



**Respect, Gratitude, Admiration**

# *TRIBUTE*

The Newsletter of the Military  
Historical Society of Australia,  
Queensland Division

President: Neil Dearberg  
Website: [www.mhsa.org.au](http://www.mhsa.org.au)

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Left to right: Flying Officer Lauren Townsend, co-pilot; Flight Lieutenant Thea Margalit, aircraft captain; Corporal Joanna Fletcher, loadmaster; Corporal Antonia Guterres, loadmaster; Corporal Tiana Heap, loadmaster; Flight Lieutenant Emily Renshaw, aircraft captain; and Flight Lieutenant Katherine Mitchell, aircraft captain.

An all-female crew has flown a C-27J Spartan transport aircraft into the history books at the Royal Australian Air Force's No. 35 Squadron on 24 January 2022.

(Source: Defence News)

## President Report

*“Over the past three decades, 100,000 Australian servicemen and servicewomen have served in war, conflict, peacekeeping and humanitarian and disaster relief operations. Today, their stories remain mostly untold.*

*We owe it to every veteran of every generation to have their service recognised.”*

- Australian War Memorial Development Project Booklet -

As a nation, just as we honour our sporting legends, so we must honour our veterans and their families. Especially in these troublesome times as much of the east coast recovers from extensive rain and floods and our ADF personnel are called away from their homes to assist so the ‘mud army’ can go home. I hope you are all safe and well and little affected by the rain and floods. However, if you were affected, please let us know and especially if you need any help, even a set of ears to hear your story – we are here to help where we can.

To recognise their service, at least two things are happening. One, the AWM will spend nearly \$500m over 8 years expanding their exhibits and displays. Two, in October this year the MHSAQ is conducting the inaugural Military Spectacular on the Sunshine Coast over 3 days to honour, respect and commemorate those veterans and their families.

To make this a truly memorable *Spectacular* we have received agreement to attend from 2<sup>nd</sup> Combat Engineer Regt with their explosive detection dogs, 1<sup>st</sup> Military Police Battalion for their attack dogs, band and possibly guns of 1<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment that will play and fire the *1812 Overture* free and open to the public. We hope to have a *Beating the Retreat* ceremony on Caloundra RSL’s Memorial Garden on the Friday evening, free and open to the public.

Of course, there will be special demonstration of the dogs and playing of the band specifically for those attending the formal Spectacular. In addition, we have Lt Col George Hulse and Sgt Graeme Ellis, both former dog handlers and trainers, to expand on their experiences and the future of our dogs.

The Friday evening is an informal but sit-down dinner where the bands and dogs will show off. Saturday evening is an informal stand-up finger food dinner where again, dogs and musical accompaniment will entertain – this will be a cracker of an event so **REGISTER** to get your updates and *early bird tickets* at [www.militaryspectacular.events](http://www.militaryspectacular.events) if you have not yet done so.

Volunteers will be needed, same as all major events. If you would like to help out, please let Ian, Russell or myself know.

Several funding grants have been or will be applied for. This will help keep ticket prices as low as we can. Remember, any profit that is made will be donated to veteran and defence animal welfare organisations.

The theme for the rest of this year's Tribute and speakers will focus on our veterans and serving defence people since Vietnam, our contemporary veterans – they have amazing stories that are yet to be heard and admired.

Look forward to seeing you soon.

Neil

## **From the Editor**

Welcome to Edition No 9 of *TRIBUTE*. Firstly, the Editor need to apologise for a couple of mistakes in the last edition. On page 32, I attributed the Marlin Brando style coat to Frank Reid. Wrong, it was from Allan Fuary. Sorry Allan. Secondly, as one of my bosses use to say to me, 'If there are no spelling mistakes in your work, then you did not write it.' My apologies to Russell Paten for misspelling his name.

This is the first of a series of *TRIBUTE* leading up to the Military Spectacular and we will be featuring Post Vietnam articles. You will also note that we have changed the logo to the Military Spectacular logo for this period. The first two Post Vietnam stories are, The Medal for Gallantry featuring Navy Warrant Officer Benjamin James Sim and Sergeant Sean Anthony Lanigan and Operation ASTUTE – The RAN in East Timor.

All the regular features are still included and one of our new members Peter Burgess has contributed Commemorating the First Ashore, which is appropriate at this time as Maryborough and Duncan Chapman's statue have been underwater twice in the last six weeks.

Articles and feedback are always welcome so please contribute to your *TRIBUTE*.

Enjoy the read.



A Royal Australian Air Force C-130J Hercules aircraft departs RAAF Base Richmond, New South Wales, to assist the Tonga Government after the eruption of the Hunga-Tonga-Hunga-Ha'apai volcano. Photo by Corporal Kylie Gibson.



## Medal for Gallantry

By Ian Curtis

The Medal for Gallantry (MG) is a military decoration awarded to personnel of the Australian Defence Force. It recognises acts of gallantry in action in hazardous circumstances. The MG was introduced on 15 January 1991, replacing the Imperial equivalent. It is ranked third in the Gallantry Decorations in the Australian Honours System. Recipients of the Medal of Gallantry are entitled to use the post-nominal letters "MG".



Notable recipients include;

- Signalman Martin “Jock” Wallace MG, formerly 152 Signal Squadron and Special Air Service Regiment. Awarded 27 November 2022 for actions in Afghanistan on 2 March 2000.
- Sergeant Mathew Locke MG of the Special Air Service Regiment who was subsequently Killed in Action 2007
- Lance Corporal Ben Roberts-Smith VC MG of the Special Air Service Regiment. He was awarded the MG for action in the period May – September 2006 in Afghanistan, and subsequently the VC.
- Sergeant Brett Wood MG of 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment who was subsequently Killed in Action 23 May 2011.
- Major Alexandra Vaughan-Evans on 25 November 1996 for distinguished service in response to the massacre of civilian’s refugees at Kibeho on 22 April 1995 whilst serving with UNAMIR II in Rwanda. She is the only female to be awarded the MG to date.

**“She was the first female doctor to serve with our SAS and, will be a keynote speaker at the Military Spectacular.”**

The Medal for Gallantry is circular and is made of gold-plated silver. It is ensigned with the Crown of Saint Edward. The obverse bears a Federation Star, which is superimposed on a circle of flames. This image represents action under fire.

The reverse shows a horizontal panel superimposed on a design of fluted rays.

The Medal for Gallantry is suspended from a 32-millimetre-wide ribbon by a narrow gold-plated silver suspender bar. The ribbon has a design of chevrons of light orange alternating with chevrons of deep orange angled at 60 degrees. The chevron pattern is placed as a stylised "A" with the points facing upwards.

One member of the Royal Australian Navy, Warrant Officer Benjamin James Sime has been awarded the MG.



**Warrant Officer Benjamin James Sime MG**

During HMAS *Stuart*'s 2004 deployment to the Middle East in support of Operation CATALYST, the then Leading Seaman Aircrewman Benjamin Sime was serving as the sensor operator in *Stuart*'s embarked Seahawk helicopter. On the night of 24 April 2004, terrorists in fishing dhows launched a series of determined attacks against Iraqi oil terminals. One dhow, packed with explosives, was detonated when a Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB) from USS *Firebolt* drew alongside to challenge it. Three American sailors were killed and four seriously wounded.

*Stuart* immediately rendered assistance, ordering her Seahawk to close *Firebolts* position. On approaching the scene, Sime observed that the RHIB had capsized and that all of its occupants were in the water. Following several unsuccessful attempts to get survivors into a rescue strop lowered from the helicopter, a decision was made for Sime to enter the water and provide direct assistance. Moments after he did so, two further attacks were launched against the nearby oil terminals. Sime continued to provide support to survivors throughout the unfolding action until he was himself recovered by *Stuart*'s RHIB.

