



Respect, Gratitude, Admiration

TRIBUTE

The Newsletter of the Military
Historical Society Australia,
Queensland Division

President: Neil Dearberg
Website: www.mhsa.org.au

July 2022 No.13



F-35A Lightning II aircraft from No. 2 Operational Conversion Unit fly over the Northern Territory during Exercise Rogue Ambush 21-1.

(Source: Contact)

President Report

The AGM is upon us and the current committee stands down. Nominations are called from the membership for all positions so please send forms to Ian, the Secretary. All current committee are eligible for re-election and have nominated for such. Come to the meeting at Maryborough Aero Club, enjoy the company of some history mates, grab a snag off the BBQ, bring something to 'show and tell' and let's have some new year fun.

The Military Spectacular is progressing well in its organisation. We surely need people to come and see our remarkable modern veterans who have and do serve since the Vietnam War. The cooperation of the ADF is super and they are supplying lots of people and hardware. A major update to the website www.militaryspectacular.events will detail all that is happening. And, during July and August those travelling the Bruce Highway between Brisbane and Sunny Coast will see HUGE roadside billboards directing passers by to the website where they can register an interest. Displays of uniforms and military equipment of Afghan deceased veterans, loaned by the family and, a magnificent surf board with the names of all 41 who died in Afghan.

August is also the anniversary month when the Light Horsemen of Aus and NZ of the Anzac Mounted Division saved the British Empire in 1916. Their multi-day mounted action against an Ottoman and German force resulted in the Suez Canal never being again threatened and began the pursuit through Sinai and Palestine, more than a year before the Beersheba charge.

Delighted to let you know that John Meyers has been given a "clear of cancer" after a recent scan. Nonetheless, he reviews from time to time but good news so far.

See you in Maryborough on 9 July

Neil

From the Editor

We are half way through 2022. COVID, Rain and more rain as well as a new government. Thankfully we have some better weather now.

In this edition (unlucky for some) No 13 I have continued the stories of Australian Defence Force Casualties in Afghanistan, with Lieutenant Michael Fussell, Sergeant Todd Langley and Sapper Rowan Robinson. With plenty of defence news about, it is getting harder to decide what to include or leave out. I try to keep it balanced.

We are getting close to the end of our Show and Tell series on Diggers Gear. I hope you have enjoyed it.

A very special poem is included in this edition, ODE TO A MATE that was told with passion by the author Jim Murrell at the Tewanin meeting.

Enjoy the read.

Australian Defence Force Casualties in Afghanistan – Part 2

By Ian Curtis



Lieutenant Michael Kenneth Housdan Fussell

Lieutenant Michael Kenneth Housdan Fussell was born on 17 November 1983 at Coffs Harbour, New South Wales the son of Ken and Madeline Fussell. The family moved to Tamworth soon after and lived there till Michael was nine when they moved to Arding, 15 minutes south of Armidale where he attended Armidale State School and the Armidale School from 1994 to 2001. He was an outgoing and friendly child who like to build things from cubbies to Lego creations. He also learnt to ride horses and competed in jumps, polocrosse, tent pegging and even dressage. He did very well academically and was a good piano player. He loved sport and would have a go at most. He was a keen squash player, enjoyed archery and kayaking, swam competitively and had a special love of rugby union, which he continued at both ADFA and RMC.

Michael enlisted in the Australian Army, January 2002 and was appointed as an officer cadet at the Australian Defence Force Academy with his Armidale School mate John Bale who later helped form Soldier On. He completed a Bachelor of Arts and remained a keen sportsman. He attended Royal Military College, Duntroon in 2005, commissioning in December 2005 into the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery. His younger brother Dan followed in his footsteps three years later.

On graduation he was posted to 'A' Field Battery, 4th Field Regiment, where he fulfilled a number of junior officer roles. During his time at 'A' Field Battery he qualified as a para-trooper. He also deployed to East Timor on Operation Astute in 2006 and 2007.

Michael was posted to 4th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (Commando) in January 2008 now the 2nd Commando Regiment, as a joint offensive support team commander. He was a platoon commander for the Advance Infantry Course at Singleton and completed the joint terminal attack controllers (JTAC) course.



His mate Matt Martin took this picture on the hill top where Michael stepped off on his last mission.

Lieutenant Michael Fussell was killed while on a foot patrol by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) detonation on 27 November 2008 in Afghanistan. Two soldiers were also injured in the explosion. He was the first officer to be killed in action since Vietnam. He had a younger brother Daniel and two younger foster sisters Nikki and Nyah. His brother Daniel was a Lieutenant with 1st Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery (RAA) in Brisbane at the time.

A high-level investigation into Lieutenant Michael Fussell death carried out by Vice Admiral Chris Ritchie, found that the risk of the unit suffering casualties in Afghanistan was increased by deficiencies in training, assessment, certification and leadership. The commandos were on their way on foot through rugged terrain at 1.12am to search compounds where insurgent leaders were believed to be hiding. The patrol was moving through darkness with the aid of night vision equipment when he stood on the bomb's pressure plate.

The report suggested that, in the minutes before the explosion, the soldiers did not properly maintain track discipline, a form of movement designed to lessen the chances of troops triggering a bomb or landmine by keeping within boundaries that had already been cleared. His officer in charge at the time who was leading the patrol (a major) was removed from command.

The township of Armidale remembers Lieutenant Michael Fussell with a plaque on the War Memorial Fountain in Central Park and at his school.



Captain Dan Fussell, Michael's brother unveiled a plaque at Armidale School on 28 April 2016. The school Honour Board lists all ex-students who have fought in recent conflicts including the Fussell brothers.

Lieutenant Michael Fussell's memory still remains strong in people's minds today. In 2021 Fussell House, accommodation for veterans and their families based at Concord Hospital, was named in his honour. Sporting events in Armidale and at ADFA are still held in his honour which raise much needed funds for various charities including Soldier On.

