and, once delivered, will provide the Army with an advanced, mounted, close-combat capability.

Each company has delivered three prototypes for more than a year of torture testing by the Army.

Acting Minister for Defence Marise Payne said up to 450 infantry fighting vehicles would be acquired at a project cost of up to \$27billion.

"These next generation infantry fighting vehicles will provide Australian soldiers with higher levels of protection, mobility, firepower and connectivity," Minister Payne said.

"They will give our troops the best possible opportunity to successfully complete their mission safely."

The two shortlisted tenderers for LAND 400 Phase 3 project are Rheinmetall, offering its KF-41 Lynx, and Hanwha, with its Redback.

If successful, both companies have proposed to build the the majority of the fleet in Australia – Rheinmetall in Queensland or Hanwha in Victoria.

Attending the official unveiling in Canberra, former Army Major General Senator Jim Molan said Defence was seeking a tracked infantry fighting vehicle capable of accommodating six soldiers in addition to a crew of three.

"Hanwha Defense Australia and Rheinmetall Defence Australia have each delivered three prototype vehicles which will be tested over the course of this year, as part of a two-year risk mitigation activity," Senator Molan said.

"These activities include Australian soldiers participating in user evaluation and testing, with a particular focus on the armour, firepower and mobility of the platforms."

A decision on the preferred tenderer will be presented to government for consideration in 2022.

The infantry fighting vehicles will replace the current M113 armoured personnel carriers that have been in service since the mid-1960s.

\$27BILLION PRIZE





RHEINMETALL LYNX KF41 INFANTRY FIGHTING VEHICLE (Tenderer Claims)

Crew:	3 + 6 dismounts
Engine:	Liebherr D976
Power:	850 Kw
Torque:	4308 Nm
Fuel:	961 litres diesel
Height:	3.7 m
Width:	3.4 m
Length:	7.8 m
Maximum speed:	75 km/h
Maximum range:	520 km
Maximum gradient:	60 per cent
Maximum side slope:	35 per cent
Maximum trench width:	2.5 m
Maximum vertical step:	1 m

Weapons fitted:

- » Mauser MK30-2 Air Burst Munition
Main Weapon
- » 7.62mm GPMG MAG 58
Secondary Weapon
- » Anti-tank Guided Missiles (ATGM)
SPIKE LR2
- » Remote Weapon Station

LAND 400 is a multi-phased program that will deliver the future Land Combat Vehicle System (LCVS) for the Australian Army. LAND 400 Phase 3 will replace the M113 fleet of vehicles. The LYNX has a 30 mm cannon capable of firing armour piercing, high explosive, practice and programmable air burst ammunition and carries two SPIKE LR2 ATGM. It has a range of electro-optical, infra-red and laser sensors to detect threats and a suite of other survivability capabilities to protect against guided and unguided anti-armour weapons, mines and improvised explosive devices. It has a digital communication system interoperable with other Australian Defence Force capabilities. It accommodates a crew of three and can transport six additional soldiers with combat equipment.



HANWHA REDBACK INFANTRY FIGHTING VEHICLE (Tenderer Claims)

Crew:	3 + 6 dismounts
Engine:	MTU America MT881 Ka-500
Power:	735 Kw
Torque:	3030 Nm
Fuel:	920 litres diesel
Height:	3.82 m
Width:	3.60 m
Length:	8.72 m
Maximum speed:	65 km/h
Maximum range:	575 km
Maximum gradient:	60 per cent
Maximum side slope:	30 per cent
Maximum trench width:	3 m
Maximum vertical step:	1 m

Weapons fitted:

- » ATK MK44 Bushmaster Chain Gun
Main Weapon
- » 7.62mm GPMG MAG 58
Secondary Weapon
- » Anti-tank Guided Missiles (ATGM)
SPIKE LR2
- » Remote Weapon Station

LAND 400 is a multi-phased program that will deliver the future Land Combat Vehicle System (LCVS) for the Australian Army. LAND 400 Phase 3 will replace the M113 fleet of vehicles. The REDBACK has a 30 mm cannon capable of firing armour piercing, high explosive, practice and programmable air burst ammunition and carries two SPIKE LR2 ATGM. It has a range of electro-optical, infra-red and laser sensors to detect threats and a suite of other survivability capabilities to protect against guided and unguided anti-armour weapons, mines and improvised explosive devices. It has a digital communication system interoperable with other Australian Defence Force capabilities. It accommodates a crew of three and can transport six additional soldiers with combat equipment.



BOXERS' FIRST ROUND

Boxer combat reconnaissance vehicles are being put to the test in the largest exercise they have operated in since being introduced into the Army.

The vehicles are being used in the 7th Brigade-led Exercise Diamond Walk at Shoalwater Bay Training Area in Queensland.

Trooper Harrison Dietrich, a gunner on the Boxer, said crews had adapted well to the new capability.

"We have just conducted a battle run with the hatches down, which has been a first for the troop," he said.

"It's also been about adapting and trying to work out the best way to employ the Boxer."

Lieutenant Riley Brassil previously worked with ASLAV – the vehicle the Boxer is replacing.

"The crews have shown great initiative and technical mastery in the way they have adapted to the new platform, which is unlike anything they have worked with before," he said.

"In a vehicle that has so many sensors and digital systems, you find you have so much more to work with and your mind is stretched between a few different lines of effort."

"However, if you can pull that all together and work with the crew as a whole, the Boxer is extremely effective at doing its job."



PHOTOS BY PRIVATE JACOB HILTON

HOWLING WOLF

WORDS CAPTAIN TAYLOR LYNCH
PICS PRIVATE HAMID FARAHANI

Tank crews from 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment (Queensland Mounted Infantry) honed their skills operating M1A1 Abrams during Exercise Howling Wolf, while local Indigenous school children interested in a Defence Force career, watched.

Soldiers cycled through their drills to neutralise threats, ticking the boxes to progress to their next level of training.

Trooper Dade Goldberg was one of the newer gunners being assessed throughout the two-week exercise and said it was a great experience.

"I've done live fire before on my gunners course, so it was good to hone those foundation skills and drills again," Trooper Goldberg said.

"It was thrilling. You're laser focused the whole time and when you finish, and take that moment to breathe, you realise it's one of the best jobs you can have."

Trooper Goldberg said teamwork was key for the four-man crew.

"It's not just one person – you're backed by the rest of the crew and you work like a well-oiled machine."

"Through our drills we have quick words of command to tell the crew commander what we're seeing, what we're doing, and it just flows nicely."

"When you're in there it's a hell of an experience, but you've got to be on top of your game."

Trooper Goldberg said the regiment also placed high importance on engagement with the community.

"It's good for the students to see what we're capable of doing and know that we take our jobs extremely seriously," he said.

"You learn discipline, you learn good skills, but the opportunities this job offers are the best. There's nothing like it."

Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships representative Joel Moon said witnessing Exercise Howling Wolf was an invaluable experience for young Indigenous students who live in the area.

"Supporting employment among Indigenous youths to help them get into jobs and working is an important part of our job," Mr Moon said.

"The Defence Force gives Indigenous youths a pathway and guidance, which they need at a young age."

"Some of the candidates we have are just looking for someone to guide them and give them the tools for success."

"A few of our candidates are keen on the Defence Force and this was an opportunity for us to get a better understanding for when I'm talking to the kids and providing guidance for different career opportunities."