Leading Seaman Sime showed outstanding courage and remained dedicated to supporting a sailor in his care without regard for his own safety. His efforts were of the highest order and in the finest traditions of the Royal Australian Navy. In recognition of his deeds, he was awarded the Medal for Gallantry.

In December 2017 on a grey, wet Canberra Day, now Warrant Officer Sime climbed out of the last operating Seahawk "Bravo" helicopter for the last time. The helicopter known as Christine, had been donated to the Australian War Memorial, and Sime and the crew had just completed a flypast of the War Memorial and Parliament House before the official handover ceremony.

This was a very emotional time for Sime as Christine (Seahawk 872) was the helicopter back in 2004 that was involved in the rescue.

Sime remembered; the helicopter was operating off HMAS *Stuart* when terrorists in fishing dhows launched a series of attacks against Iraqi oil terminals. One of these dhows, packed with explosives, detonated when a boat from USS *Firebolt* drew alongside to investigate. Three American sailors were killed and four were seriously wounded in the explosion.

Following several unsuccessful attempts to rescue survivors, Sime leapt from the aircraft in his flying gear to help a badly wounded sailor.

“He had a severe head laceration ... he was struggling to stay afloat,” Sime said. “He actually let go of the [rescue] strop at this point and then lay face down in the water and it was evident he was unconscious ...

“At that point I jumped from the aircraft to try and render assistance ... [I] turned him over the best I could and tried to render some sort of first aid in the water. At this point in time, it was night so ... it was a little bit challenging. At the end of the day all I could do at this point was just support him as best I could and keep his head out of the water.

“We managed to get the casualty onto ... the patrol boat and that’s where we continued to try and do CPR. It was ... pretty chaotic at that point – there were bodies being recovered from the water ... and there were a lot of people in distress clearly and it was very hectic.”

“I don’t want to use the cliché of ‘you’re relying on your training and you rely on the people around you,’ but that is really the case,” Sime said. “We all worked together extremely well as a crew and we just went about doing what we had to do. In all truthfulness, no, I wasn’t [scared] ..... it was just one of those circumstances where you just do what you have to do and worry about it later.”

Sime managed to get the injured sailor to the patrol boat and then to a doctor on HMAS *Stuart*, but the sailor died of his wounds.

“In later years obviously, you still think about it,” Sime said. “It happened on the 24<sup>th</sup> and it went over into the 25<sup>th</sup>, so obviously being Anzac Day, every year when Anzac Day comes around for us, and for me personally, it just has my own personal spin on what it means for me.”

“I’m very proud to be a part of the Seahawk history ... [and] I’m very, very proud that 72, the aircraft that we embarked with to the Gulf, the North Arabian Gulf and Iraq, is going to the War Memorial.”



Sergeant Sean Anthony Lanigan MG

*"When you sign up to join the Australian Infantry Corps, you are choosing a life of hardship and great challenges; furthermore, you are going to live a life where friendship and teamwork are the cornerstone for success. From peace keeping in East Timor to fierce fighting in Afghanistan, it has been the dedication of the men by my side that has inspired me to continue in this career, and I will always remember the ultimate sacrifices that have been made by those who did not return."*

Sean Lanigan was born in 1974 in Port Fairy to parents Mick and Cath Lanigan. He has two older sisters Helen and Marcia, and one younger brother named Mark. He joined Christian Brothers College after completing primary school at Saint Patricks in Port Fairy, and was there during the transition years as Emmanuel College was formed.

Whilst at Emmanuel College, Sean represented the school in Football, Basketball, Badminton and Athletics, before graduating in 1991. He played football with Port Fairy in Juniors and Seniors.

Sean studied Business at Deakin before working in the hospitality industry for many years in Queensland. In the year 2000 Sean enlisted in the Australian Army as a Rifleman and after completing recruit and initial employment training, he was posted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Australian Regiment in Townsville.

Sean deployed to East Timor on Operation TANAGER in 2001, as part of the United Nations led peace keeping mission, and also on Operation ANODE to the Solomon Islands in 2003, both times as a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion. By 2005 he had been promoted to Corporal and also held the position of Sniper Team Leader.

In 2006 Sean was posted to Melbourne to study at the Australian Defence Force School of Languages, and by the end of that year he graduated with an Advanced Diploma of the Thai Language.

In 2007 Sean was posted to the 6th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (6 RAR) in Brisbane. During his time in 6 RAR he deployed to East Timor in 2007 on Operation ASTUTE, which was focused on regaining peace within Dili, and to Iraq on Operation CATALYST) in 2008, which was focused towards protecting the Australian Embassy and DFAT Staff in Baghdad. After returning from Iraq, he completed both his Sergeant Promotion Courses and in January 2009 was promoted to rank of Sergeant within the 6 RAR.

In 2010 Sean deployed to Afghanistan on Operation SLIPPER as a member of Mentoring Taskforce One. This deployment turned out to be most defining time of his career with amazing challenges working in an extreme terrain with a very high enemy threat. He spent 8 months in Afghanistan during which time the Australian Army received the most casualties since the Vietnam War.

As part of the 2012 Australia Day honours list, Sergeant Lanigan was awarded the Medal for Gallantry for courage under fire in hazardous circumstances. His Citation reads as follows: *For acts of gallantry in hazardous circumstances on the 24th of August 2010 while a platoon sergeant and mentor with Mentoring Team Delta, the 1st Mentoring Taskforce at Derapet, Tangi Valley Afghanistan. His gallant actions in contact with a numerically superior and entrenched enemy, in rallying the soldiers and coordinating their return fire, gained time for both Australian and Afghan Soldiers to move into supporting positions. He then bravely led a frontal assault under heavy enemy fire to clear the enemy from their entrenched position, and subsequently disregarded his own safety while coordinating the partnered patrol to defeat the enemies' counterattacks.*

## References

1. Australian war Memorial
2. Emmanuel College, South Australia

## **Operation ASTUTE - The RAN in East Timor**

By Dr David Stevens

(Source: [www.navy.gov.au](http://www.navy.gov.au))

Operation ASTUTE, the ADF's recent deployment of "troops to bring security, peace and confidence to the people of Timor-Leste",<sup>[1]</sup> has been accompanied by the expected flood of media analysis. With some 1300 soldiers once more facing a challenging mission on foreign soil, the tendency has been to focus on the land-force contribution because, as one columnist put it, "Whatever we do and wherever we do it the army is almost certain to be playing the central role".<sup>[2]</sup> The danger associated with such themes is the often explicit dismissal of the force-enabling role played by other ADF capabilities. "Our high-tech



weaponry is useless in these [asymmetric warfare] situations”, another writer opined, “when the key to victory is boots on the ground”.<sup>[3]</sup>

Oversimplifications and misrepresentations such as these do nothing to enhance our understanding of current operational experience and little to address future security concerns. Regrettably, too few analysts comprehend that a credible ADF must necessarily be a flexible, balanced joint force. That is, one in which the integrated capabilities of the three Services work together to provide operational synergy. Moreover, rather than structuring to meet a particular set of circumstances, the ADF must be sufficiently versatile to respond effectively across a wide spectrum of operations, at times preparing for threat levels which may ultimately never eventuate. Deterrence, after all, is far preferable to victory on an Australian battlefield.



The amphibious capabilities of Balikpapan Class LCHs proved vital in support of Operation ASTUTE.