Lieutenant Michael Kenneth Housdan Fussell is remembered on the Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour, Two Wells Afghanistan War Memorial, Yungaburra Afghanistan Avenue of Honour, 42for42 Memorial Garden, Brisbane, Armidale War Memorial, The Armidale School, A garden bench at the Walcha and District War Memorial

References

1. Australian War Memorial
2. Department of Defence
3. www.monumentaustralia.org.au
4. www.abc/news.com
5. www.findagrave.com
6. www.smh.com.au
7. RAA Liaison Letter 2009 - Autumn Edition
8. Lieutenant Michael Fussell – Killed in Action – Sympathies Facebook page



Sergeant Todd Mathew Langley

Sergeant Todd Matthew Langley who epitomised the spirit of the Aussie Digger – loyal, hardworking and well respected was born in Margaret River, Western Australia in 1976. He grew up in Katanning and Broome Hill attending Katanning Senior High School. He enlisted in the Army on the 18 April 1993 and transferred to the regular Army on the 14 September 1994 and was posted to 1 RAR where he served in Townsville for 8 years. He married a local Katanning girl Reigan, before moving to Townsville.

On completion of the Commando selection and training course in 2004 was posted to 4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (Commando), now 2nd Commando Regiment.

Todd was an extremely experienced Section Commander who always set an example to all those who had worked with him. He was an exemplary Commando, a warrior and a leader who gave his best, and always got the best out of those around him. He was universally respected by all the men and women of the 2nd Commando Regiment. Even after his death, his comrades remained inspired by the man he was and relentlessly took the fight to the insurgents.

During Sergeant Todd Langley's service in the Australian Army, he deployed on the following operations:

- OPERATION TANAGER (East Timor) - October 2000 – May 2001.
- OPERATION CITADEL (East Timor) – May 2003 – October 2003.
- OPERATION SLIPPER (Afghanistan) - February 2006 – May 2006.
- OPERATION SLIPPER (Afghanistan) - May 2007 – August 2007.
- OPERATION SLIPPER (Afghanistan) - December 2008.
- OPERATION SLIPPER (Afghanistan) – July 2009 – November 2009.
- OPERATION SLIPPER (Afghanistan) – March 2011 – July 2011.

Sergeant Todd Matthew Langley died on the battlefield after being shot in the head during a firefight during operations in Afghanistan on 4 July 2011. Despite emergency first aid treatment from a medical officer, he died from his wounds. He was deployed as a Commando Section Commander and this was his seventh operational deployment.



Reigan and Todd Langley

Todd was a big kid at heart with a love of playing board games and was fascinated by world affairs, an all-round great guy with a larger-than-life personality. He left behind a wife, three school age daughters and an infant son. His brother was a Corporal in the Australian Army.



In memory of Sergeant Todd Langley, North Queensland Garden of Remembrance, Townsville.

Sergeant Todd Langley is remembered on the Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour, Two Wells Afghanistan War Memorial, Yungaburra Afghanistan Avenue of Honour, 42for42 Memorial Garden, Brisbane, North Queensland Garden of Remembrance.

References

1. Australian War Memorial
2. Department of Defence

3. www.smh.com.au
4. www.dailytelegraph.com.au
5. www.perthnow.com.au



Sapper Rowan Jaie Robinson

Sapper Rowan Jaie Robinson was born in Wahroonga, NSW in 1987 the son of Peter and Marie Robinson. He had three older siblings, Racheal, Ben and Troy. Soon after he was born the family moved to acreage at Cudgen, in the Tweed Head region. He grew up riding horses and tending goats. He played initially soccer, then cricket, surf life-saving, basketball, rugby union and league. He attended Cudgen Primary School, St Patricks College and Kingscliff High School.

Rowan was a big unit, six foot four, broad and muscular. He learnt scripts of by heart from TV shows and movies. His mate Luke Waide who grew up with him, from Nippers to rugby union and high school remembered that Rowan scored two tries in the Yeates Shield (a country high school rugby championships). He was charismatic, had the gift of the gab, and was nicknamed Ken – after Ken and Barbie. His father felt Rowan was the last boy you might expect to join the army, he had long hair, the surf board, the scruffy chin and the mischievous grin.

Rowan graduated from High School in 2005 and joined the Army in 2006 and after his initial recruit training joined the 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment, he like the idea of building and blowing things up. He considered going to Duntroon but was rejected because it was felt he needed more life skills and was too young. He was first deployed to Afghanistan in 2007 in winter. It was the coldest he had experienced. He should have been killed when on patrol a fellow soldier stood on an IED that did not go off. He was five metres away. On return he played a season of Australian Rules in Townsville for Hermit Park Tigers. He was a big ruckman, and he couldn't kick, but no one argued with his fend. He was asked by his commander on return if he would become an officer, but by now he felt he was a real soldier.

After four years of service, he was posted to the Incident Response Regiment at the start of 2010 where he completed his reinforcement cycle. He found himself being called to work with the Commando unit. They wanted to see if he was made of the right stuff. They took him to a local pub to play a game of 'chins. He won and was given the nickname 'Sugar Ray.'

His colleagues described him as a superb young man who was fit, happy go lucky and a great team member. He was a dedicated and professional soldier whose skill belied his youth. Those who had the pleasure of meeting him instantly warmed to him and his easy-going nature made him popular with his peers and chain of command alike.

Sapper Robinson was serving with the Special Operations Task Group when he was tragically killed in action on Monday 6 June 2011. Rowan went on two missions the day he was killed in action. He helped uncover a large cache of drugs and guns firstly then he was part of an 'overwatch' team responsible for providing cover from high ground for a clearance team below.

They were flown into the deadly Bagram district and tasked with clearing an old Russian gun emplacement on a hill. They took up their positions and at 2pm their time under air support expired. Soon after they began to take increasing accurate small arms fire from concealed positions. Rowan was targeted so he decided to move up the hill, and as he did, trading fire with the enemy a bullet flew through his left hand. It struck the stock of his rifle, ricocheted through his throat, and clipped his carotid artery. Unable to get a helicopter to get him out for about two and a half hours he was unable to be saved even though he was returned to a hospital in Tarin Kowt.

After his death his brother Ben also a member of the Army flew to Afghanistan to bring his brother home. More than a thousand people attended the funeral including the Prime Minister Julia Gillard and opposition leader Tony Abbott.

The local beach front park was renamed Rowan Robinson Park and a surf boat at Kingscliff is emblazoned with his photo.



Rowan family went to Afghanistan in 2014 to visit the military base, and the gym that was renamed in his honour. The family are invited to a dawn service at North Bondi RSL each year, where 12,000 people attend and Rowan is remembered. The Richmond Football Club honour Rowan at their 2019 Anzac Day Eve game at the MCG. His parent lit the cauldron.