"Exercise Howling Wolf was definitely an eye opener for them – it's a good step for them to see if they really want to commit to the Army. I think they all enjoyed it."





ABOVE: A US Army 1st Cavalry Division Abrams M1A2 SEPv3 sends its first round downrange at Fort Hood, Texas. Photo by Sergeant Calab Franklin.

RIGHT: An M1074 joint assault bridge. US Army photo.

M1A2 SEPv3

The US has approved the sale of 75 M1A2 SEPv3 Abrams tanks to Australia – plus other systems not fielded by the Australian Army before.

US State Department approved the possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Australia of Heavy Armored Combat Systems and related equipment for an estimated cost of US\$1.685 billion.

Australia requested to buy 160 M1A1 tank structures/hulls provided from stock in order to produce the following end items and spares:

- 75 M1A2 SEPv3 Abrams main battle tanks;
- 29 M1150 assault breacher vehicles;
- 18 M1074 joint assault bridges;
- 6 M88A2 Hercules combat recovery vehicles; and,
- 122 AGT1500 gas turbine engines.

Also included is development of a unique armour package, common remotely operated weapon station low profile (CROWS-LP), driver's vision enhancer, mission equipment, special tools and test equipment, ground support equipment, system and engine spare parts, technical data and publications, US government and contractor technical and logistics assistance, quality



assurance teams, transportation services, program management, new-equipment training, and other related elements of logistic and program support.

The US statement said the proposed sale would improve Australia's capability to meet current and future threats by enhancing the lethality, survivability, and interoperability of the Australian Army.

"The M1A2 SEPv3 will upgrade the current Australian fleet of M1A1 SA tanks with no changes to Royal Australian Armoured Corps force structure.

"Additional M88A2 vehicles provide de-processing and combat-vehicle-recovery support for the Australian tank fleet.

"The M1150 assault breacher vehicles and M1074 joint assault bridges will be a new capability for the Royal Australian Engineers, bringing under-armor bridging and breaching capability, increasing the effectiveness and survivability of Australian combat engineers and providing increased mobility for the armoured fleet."

The above information all comes from an April 2021 US DoD announcement, which has not yet been confirmed by the ADF (as of 31 May 2021).



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The Royal Australian Air Force officially celebrates its 100th birthday across much of 2021, bookended by ceremonies and a spectacular flypast in Canberra on 31 March and the Australian International Air Show at Avalon, Victoria, from 30 November to 5 December.



At the Canberra event, more than 60 past and present aircraft of the Royal Australian Air Force made a big impact with crowds watching on the ground – and on national television.

The latest F-35A and F/A-18F Super Hornet fighters loudly announced themselves before flying over Government House and Lake Burley Griffin.

Giant C-17 Globemaster transports, high-tech P-8A Poseidons and E-7A Wedgetails graced the skies.

And RAAF's World War II-era aircraft weren't forgotten, with the iconic Spitfire and Kittyhawk fighters, Catalina flying boat and Dakota transport also taking part.

All followed by a 14-minute aerobatics display by the Roulettes.

Minister for Defence Personnel Darren Chester attended a centenary event at Government House, along with special guest 100-year-old Air Force veteran John Cockburn.

Mr Chester said the centenary commemorations recognised the 350,000 people who had served in the Royal Australian Air Force and he thanked those who continued to do so.

"One thing that is consistent right across RAAF is the incredible amount of professionalism and commitment to service, and today we say

thank you for your service and we wish the Royal Australian Air Force a happy 100th birthday," Mr Chester said.

Before the flypast, Governor-General General (retd) David Hurley presented the Royal Australian Air Force with a new Queen's Colour during a parade at Government House, replacing an older colour presented by the Queen in 1986.

Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld said the new colour would represent the dedication and sacrifice made to ensure Australia's security.

"Let it also lay a marker for the Royal Australian Air Force that we are today and will be into the future," Air Marshal Hupfeld said.

"The Royal Australian Air Force, represented by our new colour today, is ready to meet any emerging challenge our nation encounters.

"All who proudly serve in the Royal Australian Air Force carry a deep sense of duty to our nation and will serve to safeguard its future for the generations that will follow us."

Centenary commemorations actually began earlier in the day with a flag-raising ceremony by ADFA cadets at Commonwealth Place in Canberra, followed by another at Defence headquarters – and concluded with a Last Post ceremony at the Australian War Memorial, dedicated to Royal Australian Air Force sergeant William Godley.

Sergeant Godley was born in India on 31 March 1921, sharing his birthday with the Royal Australian Air Force.

He joined the RAAF in 1940, became an air gunner, and was later attached to the Royal Air Force's No. 14 Squadron as a wireless operator/air gunner on Bristol Blenheim light bombers in the Middle East.

On 17 March 1942, his aircraft collided with another Blenheim, near Bahariya, Egypt, killing all onboard both aircraft.





Autumn Colours

It was a perfect day at Government House for an important ceremony, Petty Officer Lee-Anne Cooper reported.

On the manicured grounds of Government House, Canberra, on a cool autumn morning, guests huddled in pockets of sunshine waiting for the rare opportunity to witness the presentation of a new Queen's Colour to the Royal Australian Air Force.

Historically carried in battle to signify unit locations in the chaos, today, 'colours' embody a spirit of devotion to duty.

A kaleidoscope of colour from the deciduous European trees with the settling fog on Lake Burley Griffin made for a spectacular backdrop as a Navy MH-60R 'Romeo' helicopter trailed the RAAF Ensign beneath to kick off the event.

Master of ceremonies was Royal Australian Air Force's own specialist capability officer Wing Commander Peter Overton, also known to many as a 60 Minutes reporter and Channel Nine Sydney senior newsreader.

All current colours, banners and standards lined the parade ground as the Queen's Colour was blessed and dedicated, then presented by the Governor-General General (retd) David Hurley to the Royal Australian Air Force.

Following the formalities, a sea of members in blue uniforms turned their eyes skyward to feast upon the display of air power, past and present that flew over the nation's capital.

A beaming smile from ear to ear, Warrant Officer of the Air Force Fee Grasby shone with the energy of the day.

"It was absolutely amazing – exceeding all expectations," WOFF-AF Grasby said.

"The highlight was seeing the look on everybody's faces."

The RAAF hot air balloon served as a backdrop for lunch and cake on the vista lawn, giving friends and colleagues the opportunity to catch up.

The high-point, according to WOFF Des Byrnes was RAAF being able to come together on the day.

"Running into people that I have met through my time in RAAF and being able to share today with everyone here, has been the best part," WOFF Byrnes said.

Gathering around a three-tiered cake adorned with roses and topped with a RAAF crest, guests enjoyed red, white and blue cupcakes following a very loud "Happy Birthday" rendition.

Three cheers – hip, hip, hooray



As they stood in the shape of the number 100, under grey skies and light drizzle, the assembled Royal Australian Air Force members' spirits were not dampened – they were excited to make history, on 17 March.

Home to five military aircraft types and 6000 personnel, RAAF Base Amberley – Australia's largest – hosted the iconic centenary-framing photograph.

A spectrum of aviation and ground-support capabilities

surrounded personnel wearing their trade-specific uniforms, to represent the diversity of specialisations and musterings.

The 'Air Force 2021' team had created an aircraft-parking plan for all in-service aircraft and ground assets, including drawing the aircraft and assets to scale.