This is not to suggest that the ADF can have it all: a limited budget must always be prioritised. But it is here that cost-effectiveness comes into play, and given the long lead times and service lives of modern defence hardware, it would be wise to procure inherently flexible assets. The propensity of some defence commentators to advance a few narrowly focused capabilities at the total expense of others carries the risk of strategic irrelevance, as the security climate inevitably changes. Such proposals would also upset the ADF’s ability to apply credible power across a range of contingencies. Any increase to the size of a modern Army, for example, brings with it the need to add joint force enabling capabilities in order to provide support and protection when deployed. Operation ASTUTE offers a salutary lesson in this context because, despite the ongoing media commentary, it began and continued as a joint operation and while publicised as a “troop deployment”, was in fact a text book example of littoral maritime power projection.<sup>[4]</sup>

It is food for thought that the land forces were not simply assisted by naval elements during ASTUTE, but at a fundamental level relied upon the many and varied capabilities brought by one of the largest RAN task groups operationally deployed since World War II. Involving five major and three minor fleet units, ASTUTE's initial force allocation was only slightly less than the number of warships assigned to the 1999 INTERFET (International Force East Timor) deployment, Operation STABILISE. In view of the planned acquisition of two large amphibious ships of the Canberra Class from 2012, it is especially noteworthy that ASTUTE witnessed the first operational deployment of the ADF's Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), comprising the amphibious transports HMA Ships *Kanimbla* and *Manoora*, and heavy landing ship HMAS *Tobruk*. Acting together, these units established an Army Battalion group ashore within three days. Using either of the designs currently proposed for the Canberra Class, a similar sized expedition could be transported in a single lift and landed in a matter of hours.

The call for help from the government of Timor-Leste came on 24 May and crucial to Australia's rapid reaction was the readiness of the ADF's maritime assets and the effectiveness of individual and collective training regimes. Sailing from Darwin early on 25 May, *Kanimbla* was first diverted to the south coast of Timor, where she provided facilities to four Army helicopters unable to reach Dili due to poor weather. She entered Dili Harbour late on 26 May with an operational Primary Casualty Reception Facility, staff essential to initial operations, and priority military and humanitarian aid stores. Soon following *Kanimbla* into Dili were *Manoora* and *Tobruk*, which had sailed from Townsville on 24 May. Each carried several hundred troops and their equipment together with armoured personnel carriers and associated support vehicles.



RAN 817 Squadron Sea King Helicopter delivers mail to HMAS *Manoora*, 7 June 2006.

The chaotic environment ashore required the land forces to be disembarked in a high state of tactical readiness, and with Dili port facilities unsecured this relied entirely on the over-

the-beach capabilities provided by the ARG and its embarked helicopters. *Manoora*, for example, carried four Black Hawks in addition to a Sea King, and these conducted an air assault on 28 May. She also had on board a Deployable Geo-spatial Support Team which surveyed the landing sites prior to the amphibious assault conducted by hard-worked RAN heavy landing craft (HMA Ships *Balikpapan*, *Tarakan*, *Labuan* and later *Wewak*) and Army LCM8s. Some of these smaller units will likely remain until the ADF's final withdrawal for, as has been demonstrated time and again within our region's underdeveloped operational environments, scope for manoeuvre ashore can be highly constrained. The corollary is that an amphibious capability to provide inter- and intra-theatre lift is a vital enabler of land operations.

Furthermore, no military operation can be sustained without the necessary accompanying infrastructure. The Army Company group first deployed to East Timor by C-130 late on 25 May did not have the luxury of a prolonged build-up to create a base from which to operate, achieve operational mass and establish appropriate support mechanisms. The ARG not only brought these essential heavier and second level forces into theatre, but also offered an immediately functioning offshore base, thereby allowing the force ashore to maximise its effectiveness while minimising its footprint. Support roles are intrinsic to the design of amphibious ships and in addition to functioning as a large heliport, fuel dump and hospital, the ARG acted or could potentially have served as a communications centre, hotel, food service centre, port security force, and supply depot for items as diverse as toilet paper, clothing and ammunition.

However, the amphibious and logistic enabling activities of the ARG only touch on the totality of the naval role during ASTUTE's early phases. One of the critical naval tasks during Operation STABILISE in 1999 was to provide presence, and the RAN deployed several major surface combatants to ensure the area was safe during INTERFET's initial insertion. That the threat was of a different scale and nature in May 2006 did not lessen the importance of advance force operations,<sup>[5]</sup> particularly since naval units operated in a dimension that potential antagonists were unable to oppose. As the Vice Chief of the Defence Force flew into Dili airport with the first troops, the FFG HMAS *Adelaide* appeared over the horizon.<sup>[6]</sup> While tasked for border protection under Operation RELEX II, the frigate had been simultaneously poised ready to assist off East Timor, offering a range of combat, surveillance, command and control and aviation capabilities. The ADF had "to go in there with plenty of combat power", noted the Chief of the Defence Force, [and] "demonstrate that we have very good capability". *Adelaide*, he continued, was "a very handy asset to have...and of course as we all know, when a naval ship steams into port, it does have an effect that is good to creating a stable environment".<sup>[7]</sup>

Allowing sustainment of the naval presence and adding her own not inconsiderable bulk was the replenishment ship HMAS *Success*. Joining *Adelaide* on a patrol line close off

Dili Harbour at dawn on 26 May, the highly visible and professional appearance of the two warships had a significant impact on perceptions ashore. Indeed, during the critical early hours, before sufficient troops were available to deploy throughout Dili, high end maritime combat capabilities combined with the inherent mobility of warships went far towards making the Australian presence seem ubiquitous. The overt naval presence also brought a measure of reassurance to the few Australian forces then in Dili; should the situation have become untenable, then an emergency extraction would not have been possible without the presence of the maritime component.

With the ARG's arrival *Adelaide's* mission shifted to providing cover,<sup>[8]</sup> but by 28 May the security situation had clarified to the extent that it no longer warranted her presence. Testament to the ability of warships to successfully conduct wide ranging activities over vast distances with little or no notice, *Adelaide* returned to her previous RELEX tasking, while *Success* was soon in the South China Sea replenishing a US Navy task group proceeding to provide humanitarian aid to the victims of an earthquake in Java. As her Commanding Officer related, in a matter of six days *Success* "had transited from one side of Borneo to the other. In between the ship conducted 'gun boat diplomacy' off one country in support of law and order and was then able to support another nation's aid efforts to yet a third nation".<sup>[9]</sup>

Forecasting future global trends in an unpredictable world is an inherently uncertain process, but experience suggests that strategic choices should never be absolute. Recent operations in East Timor, the Solomons, Indonesia and Iraq have routinely illustrated the multifaceted tasks which navies perform in the littoral environment. In all these commitments amphibious units have played a vital part, yet only 16 years ago official policy dismissed these assets as "inappropriate for Australia's force structure".<sup>[10]</sup>

As Professor Andrew Lambert argued at a recent SPC-A conference, our greatest danger is to allow the impulses of today to become an excuse not to think: "Narrow prescriptions approaches to national strategy do not work. Wise nations know their interests, and are prepared to defend them".<sup>[11]</sup> Australia is a maritime nation, and as "the littoral accommodates over three quarters of the world's population, hosts over 80% of the world's capital cities and nearly all of the marketplaces for international trade",<sup>[12]</sup> only rarely will securing our national interests not involve a maritime dimension. Operating in an increasingly complex and at times more dangerous environment, the ADF must maintain its ability to credibly function and flexibly use its equipment at short notice. To argue that anyone or other ADF capability "is the single most important" or more "central" than others, is to misunderstand the interdependency of joint operations, and to put the effectiveness of those operations at risk.