Sapper Rowan Jaie Robinson is remembered on the Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour, Two Wells Afghanistan War Memorial, Yungaburra Afghanistan Avenue of Honour, 42for42 Memorial Garden, Brisbane, Rowan Robinson Park, Kingscliff.

Sapper Robinson body was cremated and is remembered at the Melaleuca Station Memorial Gardens and Crematorium, Chinderah, NSW.



References

1. Australian War Memorial
2. Department of Defence
3. www.findagrave.com
4. www.vwma.org.au
5. www.richmondvc.com.au
6. www.warmemorialregister.nsw.gov.au

From the News



United States Marine Corps and United States Army High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems perform a live firing drill at Plains Airfield during Exercise Talisman Sabre 2019.

The US State Department has made a determination approving a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Australia of HIMARS launchers and related equipment.

The Defence Security Cooperation Agency delivered the required certification notifying Congress of this possible sale on 26 May 2022.

The Government of Australia has requested to buy 20 M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS); 30 M30A2 Guided Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (GMLRS); 30 Alternative Warhead (AW) Pods with Insensitive Munitions Propulsion Systems (IMPS); 30 M31A2 GMLRS Unitary (GMLRS-U) High Explosive Pods with IMPS; 30 XM403 Extended Range (ER)-GMLRS AW Pods; 30 EM404 ER GMLRS Unitary Pods; and 10 M57 Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS).

Also included are Reduced Range Practice Rocket Pods (RRPRP); Vehicular Intercom System (AN/VIC-3) 3-Station; radio communication mounts; machine gun mounts; battle management system vehicle integration kits; wheel guards; ruggedized laptops; training equipment publications; spare and repair parts; support equipment; tools; test equipment; technical data; US Government and Contractor support; technical and logistical support services; and other related elements of program and logistic support.

The total estimated program cost is US\$385 million.

A US Defence Security Cooperation Agency press statement said Australia was one of the USA's most important allies in the Western Pacific. "The strategic location of this political and economic power contributes significantly to ensuring peace and economic stability in the region." It is vital to the US national interest to assist our ally in developing and maintaining a strong and ready self-defence capability. "The proposed sale will improve Australia's capability to meet current and future threats, and will enhance interoperability with US forces and other allied forces. "Australia will use the capability to strengthen its homeland defence and provide greater security for its critical infrastructure."

The US Defence Security Cooperation Agency assessed that Australia would have no difficulty absorbing this equipment into its armed forces.

Among the principal contractors listed to support this purchase [if it goes ahead under Australia's new government] will be Lockheed Martin and L3 Harris.

This notice of a potential sale is required by law. The description and dollar value are for the highest estimated quantity and dollar value based on initial requirements. Actual dollar value will be lower depending on final requirements, budget authority, and signed sales agreement(s), if and when concluded.

(Source: Contact)



Warrant Officer Class One Mick Dewar takes part in the 40th anniversary parade at South Camp in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

Personnel representing seven nations marched using their own drills when they entered a parade ground in Egypt to the beat of Fijians with snare drums.

Last month's parade was held to mark the 40th anniversary of the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai Peninsula.

MFO Deputy Director General Candace Putman told those gathered of her pride in the mission and its ability to adapt to change.

Quoting Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of the former US president, Ms Putman said: "It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it is not enough to just believe in it, one must work at it."

Four decades on, the peacekeeping force's mission remains to observe, verify compliance, and report any violations of the Treaty of Peace between Egypt and Israel.

Established in 1982 to oversee the terms of the treaty, after it was signed in 1979, the force now comprises about 1200 personnel across North and South Camp, as well as six remote

sites. Nineteen countries, including Australia, contribute troops, aircraft, equipment and money.

Australian contingent commander and MFO chief of operations Lieutenant Colonel David Evans emphasised the importance of Australia's contribution. "We remain involved as a trusted partner in maintaining peace," Lieutenant Colonel Evans said. "We are constantly learning as we work with different nations. I think each and every person will be broadened by the opportunity, and that will bode well for their ongoing service."

They often work with people that may not speak English as a primary language and ensure there is clear communication to achieving the mission. "I have tried to learn a little bit of Arabic, but mixed in with a little bit of French and Spanish; it's a work in progress," Lieutenant Colonel Evans said.

The Australian contingent of 27 personnel has a range of ranks from all three services, filling roles such as administration, force protection analysis, operations, plans, communications, logistics and liaison.

The majority of Australian are located at South Camp on the Sinai Peninsula's southern tip, on a bluff overlooking the Red Sea. It is home to the force headquarters and is the operational and logistical base for activities in the southern area.

The remaining Australians are at North Camp near El Gohah, in northern Sinai. "It is a different environment to South Camp," Lieutenant Colonel Evans said. "It is less permissive and all movement into and out of the area is either by air or armoured vehicles."

Each site performs a function that supports the mission to observe, verify and report.

(Source: Contact)



Birdon Bridge Erection Boat

Engineering companies sometimes find a specialist niche that is a small opportunity in Australia, but which has enormous potential in larger markets such as the US. A case in point is family-owned Birdon, headquartered in Port Macquarie on the NSW mid-north coast,

which continues to expand its business in North America thanks to specialising in military and paramilitary watercraft.

As the history of warfare shows and as current events in Ukraine are amplifying, one of the first targets in a conflict is critical ground transport infrastructure, especially bridges. They are large, immobile targets, and their loss greatly impedes both offensive and defensive operations. Consequently, all modern armies must be equipped to cross major obstacles when bridges have been destroyed, and among the most challenging are large, fast-flowing rivers.

The US Army is built around the use of huge, powerful armoured formations, and they come with their own engineering units able to rapidly assemble pontoon bridges for wet gap crossings. Doing so is no easy task especially under fire, and connecting what amounts to numerous large steel floating bridge sections requires specialised boats to push them into place and join them with speed and precision in adverse conditions, such as fast rivers filled with debris. This brings us to Birdon and the largest single contract in the company's portfolio, which is for up to 491 Bridge Erection Boats (BEB) for the US Army, worth more than \$500m.

Each boat has a two-person crew and is propelled by two powerful waterjets (manufactured by NAMJet, another Birdon entity) that also allow them to operate synchronously to hold a floating bridge in position against a strong current for days or weeks at a time.