Flight Sergeant Tim Muehlberg said selecting the base for the photo was the first step, with 'most musterings, specialisations and aircraft' considered.

"Amberley was the obvious choice for runway and apron size, and roughly 90 per cent of musterings already here," Flight Sergeant Muehlberg said.

"Our plan was to alternate the left and right flanks in case aircraft were delayed, but there was very little variation to the plan in the end.

"RAAF was also planning for the centenary flypast in Canberra on March 31 and, while that was dynamic and this was a

static event, it's still interesting how much work was involved in bringing so many assets together."

Flight Sergeant Muehlberg said land and tow timings were as critical as the layout.

"To get most of the aircraft positioned in one morning showed a stellar effort between air crew and ground support.

"All units were excited to participate and fantastic to deal with – everyone had a 'can do' attitude."

Senior imagery coordinator Warrant Officer Ian Gosper said he appreciated everyone's support.

"It was virtually all hands on deck and everyone was keen to make it happen," he said.

"Despite the drizzle, everyone kept their good humour and their eyes on the prize.

"To rack and stack every aircraft type in the inventory in one place at one time, and have all the musterings represented, is unique," he said.

"I wish the weather had been kinder to us, but even that gave us a nudge.

"It got a bit breezy out there while the imagery specialists got the shots from the chopper, but I think even the military working dog enjoyed it," Warrant Officer Gosper said.

"Considering all that conspired against us, and how we overcame the challenges, it was a beautiful thing."

UNIQUE FAMILY PORTRAIT

PHOTO CORPORAL NICCI FREEMAN
WORDS CORPORAL VERONICA O'HARA

FUTURE

As the Royal Australian Air Force enters its second century

When asked about their vision for RAAF, Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld and Head of Air Force Capability Air Vice Marshal Cath Roberts said they saw a bright future.

Air Marshal Hupfeld said all RAAF personnel were guardians of a proud heritage of service and sacrifice established over the past 100 years.

"Our task now is to build on that legacy and define the second century of the Royal Australian Air Force together," he said.

"RAAF's contribution to the joint force has moved from being about 'things with wings', to realising the unsurpassed advantage of the ultimate high ground – the air and space domain.

"We need to be open-minded about how we achieve air and space power as we plan for the future.

"Our people will always be our most important asset, however, our talent mix will change to

include more analysts, cyber and space experts.

"There will also be non-traditional roles, such as programming, data analysis, creative dilemmas, training robots and AI."

As Head of Air Force Capability, Air Vice Marshal Roberts is responsible for imagining the future force and then creating it.

"The force of tomorrow will be characterised by things that you can't see, connecting us across air, land, maritime, space and cyber – with masses of data from sensor inputs being fused using artificial intelligence and machine learning to rapidly convert data to knowledge, to provide insight at unfathomable speeds," she said.

"This is why we need to move away from platform-centric thinking, as our entire Defence Force will be one big, integrated system of systems.

"If you look at things in that way, you

realise the importance of agility. Our competitive advantage will be in how we use creative and and non-prescriptive compositions of capabilities to achieve effects.

"This will be driven by the creativity and ingenuity of our people.

"Our high-value crewed systems will be force-multiplied by layers of robotic and autonomous systems.

"We will see increased mass and miniaturisation – supplementing large, expensive platforms with smaller, lower-cost capability such as drones, expendable sensors and commercially available technology.

"Most aircraft will be remotely or autonomously piloted – hypersonics will help us reach further and faster – bases will be agile and resilient – training will be virtual – and space will become more pivotal.

"The Royal Australian Air Force is leading an exciting new era in defence space, which will support our operations across the

FOCUS

leaders outline challenges on the horizon

air, ground, maritime and cyber domains.

"The strategic environment has changed. Regional players are acquiring advanced aerial capabilities, including networked fifth-generation combat aircraft and high-speed, long-range weapons.

"This means our focus on long-range deterrence and strike capability is more important than ever. Imagine a hypersonic weapon that can travel Melbourne to Sydney in seven minutes.

"Through a collaborative agreement with the United States, we are jointly developing and testing full-size hypersonic cruise-missile prototypes, which have the potential to be carried by a range of combat platforms, including uncrewed aircraft.

"Future uncrewed systems, such as the Loyal Wingman, will require a carefully considered human-machine teaming

approach to gain advantage against increasingly sophisticated threats in complex environments"

Air Marshal Hupfeld said collaboration with partners was key.

"I believe relationships and collaborations are a distinct element in our competitive advantage.

"Never before has our relationship with our allies, academia and industry been so important to helping us deliver leading capabilities."

Air Vice Marshal Roberts said evolving technology needed to be incorporated into the force at relevant speed.

"Our Defence industry and academic innovation needs to help us achieve 'transient' capability advantages and continuous capability development to compete and win against potential adversaries."

As the Royal Australian Air Force continues to transform, Air Vice Marshal Roberts, who

will next year become the first commander of Australia's new Space Command, within the Royal Australian Air Force, said RAAF must reshape and upskill the workforce to transition into more complex capabilities and platforms.

"Our people are at the core of how we will sharpen our edge and our emerging capabilities, such as cyber, intelligence and space, and electronic warfare will bring so many exciting opportunities and challenges.

"We need RAAF personnel to be changemakers, creators and innovators and we need them to constantly be challenging the status quo.

"Only then will we be able to realise the potential of our future force."

WE WILL NOW BE KNOWN COLLECTIVELY AS AVIATORS

“As we begin our second century, our focus on evolving Air Force culture is a priority to enable us to deliver the Air Force Strategy.”

Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld

At the Royal Australian Air Force centenary celebrations on March 31, Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld announced the re-vector of RAAF culture, to become strategy led and deliver a strong foundation and shared purpose.

“Re-vectoring is about celebrating the positives of our air force and its culture, while simultaneously making adjustments required to ensure we are tactically and technically capable, underpinned by our shared purpose, values and behaviours.

“This re-vectoring process requires us to re-examine our identity.

“Regardless of where in the RAAF we work or the roles and tasks in front of us, the skies above us are our domain – air and space defines us. It gives us our identity, drives our purpose, fuels our aspirations, gives relevance and gravity to our past, and lights the path to our future.

“As Royal Australian Air Force members, we embody the same sense of limitless perspective that characterises our domain.

“The air and space is our home and the place from which we serve our nation. Your role may place you on the ground, but your purpose in this force is intrinsically linked to air and space.

“We have this in common – we are aviators in defence of our nation’s interests.

“By re-vectoring as we begin our second century, Air Force will ensure our workforce is intelligent, skilled and culturally ready to innovate, adapt and evolve into the future force we need to be.

“The future RAAF workforce will continually challenge the status quo, refusing to be satisfied with where we are now.

“Our culture is at the core of RAAF’s ability to defend Australia and its interests, and to advance our nation’s prosperity and security.

“We all have ownership and responsibility for our cultural transformation.

“Noting this purpose, the re-vector also includes the introduction of a new and inclusive collective noun to describe Royal Australian Air Force people – where we were once all airmen and then, in more recent years, airmen and airwomen, we will now be known collectively as aviators.

“While there are many of us who are comfortable with the collective term ‘airmen’, at the same time unconscious biases from a gendered term are no longer helpful for understanding who we are and, more importantly, who we aspire to be.

“At the start of our second century, it is timely to reframe how we are known.