References

1. Department of Defence, Operation ASTUTE web page, Internet <[defence.gov.au/opastute/](http://defence.gov.au/opastute/)> (viewed 31 May 2006, *link no longer active*).
2. G Sheridan, 'We need soldiers and more firepower', *The Australian*, 25 May 2006.
3. N Stuart, 'Stretching our forces too tightly is not the way to win the peace', *The Canberra Times*, 6 June 2006.
4. Royal Australian Navy, *Australian Maritime Doctrine (AMD)*, DPS, Canberra, 2000, p. 156. Maritime power projection is defined as "The ability to project, sustain and apply effective military force from the sea in order to influence events on land".
5. AMD, p. 60: "Advance force operations are conducted in advance of a main force, notably an amphibious force, in order to make acceptably safe the area in which the latter will operate".
6. VCDF Doorstop Interview, 27 May 2006, Internet <[defence.gov.au/opastute/](http://defence.gov.au/opastute/)> (viewed 31 May 2006, *link no longer active*).
7. CDF Media Briefing: 'Update on Op ASTUTE', 26 May 2006, Internet <[defence.gov.au/opastute/](http://defence.gov.au/opastute/)> (viewed 31 May 2006, *link no longer active*).
8. AMD, p. 56. Cover is "the provision of support for less capable forces to ensure their protection and the completion of their tasking without interference from an adversary."
9. HMAS *Success*, Report of Proceedings, May 2006.
10. D Stevens (ed), *The Royal Australian Navy*, OUP, Melbourne, 2001, p. 261.
11. Professor A Lambert, 'Sea power ashore and in the air', presentation to the King-Hall Naval History Conference, Canberra, 21 July 2005.
12. A Tewes, et al, 'A Foundation Paper on Australia's Maritime Strategy', Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2002, p. 16.



## Military Spectacular March Update

If you have not already done so please register your interest at [www.militaryspectacular.events](http://www.militaryspectacular.events)

Our list of speakers is almost full with outstanding people who have served, and some who continue to serve, our great nation. On the website [www.militaryspectacular.events](http://www.militaryspectacular.events) are their names and background via their Bios, once all are uploaded.

You will also see on the website the revised Program, commencing on the Friday night with the band of 1st Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery and the band of Maleny State High School. An official opening and a casual sit-down dinner. Two fabulous keynote speakers are Dr Alexandra Douglas MG (Medal of Gallantry) who served in Rwanda with UN peacekeeping force as head of the medical team, and again in Iraq and Afghanistan. We are waiting for confirmation of the second keynote so we can tell you about that. All the keynote speakers will be invited to this dinner and you will have the chance to move amongst them and meet some truly wonderful human beings and chat with them.

The military dogs of 1st Military Police Battalion will give several demonstrations of their roles in keeping our soldiers safer while dealing with an enemy. We are waiting confirmation about explosive detection dogs of 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment.

Many of the speakers have had books published that detail their service and outstanding actions by them and their colleagues and, now having read several, I'm sure you will understand that this Spectacular has to be seen and heard. Their stories are gripping with their achievements, successes, difficulties, hardships, survival, emotions, family support, teamwork and that recognition. The stories you will hear and then read are extraordinary. You will be mystified, and perhaps disappointed, that these stories have not previously been told to what should be a respectful and admiring nation and its citizens.

Two have survived horrendous injuries in helicopter crashes. Doctors and nursing officers have treated them, treated combat injuries and treated civil populations in the face of hostile locals. Leaders and those they led, have endured personal hardships, emotional turmoil and questionable circumstances yet had the strength to get the job done. All have exercised and proven the success of proper training, attitude, teamwork, stickability, resilience and national pride in Australia and the Australian Defence Force.

We have, and continue, to submit grant and funding applications. Success here means ticket prices can be kept reasonable. It won't be too long before you will have the opportunity to secure 'early bird' tickets.

As well as books, there will be merchandise of polo shirts and other desirably collectible items that you will treasure for years ahead. And a 'goody bag' gift.

Best wishes from the Convening Committee.

## From the News



Soldiers re-enact the Bombing of Darwin during an 80th anniversary commemorative ceremony in the Northern Territory.

Ceremonies were held on 19 February to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first attack on the Australian mainland.

Shortly before 10am on Thursday, 19 February 1942, the first of two surprise Japanese air raids led to the sinking of a number of ships, decimating the allied air defence capability in Darwin, killing more than 240 people, more than half of them US personnel, and wounding up to 400, about 200 seriously.

The Japanese, concerned that the allied naval and air capabilities based in Darwin could pose a serious threat to their planned invasion of Timor on 20 February, planned to neutralise this threat by launching an air attack with many similarities to the attack on Pearl Harbor only 10 weeks earlier.

The first raid began when 188 light bombers, dive bombers and fighters launched from four aircraft carriers began their attack, primarily targeting shipping and the harbour. During the raid nine USN, RAN and merchant vessels were sunk, and major damage was caused to vital port facilities. While the harbour was the focus of the 25-minute attack, the Japanese also strafed the civil and military airfields and barracks. Some damage was also caused to civilian infrastructure, including a bomb which struck the post office killing the 10 staff.

While some US P40 fighters opposed the attack, all but one was quickly shot down and many more were destroyed on the ground. As the city only had limited anti-aircraft (AA) defences, the attack was mainly unopposed.

The second raid, conducted by 54 land-based medium bombers launched from an air base on Ambon, began shortly before noon and again lasted about 25 minutes. The primary objective of this raid was the destruction of RAAF Base Darwin.

AA defence was provided by 14<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian heavy AA batteries, which were part of the small Army presence in the Northern Territory known as Darwin Fortress. The batteries were armed with 16 quick fire 3.7-inch guns and two 3-inch guns, with Lewis's machine guns providing cover against low-flying aircraft.

The bombing of Darwin has been called Australia's Pearl Harbor, because it had many similarities: the first raid was launched from the same aircraft carriers and conducted by many of the same crew; and a similar amount of ordnance was dropped with minimal opposition.

While the raid achieved its immediate tactical aim it failed strategically, as the allied presence and capability in Darwin was significantly increased as a result and it was to play a significant role in the defeat of the Japanese, even though it was bombed a further 63 times.

(Source: Contact)



Deputy Secretary Security and Estate Group Celia Perkins and Chief Joint Operations Lieutenant General Greg Bilton conduct a sod-turning ceremony to mark the start of upgrade works at HQJOC.

The first stage of work to modernise Headquarters Joint Operations Command's (HQJOC) General John Baker Complex at Bungendore has begun. Chief of Joint Operations Lieutenant General Greg Bilton and Deputy Secretary Security and Estate Group Celia Perkins recently conducted a sod-turning ceremony to mark the beginning of the work.

The first stage of the project will include the creation of additional car parks, interim security works, construction of a solar farm, and site preparation for future works.



Stage 2 works, anticipated to commence this year following government approval, will deliver an extension to the main operations building, a new multi-agency collaboration facility, on-site operational accommodation and amenities, and upgrades to mess and fitness facilities.

Lieutenant General Bilton said the project represented a significant step-change in ADF joint operations.

“The future of ADF joint operations requires a greater focus on speed, capacity, resilience and agility in order to meet the challenges of an ever-evolving operational and geo-strategic environment,” Lieutenant General Bilton said.

HQJOC was established in 2004 to plan and execute ADF operations. Construction of the Bungendore complex began in 2006 under a public-private partnership with Praeco Pty Ltd.