Instrumental in winning the huge US order was a 2004 contract with the Australian Army for something similar though in that case, it was for only 24 of these specialised watercrafts, reflecting the difference in scale between the forces. Earlier contracts included the refurbishment of army's Vietnam-era LCM8 landing craft, establishing Birdon's amphibious warfare credentials.

Birdon is constructing the BEBs at its US headquarters, located in Denver, Colorado, and is producing them at a rate of seven per month. So far, 370 have been delivered, all on time. Building on that success, in 2019, the company won its next major offshore contract with the US Coast Guard for extremely rugged self-righting motor lifeboats (MLB), worth in excess of \$250m. The work is being completed at Birdon facilities in Bellingham, Washington, and Portland, Connecticut, and involves upgrading 117 vessels.

The US national security market is notoriously parochial, with local industry usually preferred. Asked to explain the company's success, chief executive Jamie Bruce said: "It starts with having the confidence to back ourselves and a willingness to make upfront investments. We also received good advice early in the process to establish ourselves in the US rather than try to compete from Australia.



Jamie Bruce, CEO of Birdon

“The BEB project started in 2009 – we were only part-funded for the production of three prototypes, so we spent our own money to come up with an absolutely first-class product, which ended up being competitively selected for full-rate production in 2014.”

The company is now one of two finalists for a fleet of even larger US Coast Guard logistics vessels optimised for work on inland waterways, especially the Mississippi River and Great Lakes.

These are vital shipping routes handling \$5 trillion of cargo per annum, and which are dotted with navigation aids that need almost constant monitoring.

Any major disruption in Mississippi River and Great Lakes traffic could have global consequences, as the Suez Canal blockage by a container ship in March 2021 demonstrated.

Back home in Australia, Birdon is delivering a wide variety of civil and military contracts, including the recycling of retired ships such as the FFGs ex-HMAS Sydney and Darwin, and the support ship ex-HMAS Sirius.

Some warships are turned into dive wrecks, but this is a costly and time-consuming process because every possible contaminate needs to be removed. Most defence assets are now recycled, with Birdon saying they have achieved reuse and recycling rates of 97 per cent of the ship weight.

However, easily the most unique contract is to design and build the New Young Endeavour – the Royal Australian Navy’s three-masted sail training ship that will replace the existing vessel that has been in service for 30 years. The new generation vessel will be constructed at

Port Macquarie and provide decades of education and experience to thousands of Australian youth.

As the largest army specialist watercraft designer and manufacturer in the Western world, wholly Australian-owned, Birdon is also targeting the Australian Army's LAND 8710 program.

(Source: The Australian 30 May 2022)

Chinese fighter fired chaff into RAAF Poseidon engines

The Australian Defence Force has issued a statement saying a RAAF aircraft was intercepted by a Chinese fighter in the South China Sea last month.

On 26 May 2022, a RAAF P-8 maritime surveillance aircraft was intercepted by a Chinese J-16 fighter aircraft during a routine maritime surveillance activity in international airspace in the South China Sea region, the statement said.

“The intercept resulted in a dangerous manoeuvre which posed a safety threat to the P-8 aircraft and its crew.

“Defence has for decades undertaken maritime surveillance activities in the region and does so in accordance with international law, exercising the right to freedom of navigation and overflight in international waters and airspace.”

Defence Minister Richard Marles said the J-16 aircraft flew very close to the side of the P-8 maritime surveillance aircraft and released flares.

“The J-16 then accelerated and cut across the nose of the P-8, settling in front of the P-8 at very close distance, “Mr Marles said.

“At that moment, it then released a bundle of chaff, which contains small pieces of aluminium, some of which were ingested into the engine of the P-8 aircraft.

“Quite obviously, this is very dangerous.”

The Australian government has raised its concerns about the incident with the Chinese government.

(Source: Contact)

Navy



Japanese Ambassador to Australia Yamagami Shingo lays a wreath during the Battle of Coral Sea 80th anniversary commemorative service at Russell Offices in Canberra

The 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea was commemorated across Australia early this month.

The battle was a critical moment in the Pacific theatre of WWII. It was the first naval battle in history where opposing warships neither sighted, nor fired directly upon, one another, fundamentally changing the nature of naval warfare.

Commanding Officer, Captain Moses Raudino, spoke at the commemorative service in Darwin on 7 May, paying respects to the deeds, sacrifice and achievements of those who fought in the battle. “Imperial Japanese advances were on a truly oceanic scale, covering distances at a speed that had little precedent and advancing rapidly towards Australia,” Captain Raudino said. “The attack on Pearl Harbour had violently brought the United States into the war. Malaya, Hong Kong and ‘fortress Singapore’ were all captured, and the Philippines had fallen. “Darwin was bombed for the first time on the 19 February, 1942, by 188 Japanese carrier aircraft and more land-based bombers, which killed more than 200 Australians, both service and civilian.

“The defence of Australia was a desperate maritime campaign fought by a coalition of nations, by sailors, soldiers and aviators in the waters and islands to our north, around our coast by sea, land, and air.”



Able Seaman Samantha Adams, Lieutenant Commander Caroline Kajewski and Warrant Officer Phillip Durnan salute during the commemorative service in Darwin.

Military leaders from across the Northern Territory came together with visiting forces, veterans' associations, distinguished guests and members of the public for the commemoration.

The ceremony was supported by a flag party from HMAS *Coonawarra*, a bugler from the Australian Army's Band of the 1st Brigade and a United States Marine Corps colour guard from the Marine Rotational Force, Darwin.

Also in attendance were representatives from the United States Army and United States Navy.

Leading Seaman Alan Wosomo participated in the ceremony as part of the Navy's contribution to the commemoration. "I enjoyed participating in the ceremony. It's really interesting to learn about the Navy history that happened so close to Darwin," he said. "It's great conducting ceremonial duties alongside our US allies, we do so many things the same and a few things differently."

Today, the United States and Japan are Australia's two closest defence partners, with the US an ally and Japan a special strategic partner.

Australia, Japan and the United States work closely together to advance peace, security, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific at the trilateral defence ministerial meetings.