“As Royal Australian Air Force aviators, we will continue to work seamlessly alongside soldiers, sailors and our other partners to provide air and space power in support of the joint force.

“Transformation is not always easy, so please support each other through this change, be encouraging and helpful to your workmates, leaders and team.

“As members of the RAAF, we are all aviators. This is who we are, what we do, what we believe, and what binds us together.”

Air Marshal Hupfeld’s re-vector will also include a review of rank titles for aircraftman and aircraftwoman, leading aircraftman and leading aircraftwoman.



**WORDS FLIGHT LIEUTENANT JESSICA ALDRED
PHOTO CORPORAL NICCI FREEMAN**



FOR OUR COUNTRY

Words Squadron Leader Lauretta Searle
Pic Leading Aircraftman Adam Abela

Flight Lieutenant Steven Warrior pours
a sample of country into the receptacle
at the For Our Country memorial.



In the lead-up to the Royal Australian Air Force centenary, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, in partnership with RAAF personnel, collected samples of country from places of significance around Australia.

The samples were placed at the For Our Country – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander memorial at the Australian War Memorial during a ceremony on 29 March in acknowledgement of RAAF's footprint on the country of traditional custodian groups around Australia.

Indigenous liaison officers from RAAF bases placed their samples into the memorial as Indigenous Elder for the Air Force Uncle Harry Allie watched on.

Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld expressed his gratitude for the service of Indigenous members, "despite some challenges of the past".

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders provided service and often made the ultimate sacrifice in defence of our nation," Air Marshal Hupfeld said.

"Our efforts to diversify our force has made the option to serve our nation both available and achievable to more people. It is the diversity of opinions, ideas, talents and experience that is needed for RAAF to be at its best.

"This diversity enhances our ability to be innovative, creative and agile.

"So in our 100th year, I say to all past, present, and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the Royal Australian Air Force – thank you for your service.

"I am excited to see you take your rightful place in the defence of our country."

Uncle Harry reflected on his own service.

"I am very proud to have served in the Royal Australian Air Force for more than 23 years. I enjoyed the camaraderie and mateship of my service," he said.

"I am honoured to have paved the way for our current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander serving members, and would like to thank them all for allowing the legend and spirit to continue."

The For Our Country – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander memorial features a pavilion, set with two-way mirrored glass that reflects the viewer and the Australian War Memorial. In front of the reflective wall, a ceremonial fire pit and a repository for soil is set in a semi-circle of rocks, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations across Australia invited to place a piece of country into the repository.

It was designed so that each Indigenous Nation could be commemorated in one place, where a piece of country joins the lands that the ancestors defended, and from which they came to serve Australia.

CONTACT Air Land & Sea – Issue 70 – June 2021

A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH

To commemorate the centenary of The Royal Australian Air Force, a spectacular visual history depicting a hundred years of aviation glory, has been commissioned from accomplished military artist, Drew Harrison. To view and own a high quality, limited edition reproduction go to

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Engraved with a message from Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld, AO, DSC the large-format reproductions also come with a piece of metal cut from the very first Australian built F/A-18A Hornet.

Every copy purchased supports the restoration and preservation of historic RAAF aircraft.

MILITARY
SHOP

2 COMMANDO REGIMENT

TITAN PEGASUS

Australian Army Special Operations Force soldiers from 2 Commando Regiment dropped in on the rural NSW community of Temora in March and again in May as part of a short-notice training series.

More familiar with seeing historic aircraft displays from the nearby aviation museum, several local landowners gathered their families late in the afternoon in March to watch the soldiers jump from an Air Force C-130J Hercules as part of Exercise Titan Pegasus 2021.

The landowners, who gave permission for the Army to use their rain-soaked fields, watched about 30 special operations force personnel land safely in the impromptu drop zone.

In May, a small force parachuted into the area at night, silently stowing their parachutes and navigating several kilometres from the drop zone to the airport, where they rendezvoused with RAAF aircraft for the extraction.

Warrant Office Class Two S, who supervised the drop zone, said it was the first time 2 Commando Regiment had used the Temora area for parachute training.

"The local landowners have been great to work with," WO2 S said.

"Nothing was ever a problem and I'm glad they could come out, bring the kids, their dogs, and make an afternoon of it.

"I'm particularly glad, the training all came off smoothly.

"We've been able to achieve some solid training in a new environment unfamiliar to the teams involved and we wouldn't have been able to do that without the local support."

Exercise Titan Pegasus is part of 2 Commando Regiment's build-up to Exercise Talisman Sabre in July, when they will conduct special operations alongside United States special-operations forces.



STORY AND PHOTOS BY SERGEANT JANINE FABRE
Main photo digitally altered by CONTACT (insert two parachutes)



An enhanced combat shooting course in Western Australia not only honed the ADF participants' skills but improved the interoperability of its three services.

Soldiers from 11th/28th Battalion, Royal Western Australia Regiment (11/28RWAR), Air Defence Guards from No. 3 Security Force Squadron and divers from Australian Clearance Diving Team – Four (AUSCDT Four) took part, at the Bindoon Training Area.

The course, run by combat shooting instructors from 11/28RWAR and AUSCDT Four, focused on teaching modern shooting techniques.

Instructor Warrant Officer Class 2 Damian Woods said a broad range of skills were shared, taught and tested.

"As part of the course, participants from across our services gained experience with close-combat shooting techniques including using cover while engaging threats with speed and accuracy from less-than-ideal firing positions," WO2 Woods said.

"These concepts better align traditional marksmanship with a combat mindset."

Commanding Officer AUSCDT Four Lieutenant Commander Fletcher Wall said interoperability, as part of a joint force in Western Australia, was a priority.

"As a Defence Force, it is critical we train to fight and win as a joint force,"

Lieutenant Commander Wall said.

"These training opportunities enable us to come together with our Army and Air Force counterparts to ensure we understand how to integrate and fight effectively, while simultaneously increasing our capability."