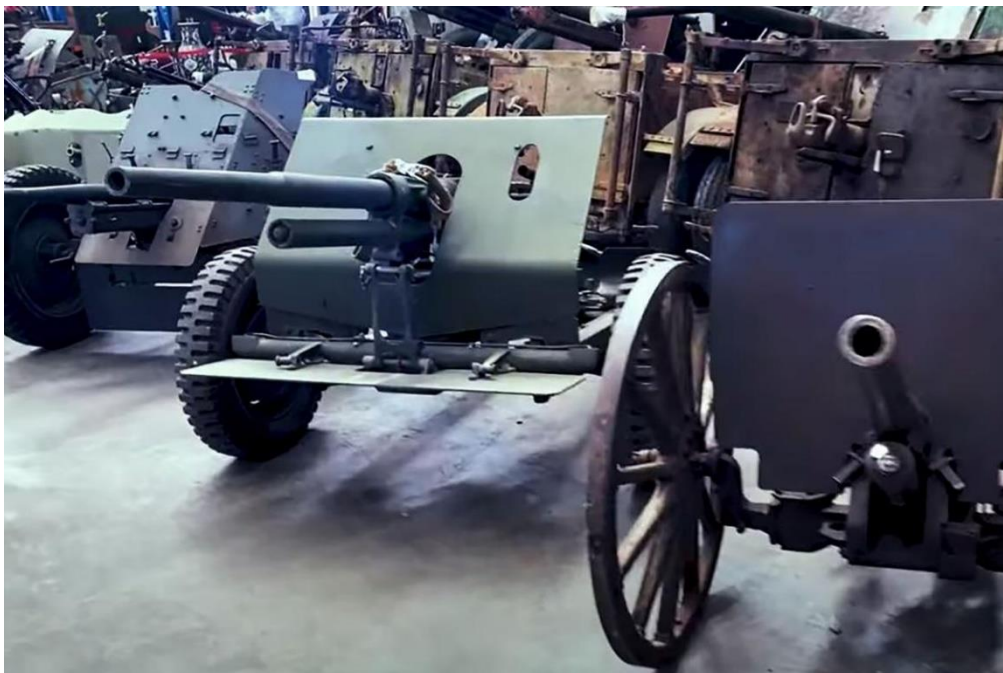
The General John Baker Complex was officially opened on 7 March 2009, with Praeco contracted to sustain the site until 2036. Praeco has since sub-contracted the ongoing operation and maintenance of the facilities to Downer Defence.

This current work is being delivered through the collaborative efforts of staff from HQJOC and Security and Estate Group using an integrated project management team model.

Ms Perkins said Security and Estate Group was pleased to be supporting the future of ADF joint operations.

“The success of the General John Baker Complex Capability Assurance Program clearly reflects the close working relationship between staff from HQJOC and Security and Estate Group, in partnership with industry,” Ms Perkins said.

(Source: Contact)



Everything from artillery to armoured vehicles and gun sighting scopes are going under the hammer this week.

They are part of a collection of more than 10,000 rare military items. The collection was the life's work of recently deceased military enthusiast Rod Bellars, from Victoria, who spent more than 60 years accumulating the items. The collection includes smaller items such as tank barrel cleaning brushes and gun sighting scopes up to anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns, along with an Australian Bren gun carrier vehicle.

The auction is being run by Lloyds Australia whose Chief Operations Officer Lee Hames met Mr Bellars before his death last year. "We were actually in complete disbelief when we first arrived to inspect the collection as it featured some of the rarest militaria collectables from WWI and WWII that we have ever seen. There is everything from military tanks to firearms, swords, military uniforms, helmets, boots and heavy artillery," Mr Hames said.

Lloyds Australia was unsure how to price the items because of their rarity, and bidding battles were expected. "We came across some very rare pieces, many of which are one-off and may be worth significant amounts of money," Mr Hames said.

"We have had enquires from all over Europe and Asia on these items, all from passionate collectors and militaria enthusiasts just like Rod was so we are sure that there will be many custodians that will treasure his collectables just as he did throughout his lifetime.

"We really hope that museums and libraries and passionate collectors from across the world are successful in securing some of these important pieces of history so they can be preserved and displayed and educate people for many years into the future."

Items will be sold through 14 separate online auctions.

The auctions closed on 19 February.

(Source: Contact)

(Ed; Rod Bellars starting collecting in 1964. He passed away 15 July 2021 at age 60 years old)

## **Navy**



Lieutenant Rick Withers



Losing everything in the Black Summer bushfires inspired sailor-turned-maritime trade officer Lieutenant Rick Withers to return to Navy after an eight-year break.

“I thought about the Navy every day after I left. It shaped who I am,” Lieutenant Withers said. “At a time when I had limited guidance, the Navy helped me become who I wanted to be. “Serving let me see I can achieve anything with hard work and discipline. “It gave me an edge only learned through confronting operations.”

In his first stint in Navy, he deployed on Operation Resolute as an electronic technician on HMA Ships *Armidale* and *Bathurst*. Following a posting to HMAS *Darwin* and a secondment with the Army Marine Unit, he posted out when his wife fell pregnant. On leaving the Navy, Lieutenant Withers received a scholarship to study marine electrical engineering.

He then worked in Commonwealth maritime security, and was part of the team that stood up the Cape-class patrol boat fleet for Australian Border Force. Then, in the summer of 2019-20, Lieutenant Withers found his resilience tested. He was on duty at the Australian Maritime Safety Authority’s Joint Rescue Coordination Centre when fire approached his south coast home.

As his wife and children evacuated to safety, he watched via satellite as their property was destroyed. Incredibly, the Withers’ chose to accept their circumstances as an opportunity for personal growth. “I always felt I had unfinished business with the Navy. Starting again, we began talking about the possibility of me re-joining, this time on our terms,” Lieutenant Withers said.

“Once my wife realised, I could serve without regular months-long deployments, she was on board. “As a specialist reservist, I’ve returned with a much broader professional skill set and academic experience. “I can bring my diverse maritime experience to the RAN and still be there for my family.”

Lieutenant Withers’ extraordinary grit led him to be the first Reserve Entry Officer trainee to break HMAS *Creswell*’s fitness records for push-ups and the beep test.

He says he’ll break more records, given the opportunity. “Those records were important to me,” he said. “If you’re in the Navy, then you’re striving to be the best sailor or officer you can be,” he said.

“Whether you’re full-time or part-time, the requirements are the same. “If reserve-entry officers aren’t breaking records, they don’t want it bad enough.” Repeating an initial training period helped Lieutenant Withers see how far he and the Navy had come since he left.

“The Navy’s matured in its approach to training, especially people of diverse ages and backgrounds,” he said. “Reservists have so much life, industry and academic experience to share. “It’s great to see the college recognise that and work hard to create a more refined and efficient training program.”