(Source: Contact)



HMAS *Canberra* commander engineering, Commander John De Bomford, left, reads the service history of former able seaman electronic systems, Gregory Raymond, before Able Seaman Raymond's ashes are committed to the sea, with Chaplain Rainer Schack looking

The ship's company of HMAS *Canberra* was honoured to commit the ashes of 10 former Navy personnel to the sea on 9 June 2022.

The ceremony was held on the quarterdeck of the ship as the ship passed through the Coral Sea and was a time of reflection for those in attendance.

Chaplain Rainer Schack opened the service and spoke about the importance of the tradition of committing ashes to the sea and how fitting it was to spread the ashes of sailors to the place that was a significant part of their lives when they served the nation.

For Commander John de Bomford, the ceremony was particularly touching. He joined Navy in 1979 with Able Seaman Gregory Raymond, whose ashes were laid to rest.

Commander de Bomford read Able Seaman Raymond's service history and said it was an honour and privilege for him to commit Able Seaman Raymond's ashes to the sea.

"We joined at 16 years of age as junior recruits at HMAS *Leeuwin*, our service numbers were next in series and we also both joined from Townsville," Commander de Bomford said.

"Greg was a lovely and personable man and, to his mates, we affectionately knew him as 'Sludge'.

“Not in my wildest imagination did I ever think that our two worlds would collide once more here on the quarterdeck of HMAS *Canberra* as we sail towards Townsville where our Navy careers started all those years ago.

“There is some simple and lovely synergy to that.”

Ten members of the ship’s company had the honour of committing the ashes to the sea.

The families will now receive a map with the latitude and longitude reference of where their loved ones were laid to rest.

The following member’s ashes were committed to the sea:

- Captain Michael Freeman, navigation officer
- Lieutenant Commander Dennis Rose, torpedo anti-submarine officer
- Lieutenant William Main, communications officer
- Sub Lieutenant David Price, assistant maritime logistics officer
- Chief Petty Officer Stores, William McBean, assistant maritime logistics officer
- Able Seaman Gregory Raymond, electronic technical systems
- William Phillis, stoker
- Keith Elve, cook
- Morris Willcoxson, coder
- Leslie Tull, musician 2nd class.

Army



Governor-General General (ret'd) David Hurley speaks with deployed Australian personnel in the newly named Hurley’s Hangar at Camp Baird in the Middle East.

Governor-General General (ret'd) David Hurley recently took time out from his official schedule during his visit to the Middle East to meet Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel deployed to Camp Baird. General Hurley was accompanied by the Australian

ambassador to the United Arab Emirates Heidi Venamore and Acting Chief of Joint Capabilities Rear Admiral Ian Murray.

They met the deployed Australian personnel in Camp Baird's C130 Hangar, which was then named 'Hurley's Hangar' to acknowledge General Hurley's work during his time in the ADF to improve the working conditions of personnel who had been operating in extreme temperatures.

During his appointments as chief of joint operations and vice chief of the Defence Force, General Hurley oversaw the approval and construction of the hangar in Australia's main support base in the Middle East region. The building has been essential in sustaining the ADF's critical air transport capability for Australian operations in the region.

Commander Headquarters Middle East, Colonel Colin Blyth, gave General Hurley an overview of current operations and General Hurley then chatted with the gathered Australian personnel.

Colonel Blyth thanked the Governor-General for his long and distinguished public service.

"His Excellency's service in Defence and as Governor-General has been characterised by his inspirational leadership and drive to improve the capability employed by service personnel," Colonel Blyth said.

"Hurley's Hanger is one small reminder of the difference he has made."

(Source: Contact)



Sergeant Rana Chandan operates a Ghost Robotics quadruped robot using a novel brain-computer interface during a demonstration at Majura training area.

While biological dogs respond to voice commands "sit", "fetch" and "stay", robotic dogs might soon take instruction via a person's brain.

This technology was demonstrated when Sergeant Damian Robinson, from 5th Combat Service Support Battalion, and Sergeant Chandan Rana, from 1st/15th Royal New South Wales Lancers, commanded a robot to go to several locations using their powers of concentration at Majura Training Area, Canberra, on 11 May.

Several white squares corresponding to waypoints flickered on Sergeant Robinson's augmented reality lens at varying frequencies. A graphene biosensor at the back of Sergeant Robinson's head was ready to detect brainwaves from his visual cortex.

When Sergeant Robinson concentrated on a particular flicker, the biosensor detected corresponding brainwaves and signalled an amplification circuit. An artificial intelligence decoder translated the signal into commands, which the robot dog then followed.

Sergeant Robinson and another soldier operated the technology using a commercial HoloLens running technology developed by University of Technology Sydney (UTS) researchers to command a Ghost Robotics quadruped robot. "The whole process is not difficult to master. It's very intuitive. It only took a couple of sessions," Sergeant Robinson said.

The robot is typically controlled with a hand-held console, but in this case, the operator's brainwave initiates the commands. This allows the operator to maintain weapon readiness or use their hands for other tasks.

Sergeant Robinson joined the program in April and did eight, two-hour sessions with the system. During the demonstration, Sergeant Robinson could command the robot to visit six pre-determined locations based on one of six flickers that he could choose. "You don't have to think anything specific to operate the robot, but you do need to focus on that flicker," he said. "It's more of a visual concentration thing."

The purpose of the demonstration was to get soldiers thinking about how Army might integrate this technology into the tactical environment.

Researchers at UTS and Army's Robotic and Autonomous Implementation and Coordination Office (RICO) worked together since December 2020 to explore brain-computer interfaces and their tactical applications.

This exploration was a four-way collaboration between Defence Innovation Hub, RICO, UTS, and Defence Science and Technology Group. Distinguished Professor Chin-Teng Lin and Professor Francesca Iacopi, from UTS, have made several breakthroughs in brain-computer interfaces. Professor Lin figured out how to minimise noise from the body and environment to get a clearer signal from an operator's brain. Another advancement was increasing the number of commands the decoder can deliver in a fixed period. "We have nine different kinds of commands and the operator can select one from those nine within that time period," Professor Lin said.

Professor Iacopi developed a replacement for older biosensors used to detect brainwaves, overcoming issues of corrosion, durability and skin contact resistance through cutting-edge graphene material. "We've been able to combine the best of graphene, which is very biocompatible and very conductive, with the best of silicon technology, which makes our biosensor very resilient and robust to use," Professor Iacopi said.