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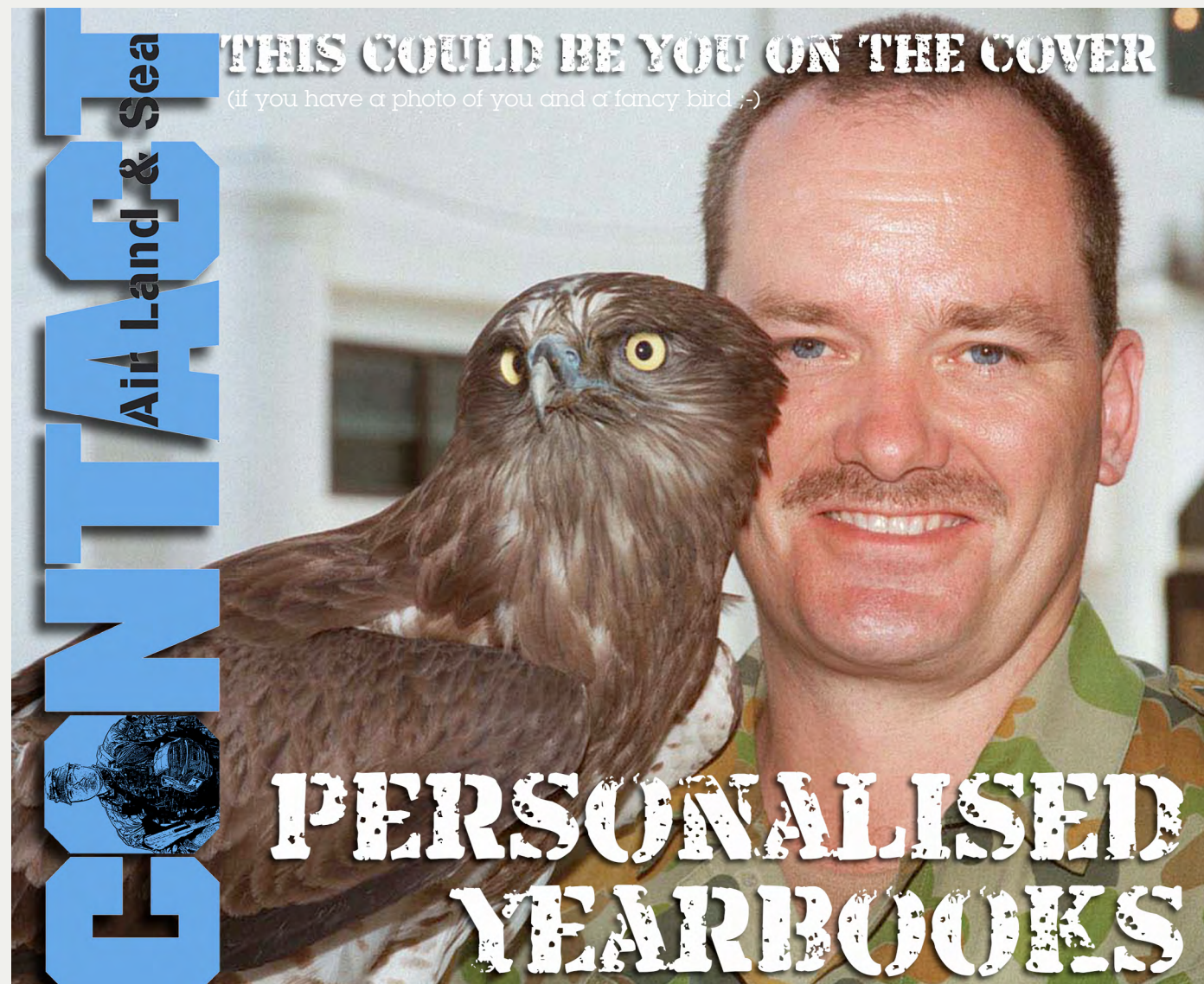
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2015



2016



2017



2018



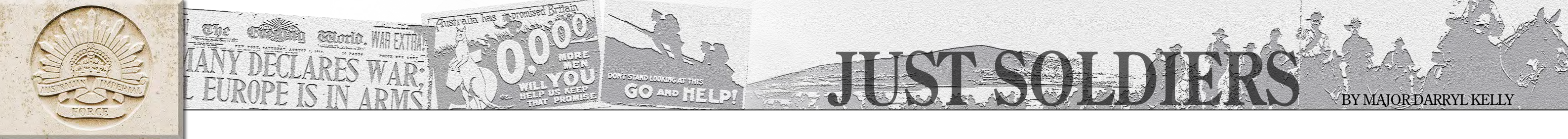
2019



2020

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These are print-on-demand books, printed on high-quality gloss paper with hard covers. They are expensive, but worth every penny. Allow up to 30 days for print and delivery after ordering.



MERE LADS

UNDER-AGED SOLDIERS OF THE 20TH BATTALION AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE

For Walter Wakeley this was a dream come true – a chance to branch out from his trade as a blacksmith and get out to see the world.

Living in the outer Sydney suburb of Camley Vale, he presented himself at the local recruiting centre in nearby Liverpool in June 1915. When asked about his age he confidently stated he was 18-and-a-half and immediately presented a handwritten note from his parents Daniel and Maria¹.

Walter started training at Liverpool Camp and relished being in the company of hard men who were now part of the 3rd Reinforcement draft of the 20th Battalion, of the new 5th Brigade.

In late July, Walter took ill and was admitted to No 2 Cottage Hospital, suffering pneumonia and sadly passed away from cardiac failure on 29 July 1915¹.

As Walter had not formally been taken onto the strength of the battalion, he had not been allocated with a regimental number.

On 31 July 1915, the body of Private Walter Sampson Wakeley was escorted by his family and friends to Liverpool Cemetery, where he lies today². His true age was in fact 16-and-a-half³.

Accompanying the casket was Walter's older brother, Daniel, who would enlist in the AIF a week later and, as a member of the 14th Field Ambulance, would go on to be awarded the Military Medal in 1918⁴.

During my visits to Gallipoli, I am always drawn to the cemetery at Walkers Ridge – which has a spectacular view northward towards Suvla Bay – and I always take time to visit the commemorative gravestone of one particular soldier – Private Roy Robinson, 20th Battalion.

Roy was a young grocer's assistant from Scarborough, NSW. A determined lad, he was not pleased when he was forced to undertake the compulsory cadet scheme in his teenage years.

When war broke out though, he was keen to join up and do his bit. Giving his age as 18, he presented for enlistment on 26 May 1915, as part of the 2nd Reinforcement draft for the 20th Battalion⁵.

With well-wishers waving and bands playing, the troopship Kanowna pulled away from the quay and, for young Roy Robertson, off to war and his own 'great adventure'.

When he finally married up with the battalion, he was allocated to C Company, and quickly realised that war on Gallipoli was not the 'wizard pranks' the papers cracked it up to be, especially when you were manning the front-line trenches of 'Russell's Top'!

On 7 November, the 20th Battalion Unit War Diary recorded the day's casualties – 1 killed, 7 wounded and 5 sick evacuated. The soldier killed was PTE Roy Robertson⁶.

He was initially hastily buried in the vicinity of where he fell but, in the early 1920s, his body was exhumed and reportedly moved to the cemetery at Walkers Ridge. Unfortunately, something went wrong and authorities could not be sure that the reinterment actually occurred.

Sadly, Roy's mother Helen passed away without knowing exactly where her son was finally at rest.

Today, Roy's commemorative gravestone reads, 'BELIEVED TO BE BURIED IN THIS CEMETERY'.

Roy's brother James, also a member of the AIF, ensured that his brother's true age was shown as 16^{5,7}.

Another young soldier in the ranks of the 20th Battalion, Edward Cawe, was an only child to parents Jessie and Edward from the Wollongong suburb of Unanderra.

Young Edward, a railway porter by trade, did his compulsory senior cadet training in the local 37th Company.

Residing in Brisbane when he enlisted in the AIF on 26 July 1915, he gave his age as 18 and one month.

JUST SOLDIERS

BY MAJOR DARRYL KELLY



A CHANCE TO BREAK OUT AND SEE THE WORLD

He'd obviously been around the traps, as he was missing a finger and one shoulder was drooping from a previous broken collarbone, but he was still deemed fit to serve.

Arriving in Egypt in January 1916, as part of the 5th Reinforcement Draft, he was allocated to D Company, 20th Battalion⁸.

Along with the rest of the battalion, Edward arrived in France in the latter part of March, where he was trained as part of a Lewis-Gun team.

In July 1916, the 20th Battalion was part of the consolidated AIF push to take and hold the tactical high ground around the village of Pozieres. At about 0330 hours on the 26th, elements of the 20th were locked in combat, and trying to move forward brought down yet another onslaught of German artillery.