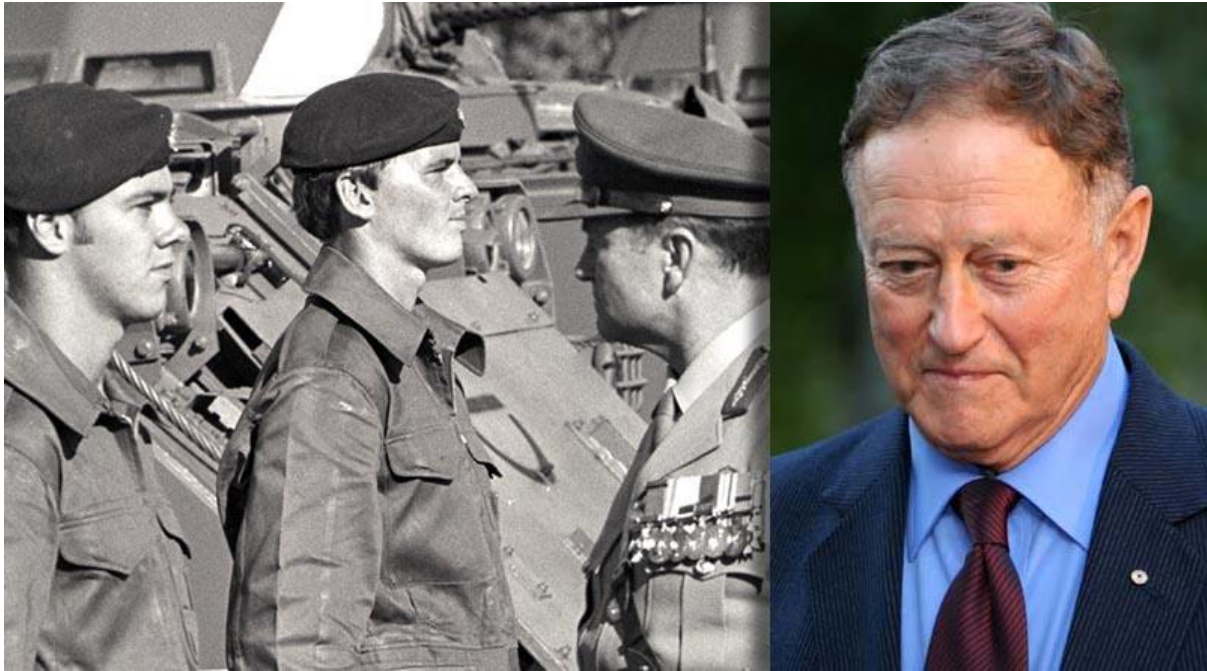
In between his reserve service and work in maritime search and rescue, Lieutenant Withers is re-building the dream home he designed for his family.

The Reserve Entry Officer Course is a conducted in four phases at the Royal Australian Naval College, HMAS *Creswell*, over 12 months and is designed to instruct officers in the

basic skills and values of service life before being employed as specialists in a SERCAT 3 or 5 role.

Source: Contact)

## Army



Major General Ron Grey AO, DSO inspects members of the 5<sup>th</sup> /7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment on parade at Holsworthy in 1981 and at a social function in 2012.

### **Vale – Major General Ronald Alwyn Grey AO, DSO (2 July 1930 – 20 January 2022)**

Caesar was our God, and his bible was to be read and obeyed. It included commandments on many essentials so critical in war. He was tough and demanding. Failure was not included in his dictionary. He was never forgiving in regards incidents of poor leadership, and always was his interest in the welfare of his soldiers, as well as an ability to recognise individual weaknesses to be rectified and strengths to be exploited. Caesar never asked a soldier to do what he as a leader had not already done, and quite often led the way with soldiers who were yet to meet their first challenge.

He administered military justice with the wisdom and force of Solomon and more often than not it was severe. Always was his objective to achieve a very high standards of battle discipline, be it peace or war, and he did. He was very much admired by his troops; however, as is the way when enduring physical and mental challenges in a harsh and unforgiving environment, there were a few who had different views. Their service was brief.

From a young lieutenant in Korea commanding an infantry platoon, then later as Chief Instructor of the Battle Wing at Canungra preparing troops for operations in Vietnam, followed by commanding an infantry battalion in Vietnam and ultimately as a General in charge of Australia's Field Force. In all commands, he left huge footprints for all who would

follow. A further challenge confronted him when the government of the day selected him to command Australia's Federal Police where yet again, he was held in high regard.

So many soldiers who served under him, no matter when or where, still remember him with much admiration and respect. Perhaps such reflection from far distant years is the most powerful accolade that any group of veterans could bestow.

(Source: Contact)



Bombardier Mitchell Yates

When he was looking for something different to his bar job, Blacktown's Bombardier Mitchell Yates had no idea he'd end up piloting some of the Australian Army's latest unmanned aircraft systems (UAS).

Bombardier Yates joined the Army Reserve in 2016 and is now a member of the Royal Australian Artillery. "The experience has been excellent," Bombardier Yates said. "Pretty much everything that I was told at Defence Force Recruiting I'd be doing I've done. It's been great.

"Getting out and doing what I've been trained to do is fantastic and the best part is live-firing." His main military role is that of a forward observer's assistant, aiding the artillery command post to bring fire onto a target. His secondary role is that of a UAS pilot, where he carries out surveillance and intelligence tasks.

Flying a Wasp AE small UAS, a winged drone that looks like an oversized, hand-launched glider, has become a passion for Bombardier Yates. "It's very easy gear to train on and easy for our new gunners to become very proficient quickly," he said. "It gives us a huge surveillance capability, whether we're deployed on exercises or helping out domestically with things like bushfires or floods."

On recent exercises with the Air Force, Bombardier Yates was part of an observer team calling in close air support from F/A-18 Hornets and guiding them to each target. “I enjoy the mental, physical and technical challenge and I enjoy being able to do something that I’d never get to do in my civilian life,” he said.

Bombardier Yates is looking forward to the rapid development and growing use of unmanned flying UAS by Artillery. “We’re going to see a lot more UAS platforms with a lot more capability and I’m thrilled to be part of that space,” he said.

The Royal Australian Artillery (RAA) is now celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Australian Artillery with a number of events. “It makes me very proud to be a member of the RAA at this special time,” Bombardier Yates said. “There’s a lot of history to the regiment. My unit, 23<sup>rd</sup> Battery, draws its heritage from the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Anti-Tank Regiment that fought at Tobruk in World War II, so it’s a privilege to be carrying on that tradition.”

Bombardier Yates’ Army Reserve service has also helped him in his regular civilian employment, where he’s risen to a new job as an operations manager in the hospitality industry. “The junior leader’s course completed with Army and my experience at work have benefitted each other,” he said.

Bombardier Yates plans to continue with his Army Reserve career and to keep taking advantage of the opportunities available to him. “I can’t go and fly drones anywhere in my regular job and I’m often briefing a senior field officer on joint fires and effects,” he said.

“I find those challenges really rewarding.”

(Source: Contact)



A US Army 1st Cavalry Division Abrams M1A2 SEPv3 sends its first round down range at Fort Hood, Texas.

Minister for Defence Peter Dutton has announced a \$3.5 billion investment in the Main Battle Tank Upgrade (LAND 907 Phase 2) and Combat Engineering Vehicle (LAND 8160 Phase 1) projects.

Army will receive up to 75 M1A2 SEPv3 Abrams tanks, 29 M1150 assault breacher vehicles, 17 M1074 joint assault bridge vehicles and an additional six M88A2 armoured recovery vehicles.

Minister Dutton said the M1A2 SEPv3 Abrams would provide critical protection and firepower for the ADF in land operations.

“Teamed with the infantry fighting vehicles, combat engineering vehicles and self-propelled howitzers, the new Abrams will give our soldiers the best possibility of success and protection from harm,” Minister Dutton said.

“The M1A2 Abrams will incorporate the latest developments in Australian sovereign defence capabilities, including command, control, communications, computers and intelligence systems, and benefit from the intended manufacture of tank ammunition in Australia.

“Introduction of the new M1A2 vehicles will take advantage of the existing support infrastructure, with significant investment in Australian industry continuing in the areas of sustainment, simulation and training.”

Chief of Army Lieutenant General Rick Burr said that tanks and combat engineering vehicles were essential to Australia’s ability to contribute to a credible land-combat capability integrated with joint and coalition forces. “The main battle tank is at the core of the ADF’s combined-arms fighting system, which includes infantry, artillery, communications, engineers, attack helicopters and logistics,” Lieutenant General Burr said. “Because of their versatility, tanks can be used in a wide range of scenarios, environments and levels of conflict in the region. “This system is the only part of the ADF that can successfully operate in medium to high-threat land environments. “The M1A2 SEPv3 Abrams protection, accurate and lethal fire, mobility and situational awareness cannot be delivered by any other platform. “There are no other current or emerging technologies – or combination of technologies – that can yet deliver the capability currently provided by a main battle tank.”