Defence has provided \$1.2 million in research funding to UTS through the Defence Innovation Hub.

Air Force

The Royal Australian Air Force's Exercise Diamond Storm 22 will be held in the skies above the Northern Territory from 30 May to 24 June.

The exercise will take place from RAAF Bases Darwin and Tindal, and at Timber Creek, Douglas Daly region and the Delamere Air Weapons Range.

Exercise Diamond Storm is the final activity for the participants in the air warfare instructor course (AWIC), and follows other exercises held in the previous six months, including Exercises Diamond Seas and Diamond Shield.

More than 1400 Defence personnel will deploy to the Northern Territory for the exercise, working alongside Defence personnel based in the Top End, and the exercise will involve more than 60 aircraft from Australia and the United States.

This year will be the first-time trainee air warfare instructors from the F-35A Lightning II, P-8A Poseidon and combat controller communities will take part.

Commander Air Warfare Centre, Air Commodore Ross Bender, said the Diamond series of exercises enhanced and promoted Air Force's interoperability with the Royal Australian Navy, Australian Army and international partners.

"Diamond Seas and Diamond Shield brought together Royal Australian Navy, Australian Army and Royal Australian Air Force elements in complex maritime and defensive counter air-focused scenarios, providing training opportunities to practise and consolidate integrated tactics," Air Commodore Bender said.

"As the culmination activity, Diamond Storm provides our candidates with the opportunity to apply their skills in high-end warfighting scenarios alongside international partners.

"We will conduct Exercise Diamond Storm throughout the Northern Territory to operate within some of the best training environments Australia has to offer."

Throughout the AWIC, trainee air warfare instructors have developed their expertise through academic activities and practical exercises that expose the candidates to complex scenarios aimed at broadening and improving their skills.

Following Exercise Diamond Storm, the newly trained instructors will be the next generation of tactical and integrated warfare experts across the air combat spectrum.

"On completion of the course, our air warfare instructors will be knowledgeable and approachable experts who can integrate people, systems and combat effects across the five warfare domains: air, land, maritime, space and cyber," Air Commodore Bender said.

(Source: Contact)



Able Seaman Zachary Duke, Leading Aircraftwoman Caylee Wallis and Private Wayne Fourmile from Australia's Federation Guard at the Australian High Commission in London during preparation for The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Standing in uniform on the steps of the large entrance to St Paul's Cathedral in London, is a long way from Perth for Australia's Federation Guard member Caylee Wallis.

Leading Aircraftwoman Wallis is an air intelligence analyst in the Royal Australian Air Force. After nearly two years' service, she is now located in Canberra posted to the Federation Guard. "The guard is a great place to work. We have a fun team who work together so well supporting ceremonial jobs across Australia," she said.

Leading Aircraftwoman Wallis was one of the 41-member contingent from Australia's Federation Guard that travelled to London to contribute to Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrating 70 years as Monarch.

Joining federation guard members from the army and navy, Leading Aircraft Woman Wallis formed part of the 21 Commonwealth nations guard of honour lining the steps of St Paul's Cathedral for the Queen's Thanksgiving Service.

"It was a moment I will never forget being so close to the cathedral entry and having all the members of the Royal family walk pass me," said Leading Aircraftwoman Wallis. "The cheers from the crowd and the sounds of the guard and band made for a very memorable event."

Along with members of the guard, Leading Aircraftwoman Wallis attended a reception at the Australian High Commission where they were all thanked for their service and duties supporting the Jubilee by the Governor-General General (ret'd) David Hurley.

Australia's Federation Guard is the Australian Defence Force's only dedicated ceremonial capability, made up of members from the Royal Australian Navy, Australian Army, and Royal Australian Air Force

Quiz

Quiz Questions

Who is he?

- He was born in Ipswich and grew up in Toowoomba
- Joined the Army as a soldier in 1974 and was a member of the Intelligence Corps
- Attended OCS Portsea and commissioned into Armoured Corps
- He served in the Gulf War
- He was CO and CI of RMC
- Deployed to Iraq as Director Strategic Operations
- Deputy Chief of Army in 2007
- CO Joint Task Force 633 on Operation SLIPPER and KRUGER
- Retired in 2012 after 38 Years
- Currently lives on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland.

Answer Quiz Question Tribute No 12

1. Name the Ship. The name of this city has three As and two Rs. After that it's time for tea. **Answer;** HMAS *Ararat*

Show and Tell

Combat Clothing, Individual Load Carrying Equipment and the Soldier Combat Ensemble – Iraq and Afghanistan

During 2001 – 02 an initial Disruptive Pattern Uniform (DPDU) was created for use by Australian forces operating in Iraq and Afghanistan. The camouflage pattern and the uniform style was based on the AUSCAM uniform with a desert colour of brown and stone-grey blobs on a sandy colour background. Initially there was no intention to produce the ICLE in the desert Camouflage Pattern, however this latter changed. Complaints were made about the uniform with colours designed for arid desert environment not blending with the green cultivated area found in Afghanistan. This led to the wearing of AUSCAM uniforms when operations were being conducted in the green cultivated areas in Afghanistan.

Initially the brown leather boots were worn. However, the effects of hot ground, sand and rocky mountain country on feet led to complaints about the boots which lacked padding and insulation. As a result, the Army had new combat boots designed with direct moulded soles, cushioning and uppers constructed from suede leather and canvas. Again, complaints from soldiers about the quality and comfort of the new Army issue boots and the realisation that

boots of equal or higher quality were available commercially resulted in an Army approved list of similar type combat boots (up to ten brand/boot types) available to be purchased by soldiers and for them to be reimbursed after producing proof of purchase.

With the deployment of Australian soldiers to Iraq the decision was made to issue 9mm Browning pistols to all ranks and this resulted in a pistol holster being added to ICLE. Previously in the Australian Army a pistol was only issued to selected personnel such as officers and some specialists (e.g., Vehicle crews, crew served weapons operators and personnel searching confined spaces). The carriage of a pistol by all ranks also applied to those serving in Afghanistan.