Sheltering in remnants of a trench, Edward readied himself to launch forward. Suddenly, a German high-explosive round erupted in a blinding flash. As his mates passed by they could see the lifeless body of their mate, Edward Cawe, lying in a 'no man's land' shell hole⁹.

During a lull in the fighting, Edward's body was buried by the legendary Chaplain Walter Dexter. Sadly, the ensuing actions and constant artillery fire from both sides, obliterated the grave. Today, Edward's name is among thousands of AIF members to have died in France with 'No Known Grave', and now remembered on the Australian Memorial at Villers Bretonneux.

His uncle and aunt, who were reportedly Edward's adoptive parents, indicated he was actually still 14 years of age when he enlisted and only 16 when he was killed¹⁰.

Private Ben Crooks, like Edward Cawe, was also a member of the 5th Reinforcement Draft of the 20th Battalion, enlisting on 26 July 1915, supposedly as an 18-and-a-half-year-old¹¹.

British born, his parents John and Mabel brought him to Australia as a nine-month-old¹², with the family settling in the Sydney suburb of Botany.

Arriving in Egypt, Ben's joining the battalion was delayed due to being admitted to hospital for a circumcision. He was finally 'Taken on Strength' in early March and was allocated to the battalion's D Company.

Following their arrival in France, the 20th Battalion undertook its final training and indoctrination to warfare on the Western Front, but nothing could prepare them for the horrors of Pozieres.

On 2 August 1916, Ben was part of a work party rebuilding a trench line that had been badly damaged by the constant shelling.

Taking a quick breather, Ben got the message to head further up trench for his dinner. As he went to stand up, a German artillery shell burst directly above him, with a piece of the shell catching him in the back of the neck, almost severing his head. His mates buried him near the blasted remnants of Pozieres Cemetery and placed a small wooden cross at the head of the grave.

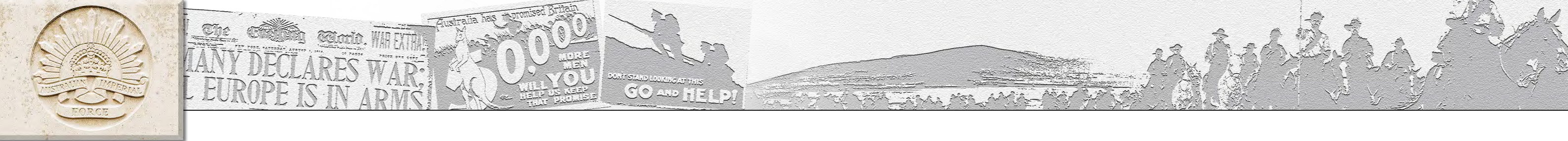
Ben's body was later exhumed and reinterred in the Pozieres British Cemetery, where he lies today¹³.

His true age when he was killed was 17¹².

Adelong born Frank Lenon, was keen to serve in the ranks when he enlisted on 13 March 1916. His brother Hugh, a veteran with the 1st Battalion, had been wounded in the leg at Gallipoli and returned to Australia for discharge¹⁴.

A glass blower by trade, Frank was originally allocated as part of the newly formed 46th Battalion. He gave his age as 18 at the Recruiting Office, validated by a hand written but undated note, supposedly signed by his mother, Annie. The only adverse comment during his enlistment being that 'his teeth needed attention'.

Before embarkation, Frank was reassigned to the 20th Battalion, as part of the 15th Reinforcement Draft, departing Australia for England on 9 September 1916.



Lance Corporal Herbert West – killed in Belgium.
AWM P02599.042

AGED JUST 16 YEARS AND ONE MONTH WHEN HE PAID THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

He ran foul of authority at sea, when he was charged for being late for parade. This was to cost him one day's pay as a six-shilling fine¹⁵.

Rounding out his training in England, Frank and his mates proceeded to France, joining the battalion in December 1916. Frank was selected and trained as a stretcher bearer.

He survived the terrible winter of 1916-17 and celebrated his 17th birthday in the snow-bound forward trenches in early March. On 27 March 1917, the 20th Battalion was deployed in the vicinity of the village of Bapaume when enemy artillery lobbed in a volley of high-explosive rounds on the Australian defenders.

Sadly, the projectiles found their mark, killing a number of men from the 20th. Among the names was Private Frank Lenon, aged 17¹⁶, who sadly has 'No Known Grave' and is also commemorated on the Villers Bretonneux Memorial.

Frank's brother Hugh recovered from his wounds and re-enlisted into the 12th Light Horse Regiment¹⁷, serving in the Middle East.

Another brother, Robert, was too young to serve in World War One but did enlist in the Royal Australian Air Force in the Second World War, serving in the South West Pacific¹⁸.

Both brothers were ever mindful of the loss of young Frank.

Herb West was working in the parcel room at Anthony Hordens Department Store, when he enlisted in the AIF on 13 August 1916¹⁹, keen to follow in the footsteps of his older brothers Harry and Clifford, who were both serving overseas with the AIF.

Giving his age as 18 and one month, he was actually just over 14 years of age and somehow joined without producing his parents' written consent.

Herb had just turned 15 when he embarked in Sydney in October 1916 as part of the 16th Reinforcement Draft.

Landing in England on 21 November, the draft completed its training before heading to France as one of 93 reinforcements assigned to bolster the ranks of the 20th Battalion.

May 17, and the Australian Forces were advancing towards the seemingly impregnable defences of the Hindenburg Line, near Bullecourt. Facing the Diggers were belt upon belt of barbed wire structured in a maze of entrances that either led to far-reaching dead ends or channelled the soldiers into the clutches of interlocked machine gun fire.

Trapped, with mounting casualties, ammunition running dangerously low and their bomb supply almost exhausted, the Diggers were forced to withdraw. Those cut off with no possibility of escape chose to lay down as much fire as they could, to cover their mates trying to make their way back through the wire.

Although being wounded in the right arm, Herb was able to make his way back to the form-up point, for evacuation and safety.

He was only away from the battalion for a week or so while the medics got him fixed up, but he was keen to get back in the fight.

To cover the casualties and those recovering from wounds, a number of men were selected for promotions, one being Herb West to Lance Corporal. 'Not bad' he would have thought to himself – still being shy of 16¹⁹.

The 20th, along with their sister battalions of the 5th Brigade, were redeployed to the battlefields of Belgium and, in early October, were tasked to take over the forward trenches on Broodseinde Ridge.

Movement behind the lines was extremely difficult due to the combination of battle and inclement weather, with duckboards being used as the primary avenues across the endless sea of mud.

On 6 October 1917, allied and enemy artillery were exchanging retaliatory fire into each other's forward trench lines and casualties were quickly mounting. One



shell caught Herb West, sending red-hot iron splinters into his back and upper arm. The stretcher bearers carried him back to Battalion HQ and, after he was basically stabilised, he was sent further to the rear, reaching the 2nd Canadian Casualty Clearing Station.

Devoted medical staff did everything possible to save the young soldier's life, but he sadly succumbed to his wounds two days later¹⁹.

His mother later indicated that he was only 16 and one month when he was killed²⁰.

Today, Lance Corporal Herbert West lies at rest in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium²². His duty done.

Sydney George Washington Drew was born in Graaf Reinett, South Africa, the only son of parents Wallace²⁴ and Minnie Drew, and was just over three years of age when he and his parents arrived in Australia.