The first vehicles will be delivered to Australia in 2024, with the projects expected to achieve Initial Operating Capability in 2025.

(Source: Contact)





Hanwha K9 Thunder – to be called Huntsman in Australia.

The government announced a \$1 billion defence contract for new self-propelled Howitzers for the Australian Army with Hanwha Defence Australia.

The contract signing was witnessed by Prime Minister Scott Morrison and President Moon Jae-in of the Republic of Korea on 13 December 2021. Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the contract would procure self-propelled Howitzers and armoured ammunition resupply vehicles, under Project LAND 8116 Phase 1. “Our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with the Republic of Korea is underpinned by our joint commitment to defence and security cooperation,” Prime Minister Morrison said.

“The contract with Hanwha demonstrates the value of industrial collaboration in supporting our countries in addressing mutual security challenges. “We are partnering with Hanwha to create an Armoured Vehicle Centre of Excellence in the Geelong region, which will establish a further strategic defence industry hub and future export opportunities for Australian businesses.

“This contract will create a minimum of 300 jobs spread across facility construction, acquisition and maintenance, as well as generating ongoing support opportunities for Australian industry until the late 2040s.

“My government is securing Geelong’s place as front and centre of Australia’s defence industry.”

Minister for Defence Peter Dutton said initial contract covered 30 self-propelled Howitzers, 15 armoured ammunition resupply vehicles, and weapon-locating radars that would help find enemy artillery – collectively referred to as the Huntsman family of vehicles.

(Source: Contact)

## Air Force



An Air Force C-130J Hercules aircraft, loaded with humanitarian assistance and supplies departs RAAF Base Amberley, Queensland, bound for Tonga for Operation Tonga Assist 2022.

The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) has surpassed 850,000 flying hours with the C-130 Hercules transport aircraft. The milestone was achieved on 21 January 2022 by a No 37 Squadron crew flying a C-130J Hercules from RAAF Base Richmond to Amberley.

Since 1958, generations of RAAF aviators flying four different variants of the Hercules have provided airlift support to Defence. Commanding Officer No 37 Squadron Wing Commander Anthony Kay said the 850,000-hour milestone was passed during a mission for Operation Tonga Assist 22.

“It comes as no surprise that this milestone should occur during a mission to provide important assistance to our Pacific family,” Wing Commander Kay said. “Generations of our Hercules workforce have carried urgent relief supplies over long distances to remote airfields, often at short-notice, and for long periods away from their family.

“The impressive scope of what we’ve achieved within those 850,000 hours is a testament to the service of thousands of people who have crewed RAAF Hercules, and kept them flying.”

The aircraft that flew the 850,000<sup>th</sup> hour, serial A97-467, is one of 12 C-130J Hercules operated from RAAF Base Richmond since 1999. The current fleet was preceded by 12 C-130As from 1958 to 1978; 12 C-130Es from 1966 to 2000; and 12 C-130Hs from 1978 to 2012. Throughout those 850,000 hours, the equivalent of more than 97 years airborne RAAF aviators have flown Hercules missions to every continent, including Antarctica.

“It’s probably not really possible to properly determine the distance our crews have travelled since 1958, or the amount of cargo they have carried in that time,” Wing Commander Kay said.

“The number of passengers carried runs into the millions, and includes Defence personnel on operations, civilian communities, heads of government, celebrities, and even animals requiring urgent air transport. “A considerable number of Australians, whether they are Defence or civilian, have either flown on a RAAF Hercules, or been the recipient of aid delivered by one of our aircraft.”

The passenger experience of flying inside a Hercules has remained largely consistent since 1958, but in recent years the fleet has been upgraded to deliver greater connectivity. This improves the airlift support available to Defence, and has modernised opportunities for those on board.

“Crew and passengers flying on future Hercules missions can conduct mission planning and remain globally connected throughout their flight, wherever they may be deployed,” Wing Commander Kay said. “These upgrades will inform not only how we operate the Hercules, but how we may also upgrade and develop other air mobility platforms into the future.”

### **Flying hours**

- C-130A (1958 to 1978) – 148,063.6 hours
- C-130E (1966 to 2000) – 307,007.9 hours
- C-130H (1978 to 2012) – 244,618.4 hours
- C-130J (1999 to Present) – 150,310.1 hours\*

\*As of 21 January 2022

## **Quiz**

### **Quiz Questions**

1. When was the L1A1 SLR introduced as the standard rifle?
2. Which is the Army’s most recent corps?
3. What is the name of the AAAvn song?
4. Which company makes the Karl Guastav 84mm recoilless rifle?
5. What is the Army Signal Corps Motto?
6. How many times has the Australian Government conscripted Australian into the Army?
7. How many crew an M1 Abrams tank?
8. What year was ANZUS signed?
9. What is the name of the medal colloquially called the ‘Victoria Cross for Animals’?
10. What is the muzzle velocity of the EF88?

**Answer to Tribute No 8 Question.**



Who was sacked on 28 September 1942 by General Sir Thomas Blamey from Command of the New Guinea Force? Lieutenant General Sir Sydney Rowell, KBE, CB.

## **Humour and Poetry**

"Lt. Colonel Robert Maclaren retired from the British Army in 2001 after a long fulfilling career.

On the day that he retired he received a letter from the Personnel Department of the Ministry of Defence setting out details of his pension and, in particular, the tax-free 'lump sum' award, (based upon completed years of service), that he would receive in addition to his monthly pension.

The letter read:

"Dear Lt. Colonel Maclaren,

We write to confirm that you retired from the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards on 1st March 2001 at the rank of Lt Colonel, having been commissioned into the British Army at Edinburgh Castle as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant on 1st February 1366.

Accordingly your lump sum payment, based on years served, has been calculated as £68,500. You will receive a cheque for this amount in due course.

Yours sincerely

Army Paymaster”

Lt Col Maclaren replied:

Dear Paymaster,

Thank you for your recent letter confirming that I served as an officer in the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards between 1st February 1366 and 1st March 2001, a total period of 635 years and 1 month. . I note however that you have calculated my lump sum to be £68, 500, which seems to be considerably less than it should be bearing in mind

my length of service since I received my commission from King Edward III

By my calculation, allowing for interest payments and currency fluctuations, my lump sum should actually be £6, 427, 586, 619.47p.

I look forward to receiving a cheque for this amount in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Maclaren (Lt Col Retd)

A month passed by and then in early April, a stout manilla envelope from the Ministry of Defence in Edinburgh dropped through Col Maclaren’s letter box, it read:

Dear Lt Colonel Maclaren,

We have reviewed the circumstances of your case as outlined in your recent letter to us dated 8th March inst. We do indeed confirm that you were commissioned into the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards by King Edward III at Edinburgh Castle on 1st February 1366, and that you served continuously for the following 635 years and 1 month We have re-calculated your pension and have pleasure in confirming that the lump sum payment due to you is indeed £6, 427, 586, 619.47p.

However

We also note that according to our records you are the only surviving officer who had command responsibility during the following campaigns and battles; The Wars of the Roses 1455 -1485 (Including the battles of Bosworth Field, Barnet and Towton) The Civil War 1642 -1651 (Including the battles Edge Hill, Naseby and the conquest of Ireland) The Napoleonic War 1803 – 1815 (including the battle of Waterloo and the Peninsular War) The Crimean War (1853 – 1856) (including the battle of Sevastopol and the Charge of the Light Brigade) The Boer War (1899 -1902).

We would therefore wish to know what happened to the following, which do not appear to have been returned to Stores by you on completion of operations:

9765 Cannon’s

26,785 Swords

2,889 Pikes

127,345 Rifles (with bayonets)

28,987 horses (fully kitted)

Plus three complete marching bands with instruments and banners.