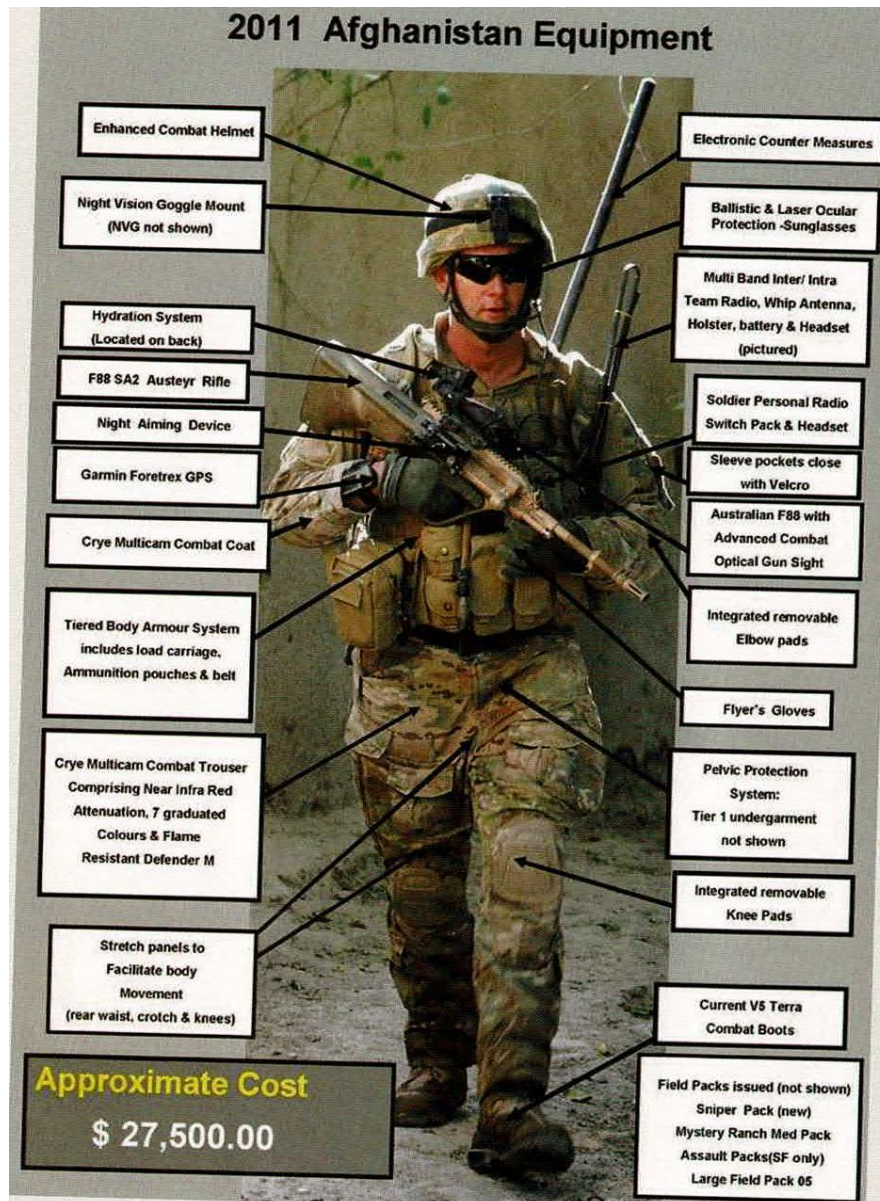


During 2005 – 06 Enhanced Combat Body Armour (ECBA) and enhanced combat helmet were issued to Australian soldiers in Iraq. The new body armour was designed to provide greater protection for the wearer and the enhanced combat helmet was lighter in weight, but also had fittings for the attachment of night vision equipment or a sighting device or camera.

From 2005 Modular Lightweight Load Carrying Equipment (MOLLE) was issued to Infantry units and soldiers serving with the Australian Task Groups in Iraq and Afghanistan. MOLLE allowed the load carrying pouches to be attached to the vest containing the ballistic plates for the body armour, hence the development of the Soldier Combat Ensemble.

From 2008 the Modular Combat Body Armour System (MCBAS) was delivered to Australian soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Feedback from soldiers on operations in Afghanistan revealed that the ICLE (issued in 2005) and the enhanced body armour originally issued to provide greater protection for soldiers carrying out mainly vehicle mounted operations in Iraq was too heavy and uncomfortable for wearing on dismounted combat operations.

The operational and user feedback from Afghanistan resulted in the Tiered Body Armour System (TBAS) being developed and it was issued to Australian Soldiers in 2011. The advantage of TBAS was the amount of body armour worn could be adjusted to suit the degree of protection required to meet the threat expected on a particular operation as well as consideration of the amount of physical mobility required by the soldiers involved in the operation. It meant the commanders were able to balance the needs of protection against the bulk and weight carried by the soldiers.



To be continued

Poetry and Humour

ODE TO A MATE

By Jim Murrell

While wandering down life's winding path

Through many a turning gate

Met a kindred soul along the way

In a bloke I called a mate.

Someone who'd take good care of you

Someone who'd stand and wait

And lend a hand unto your cause

For he was indeed a mate.

My mind goes back to '68

To Vietnam, and of hate

Reflecting back on times gone by

For time is just a date.

When on that fateful, luckless day

We swore and cursed our state

For the demons of death were lurking

To close for me and my mate.

Those eyes of white, of the unnumbered foes

A picture my mind still paints

The yells and screams, the blood, sweat and tears

Whose lives of my mates will you take?

Then a hail of lead split open his head

His warm flesh and blood, for god's sake

With life flowing from him he slurred but once

"My time has come, old mate".

That beat from the medivac chopper

That stench from the dead lying straight

Those souls on the ground hear not but a sound

And there in a body bag lay my mate.

With a final farewell and short silent prayer

To grieve with no tear, that must wait

To melt back again to the bush I call home

But to do it this time, with no mate.

Because you fell for your country's cause

You will always be a saint

Your blood was the price of freedom

But fate was your hunter, old mate.

In paddy fields no poppies blow

There are no crosses row on row

Your only wish, if you should die

Was to bring you home and let you lie.

No band at the quay played Matilda.

In clubs we weren't known as saints

At home our folks walked around us

But now we are together with mates.

Why did we fall for that call to war?

That war was to set things straight

But once again it all happened in vain

And frail, grieving mothers still wait.