On leaving school, he undertook a civilian employment as an electrical engineer and, as part of the compulsory military training scheme, he joined the local cadet unit, rising to the rank of Company Quartermaster Sergeant²⁵.

He was keen to do his bit in the 'Great War' and enlisted in the AIF on 8 November 1915, using his preferred name, George, and giving his age as 18 and one month²⁶.

Allocated to the 11th Reinforcements of the 20th Battalion, he embarked in Sydney on 9 April 1916, bound for England.

With his training complete, he and the other reinforcements headed for France in September where they joined the battalion.

The winter of 1916/17 was recorded as the worst in 40 years and, in November 1916, George fell victim to



Private Sydney George Washington Drew and his gravestone in the Adelaide Cemetery, near Villers Bretonneux, France.

a serious case of 'trench foot' that saw him evacuated to England for specialist treatment²⁶.

During his hospitalisation his true age was discovered as being only 17.

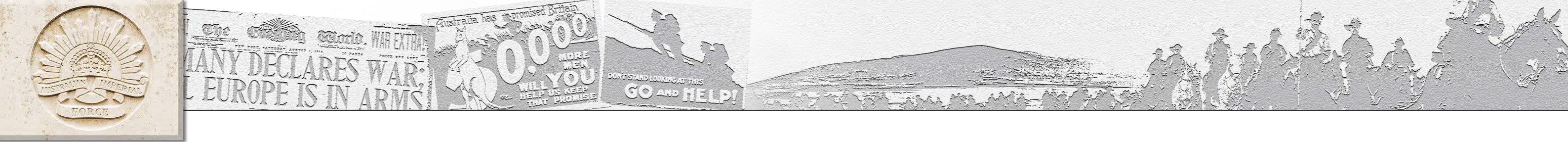
On his release from hospital, he was sent to the 3rd Convalescent Depot where he was attached to the dental section.

It was May 1918 before he was able to return to the battalion and resume his role as a number 2 of a Lewis Gun section in B Company²⁶.

In the pre-dawn darkness of 8 August, the 20th Battalion was part of the attacking force, tasked with breaching and capturing the portion of the heavily defended Hindenburg Line near Warfusse.

George and his Lewis-Gun team were sheltering in a shell hole awaiting the allied artillery barrage to lift, when a high-explosive round landed short, killing the team instantly.

Today George Drew lies peacefully in the Adelaide Cemetery, near Villers Bretonneux, France²⁷.



The Australian National Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux, France. Photo by Jake Sims.

George Seaton answered his country's call, enlisting in the AIF on 16 May 1917. He gave his age as 18 and three months²⁸, when in fact he was still 16.

Allocated to the 20th Reinforcement Draft of the 20th Battalion, he embarked in Sydney on 16 July bound for England, where he rounded out his training with the 5th Training Battalion before heading across the English Channel on 12 March 1918 to join his battalion²⁸.

He and the other reinforcements were quickly integrated into the companies to cover manning shortfalls due to mounting casualties.

George suffered a number of bouts of illness that saw him hospitalised. Unfortunately, he ran foul of authority when recovering at the 11th Convalescence Depot, where he was charged with 'Insolence to a Warrant Officer'. This type of occurrence, especially by such a young soldier, was extremely serious. As a result, George Seaton was awarded '21 Days Number One Punishment'²⁸. This was one of most humiliating of all punishments, which saw the soldier standing full length, usually tied or handcuffed, to a fixed object such as a post or a wagon wheel, for up to two hours per day and a maximum of 21 days. This was supervised under the watchful and uncompromising eyes of the Military Police, who would pounce upon those who slouched or even tried to relax in order to relieve the pain.

His sentence complete, George was returned under escort to the 20th Battalion and formally handed over to the chain of command.

Sadly, scarcely two weeks later, a burial party was tasked to dig an isolated grave near a tree, just off the main road near Feuillicourt, as the temporary resting place of a casualty from the battle to capture the key terrain known as Mont St Quentin. Etched on the marker was 6937 PTE George Seaton 20th Battalion AIF.

George was still four months shy of his 18th birthday when he was killed²⁹.

An artillery shell took the life of another young lad, Alfred Kerfoot – but whether it was allied or German, could not be determined.

Born in Newton Heath, England, Alfred arrived in Australia with his family at age eight³⁰.

A news vendor by trade, he enlisted in mid-November 1915 supposedly aged 22 and six months.

Originally allocated Regimental number 4173 as part of the 20th Battalion's 10th Reinforcement Draft, his name and number were, for some unexplained reason, struck from the roll and he was reissued with number 4463 and reallocated to the 11th Reinforcements.

After sailing from Sydney, Alfred completed training in England before joining the 20th Battalion in France on 2 October 1916³¹.

In what was termed a quiet day in the Battalion's War Diary³², random artillery fire was being exchanged between rival batteries when suddenly a number of rounds hit the forward trenches of the 20th Battalion. Among the handful of casualties was 16-year-old Alfred Kerfoot, whose name would join the thousands of fellow Australians depicted on the walls at Villers-Bretonneux, as dying in France and having 'No Known Grave'.

No one can be sure what drove so many underage soldiers to the 20th Battalion. Mostly, it would have been courage, determination, adventure or the distinct pride in being Australian – and the expectation that every 'man' would do his bit for the preservation of freedom.

There are many more underage soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice recorded in the files of the Australian War Memorial. Many more may have also passed unnoticed, possibly serving under assumed names.

In the cases above, however, some are recorded for posterity in the annals of published unit histories, such as the 20th Battalion's 'The Green and White Diamond' by noted Australian author Neville Browning.

FOREVER A GRATEFUL NATION'S HEROES



Roy Robinson – killed at Gallipoli at just 16 years of age.

Notes:

- 1 National Archives of Australia: B2445, WWI Service Records, Wakeley, Walter Sampson
- 2 Sydney Daily Telegraph, Saturday 31 July 1915, Page 8
- 3 AWM145 Roll of Honour cards, 1914-1918 War, Army. Wakeley, Walter Sampson
- 4 National Archives of Australia: B2445, WWI Service Records, 9962 Wakeley, Daniel
- 5 National Archives of Australia: B2445, WWI Service Records, 1765 Robertson, Roy Henderson
- 6 AWM 4, Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries, 1914-18 War, item 23/37/4, 20th Infantry Battalion, November 1915
- 7 Photo Roy Henderson Robertson, Author's private collection
- 8 National Archives of Australia: B2445, WWI Service Records, 2342 Cawe, Edward Sydney
- 9 Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War. IDRL/0428, 2342 Cawe, Edward Sydney, 20th Battalion
- 10 AWM145 Roll of Honour cards, 1914-1918 War, Army. Cawe, Edward Sydney

- 11 National Archives of Australia: B2445, WWI Service Records, 2354 Crooks, Ben
- 12 AWM145 Roll of Honour cards, 1914-1918 War, Army. Crooks, Ben
- 13 Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War. IDRL/0428, 2354 Crooks, Ben, 20th Battalion
- 14 431 Hugh George Lenon, 1st Battalion AIF
- 15 National Archives of Australia: B2445, WWI Service Records, 5607 Lenon, Francis Albert Leslie
- 16 AWM145 Roll of Honour cards, 1914-1918 War, Army. Lenon, Francis Albert Leslie
- 17 4223 Hugh George Lenon, 12th Light Horse Regiment
- 18 136739 Robert Ernest William Leon, RAAF
- 19 National Archives of Australia: B2445, WWI Service Records, 5914 West, Herbert Austin
- 20 116 Harry Walter West, 2nd Battalion and 54th Battalion, AIF
- 21 4281 Clifford Sydney West, 56th Battalion, AIF
- 22 AWM145 Roll of Honour cards, 1914-1918 War, Army. West, Herbert Alfred

- 23 AWM P02599.042 Herbert Austin West
- 24 808 CPL Herbert Wallace Drew was a member of the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force, and deployed to Rabaul in Nov 1915
- 25 AWM145 Roll of Honour cards, 1914-1918 War, Army. Drew, Sydney George Washington
- 26 National Archives of Australia: B2445, WWI Service Records, 4395 Drew, Sydney George Washington
- 27 Photo Sydney George Washington Drew, authors collection.
- 28 National Archives of Australia: B2445, WWI Service Records, 6937 Seaton, George Charles Richard
- 29 AWM145 Roll of Honour cards, 1914-1918 War, Army. Seaton, George Charles Richard
- 30 AWM145 Roll of Honour cards, 1914-1918 War, Army, Kerfoot, Alfred
- 31 National Archives of Australia: B2445, WWI Service Records, 4463 Kerfoot, Alfred
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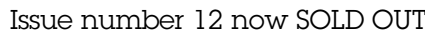
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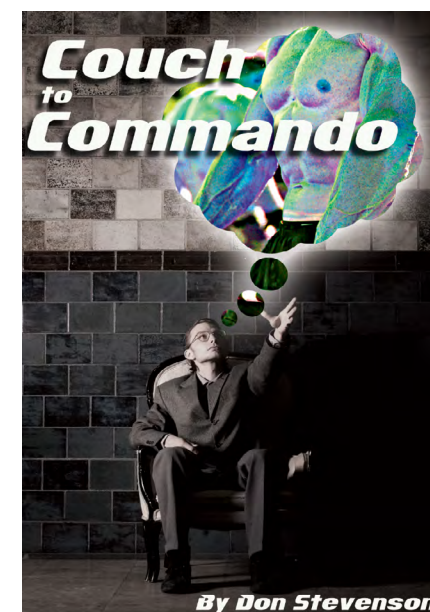
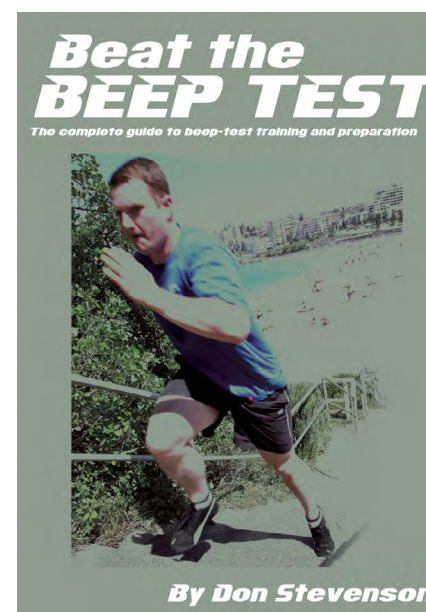
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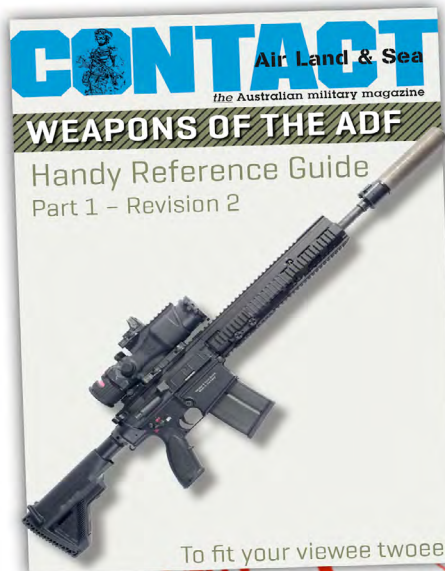
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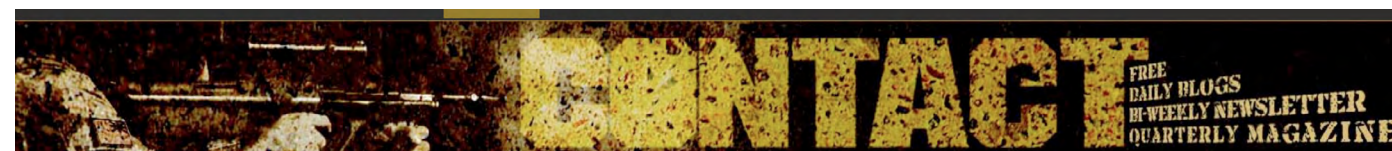


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Photo by Helen Patronis



Photo by Squadron Leader Tim Dalton

ENJOYING FREEDOM

In their first outing since 'reopening' in March last year and on return from COVID lockdowns, cadets and adult members from TS Hobart travelled to Launceston to participate in a Freedom of Entry Parade for Launceston-based Navy and Air Force Cadet units. Local Army cadets also received a welcome to the city.

Saturday started with the cadets joining TS Derwent on HMAS Canberra for a ship tour. HMAS Canberra's crew led the two units all over the ship, pointing out areas of interest. From the tank deck to the bridge, the cadets were able to ask questions and pose for photos.

Following goodbyes to TS Derwent, TS Hobart cadets got straight into parade practice. Cadets fell into a squad and marched laps of the parade ground to the beat of the drums from the Army Band Tasmania.

Cadets were assigned roles on the parade and rehearsals 'went on and on' – or so said a few.

Following parade practise, it was off to Patterson Barracks for a BBQ, courtesy of the AAFC. Cadets met with their AAFC counterparts and compared stories, before retiring to accommodation to prepare uniforms.

Rising early Sunday, the cadets dressed in ceremonial uniforms, ready for the big day. For

many cadets and some adult members, this was the first time they had worn this uniform.

On the way to Princes Square for the Conferral Ceremony, a quick breakfast stop at McDonalds was provided courtesy of Kingston Beach RSL.

The ceremony was great, with all three cadet forces formed up, colours flying in the breeze. The Launceston Mayor delivered a speech followed by a fitting welcome to country by Auntie Sharon, before national commanders of the Air Force and Navy Cadets delivered short speeches.

Finally, at 1030, 508 Squadron AAFC and TS Tamar received their Freedom of Entry to the City of Launceston and the Army cadets were welcomed to the City.

Cadets, adult members and Army Band Tasmania then moved to the main street to exercise their Freedom of Entry.

The cadets proudly marched with swords drawn, banners flying and drums beating, meeting a Police challenge on the way back to Patterson Barracks.

Following another BBQ, thanks to the Launceston RSL, it was time to jump back in the cars and head back to Hobart, ending a very busy weekend.



Photo by Helen Patronis



Photo by Squadron Leader Tim Dalton



Photo by Helen Patronis

WITH FLARE

Leading Seaman Luke Middleton fires a flare from HMAS Anzac during Exercise La Perouse. Royal Australian Navy frigate HMAS Anzac and auxiliary oiler HMAS Sirius took part in the French-led exercise in the Bay of Bengal in April with ships from France, India, Japan and the United States.





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