On ANZAC and Remembrance Day

My girls, they ask me straight

"You shed a tear, then have a beer

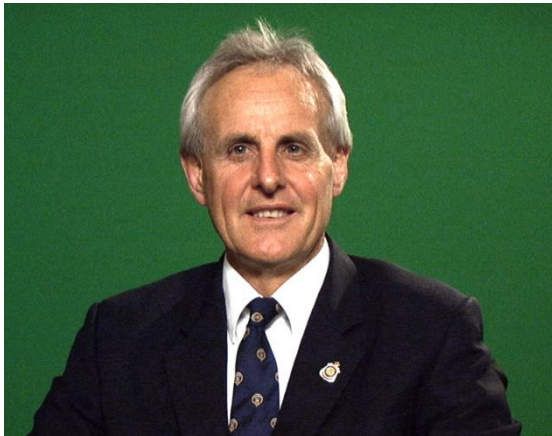
In memory of your mate?"

If there's to be an after life

Then I don't know how I'll rate

For the only words I'd care to hear

“You’re welcome up here, mate”.



In 1968 – 69 Jim Murrell served with 4 RAR (Anzac) Battalion. He was a National Serviceman. As a forward scout he moved through the dense bush, he hoped that if an enemy sniper had him in their sights, they would aim for his head and be a good shot. During his time in Vietnam, he watched his mates die, and was injured twice. His experiences left him grateful for life and all the good things in it. “I wake up every morning, I throw my legs over the side of the bed, I take a deep breath, I open

the curtains and look up at the sky and see the two fresh-faced 21-year-old kids who were killed along side of me,” he said, “and every moment of my life is good after that, because I’m still here.”

Jim wrote ‘Ode to a mate’ in honour of the first of many of his mates killed in service and he first performed it at the Sunshine Coast Poetry Slam Championships. Jim performed the poem at the last meeting at Tewantin and provided a copy for publication.



Important days in July

1 July 1977 – 20th Divisional Engineer Support Squadron

1 July 1977 – 16th Air Defence Regimental Workshops RAEME

1 July 1989 – AATC

1 July 1989 – 32nd Squadron reformed RAAF

1 July 1996 – Royal Australian Survey Corps disbanded (100th Birthday 1 July 2015) the function was moved to the RAE

1 July 2014 – Lance Corporal Todd John Chidley 2 Cdo Regt – died of a non-combat related incident during Operation Slipper, Afghanistan

2 July 2012 – Lance Corporal Luke Nathan Gavin 2 RAR – died of small arms fire during operation Slipper, Afghanistan

2 July 2012 – Explosive Detection dog DEVIL – died from a gunshot wound during Operation Slipper, Afghanistan

4 July 2011 – Sergeant Todd Mathew Langley 2 Cdo Regt – died from small arms fire during Operation Slipper, Afghanistan

7 July 2007 – Commissioning of HMAS Childers

8 July 2008 – Signalman Sean Patrick McCarthy SASR – died from an IED Explosion during Operation Slipper in Afghanistan

9 July 2010 – Private Mathew Bewes 6 RAR – died from an IED Explosion during Operation Slipper, Afghanistan

10 July 1999 – Commissioning of HMAS Weller

15 July 2006 -HMAS Albany Commissioned

18 July 2009 – Private Benjamin Ranaudo 1 RAR died from an IED Explosion during Operation Slipper in Afghanistan

21 July 2021 – Afghanistan Inquiry Reform Plan

24 July 2003 – First arrival of RAMSI forces in Solomon Islands

25 July 1994 – First arrival of Australian contingent of UNAMIR II in Rwanda

27 July 1996 – Commissioning of HMAS Collins

30 July 1979 - DASF

Military Historical Society of Australia, Qld Division Committee 2021 – 22

President	Neil Dearberg
Vice President	Russell Paton
Honorary Secretary	Ian Curtis
Honorary Treasurer	Ian Curtis
Committee Member	Andrew Limpus
Committee Member	Scott Meares

<p><u>IMPORTANT EVENTS AND DATES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 July – AGM • 10 September – Bimonthly Meeting • 11 November – Remembrance Day • 12 November – Bimonthly Meeting 	<p><u>FELLOWS of MHPA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Meyers • Anthony Staunton • Donald Wright <p style="text-align: center;"><u>NEW MEMBERS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alan Roberts • Rod Elsworth
--	---

Contact details

Honorary Secretary / Treasurer:	Editor: Ian Curtis
Ian Curtis	Editor: Neil Dearberg
Phone: 0437303969	Phone: 0437303969
Email: qldsec@mhsa.org.au	Email: qldsec@mhsa.org.au
Website: www.mhsa.org.au	
Address: MHPA Qld PO Box 243 Maleny, Queensland 4552	Annual Membership Fees Ordinary Member \$50 Family Membership \$55



MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

Australian Business Number (ABN) 97 764 781 363

Membership Application

Queensland Division

Membership Fee Ordinary Member \$50, Family Member \$55 (ie 2 or more domiciled at the one address)

Name/s

Postal Address

.....

Telephone

E-mail

Date/year joined the Society

Military Interests

I understand the above details will only be used by the Qld Division and the Federal Secretary of the Military Historical Society of Australia to maintain correct records of my membership and for general branch or administrative business, and by the Journal editor to assist with editorial planning. I understand that the Society's Constitution requires the Federal Secretary to maintain a membership register (including the Journal mailing list).

In addition to information kept for these purposes:

OPT IN I agree to my email details being included on the Federal Secretary's contact list which will be used solely to distribute Society business and convey items of interest to members (including members' notices) **YES /NO (cross out whichever does not apply)**

OPT IN I wish to be included on the members' interests register and give permission for my military interests and my phone/email/address contact details to be included on it (cross out whichever does not apply). **YES/NO (cross out whichever does not apply)**

I understand that I can revoke permission for inclusion on register and contact lists at any time

As part of your membership you will receive a quarterly edition of Sabretache, the journal of the MHS. **I require a hard copy (mail) / electronic (via email) version. (circle your option)**

.Cheque/Money Order: Military Historical Society of Australia, Qld Division - Please send this form and your membership fee to:

**Treasurer, Qld Division
Military Historical Society of Australia
PO Box 243
MALENY Q 4552
Email: curtisir131@gmail.com**

Or,

Direct deposit to the Qld Division MHS Westpac Account at Maryborough, Qld.

BSB No. 034-128 Account No. 23-3618

If paying by Direct deposit, reference your name and forward the application form as well.