We have calculated the total cost of these items and they amount to £6,427,518.119.47p.



We have therefore subtracted this sum from your lump sum, leaving a residual amount of £68,500, for which you will receive a cheque in due course

Yours sincerely

---

**YES! I AM A VETERAN**

It' early morning once again, as I now stand  
I find myself sitting writing with this pencil in hand  
Unable to sleep due to the pain in my knee  
And my shoulder; back; and also neck to a degree  
Not that it's only them stopping me from that elusive much needed sleep  
The "Cicadas" going crazy in my head, not allowing for so much as a peep!  
So pains, clenching teeth and noises that creep  
Just some of the things that keep me from counting sheep  
No "Meds" to assist me tonight you see  
"A rest from them every now and then" a statement which I do agree  
Still here I am at 3:14 am in the morning  
Listening to "Breakfast at Sweethearts" as Jimmy Barnes does he sing (or is it scream!  
That'll do Jimmy, that'll do! On yah mate!)  
My day has started early once more as it has for yet another week!  
My sleep hygiene is better but still it needs a good tweak  
What can one person do or try yet again  
With so much going on, how can one shun that which offends  
Thoughts from years gone by, unable to forget  
Some you chuckle about; others you look on with regret  
Those times have moved on by  
Live life, now that's what I must try  
Instead of living in the past  
Oh! But we did have such a Blast!

Did things that people couldn't conceive  
The memories and all the injuries that we did receive  
Now come into play  
It's like this every, Goddamn bloody day!  
"No Rest for the wicked" for people like me so they tell  
I guess for us, well, we'll all be off to Hell!  
But that's okay with me you see  
And also, with the powers that be  
As it's a nice wide road going south from Taree  
And a narrow stairway going north to the sky, Look see  
With a Jack's and Cola in my hand once again (it's been a while! "meds")  
Yeah, I like that a lot, that plan, off to see the Big man!  
Driving there in style in my great Holden VF Ute  
Be buggered if I'd walk there, do I look like a silly old coot!  
But that's just a dream of mine, you now see  
Better to stay here with all of these pains that well, trouble me  
Advance forward with my wife, get out and enjoy life once again  
Come on! You remember? Just like it was when you were ten!  
In times that were much simpler way back then long ago  
So, get up! Take a breath and throw those dice once again! and don't go  
Still listening to music from off of my phone  
Trying to stay in this good place, you know this zone  
Now plays our anthem from "Redgum" (I was only 19 (A walk in the Light Green))  
It captures the sentiment, not that I have to beat that drum  
The Sun is just up now the rays they shine through  
"Live, Laugh, Love" it is what you must do  
Look at the smaller things in life  
To help cope and overcome all your strife  
Like the things you fob off and don't really see

Just sit and engage, don't yell, instead stare at that tree  
Look at the little black native bee, doing its work every day  
They've got it sorted working together and finding their way  
So, I will leave you just here; as, I'm off to the gym! It's still in my morning routine  
It all helps to keep me lean and healthy in mind and improves me, this I have seen  
**So don't YOU give up Hope, as YOU Will find your own way back**  
Just remember one important thing. **Stay on the Track! (Navy – Stay on that Tack!)**

**By Spent Cartridge**  
Proud Australian Army Veteran  
26 November 2021

## Show and Tell

### Pattern 1956 Individual Load Carrying Equipment



The Pattern 1956 Individual Load Carrying Equipment (ILCE) was issued to replace the Pattern 1937 load carrying equipment during the early 1960's. At the same time as the new family of small arms (7.62mm L1A1 SLR and 7.62mm GPMG M60) was entering service with the Army. The replacement process was gradual and priority went to the Regular Army

and for issue to soldiers going to Vietnam. However, the replacement process for the rest of the Army continued well into the 1960's.

The Pattern 1956 ILCE was drab green colour had a harness, belt, two ammunition pouches at least one water bottle with metal cup fitted around it and a small haversack. (Known by Australian Soldiers as a bum pack) worn on the back of the belt and supported by harness straps. Bedding, shelter and any spare clothing was carried in a bed roll that was secured by straps to the shoulder area of the harness. The original metal water bottles were replaced by plastic water bottles.

Infantrymen serving in Vietnam and preparing for service there found that the original American ammunition pouches were too small and continued to use the larger Pattern 1937 ammunition pouches. A slightly larger version of the bum pack and larger ammunition pouches produced in Australia were used during the late 1960's.

The Pattern 1956 ICLE was developed by the Americans for use by Infantrymen deployed from helicopters or vehicles to conduct short duration field operations normally less than 24 hours. For operations that extended beyond a day then the soldiers large field packs with additional rations, water and stores would be transported to them by helicopter or vehicle.

The Australian concept for infantry operations was not based on one day operations and it soon became apparent on exercises in Australia and during combat operations in Vietnam that the bum pack and bed roll were not sufficient for the carrying of 3 – 5 days' rations plus bedding, shelter and additional ammunition and combat items. The Pattern 1908/1937 large pack was soon reinstated to service and replaced the bed roll. However, on operations in Vietnam the load carrying and durability of the old Pattern 1908/1937 big pack was suspect especially when the pack was overloaded. Some soldiers attempted to solve the load carrying problem by modifying their Pattern 1908/1937 large packs with the addition of extra pouches; or by obtaining large US Army or Vietnamese back packs or British Bergen. A new Australian design big pack was issued in 1969 and it continued to be used well into the 1980's.

It was made of canvas, drab green and had two main compartments (top and bottom) with two external pockets and feature padding in the shoulder straps and across the back. It was suitable for service in the tropical environment.

Australian infantrymen on operations in Vietnam usually carried at least five days rations and water (3-6 water bottles) with ammunition and normal requirements for an infantryman on operations, plus perhaps a radio, or a grenade launcher or claymore mine; this meant that each soldier was carrying around 30 to 45 kilograms on his body plus carrying a rifle or machine gun.

Australian soldiers in Vietnam rarely wore body armour, however it was available for issue to meet occasions when there was likelihood of soldiers being exposed to projectiles, explosive booby traps or land mines.

To be continued.

## Commemorating the 'First Ashore'

By Peter Burgess

9th Battalion Lieutenant Duncan Chapman, A Company, and members of his No. 3 Platoon, plus half a dozen scouts, led by scout officer Lieutenant Frank Haymen,<sup>1</sup> hold a proud and unique place in the Gallipoli story. Admittedly, they were no more courageous than the 16,000 other Anzacs who followed them ashore that day but these ordinary Queensland soldiers, the first to land at Gallipoli, are notable, and worthy of our recognition for many reasons.

Importance was first bestowed on them by World War 1 veterans. In the decades following the war, it is said whenever a group of Anzac veterans gathered, the identity of the first ashore soldiers was certain to rouse argument, anecdote, claim and counter-claim. For them, their recognition was a serious and passionate matter of battalion and unit pride. In the 1930s, debate about who was first ashore raged and culminated in a series of robust articles and letters that appeared in newspapers throughout Australia. At the same time considerable pressure was placed on Australia's official war historian, Dr Charles Bean to resolve the argument and, in 1941, after extensive investigation, he concluded there was 'ample evidence' to name Lieutenant Duncan Chapman and his boat as the first ashore. This conclusion, published in 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of his Official History,<sup>2</sup> plus the diggers' consistent and fervent enthusiasm, has assured the men of the first boat a proud place in the Anzac Legend.

Throughout history, there has also been a universal custom to bestow some level of fame and esteem on the first achiever. In almost every aspect of human endeavour this is the case, whether it be the first person to reach a peak, swim an ocean, break a world record or to be the first there. Equal or greater achievements usually always follow but we persist in honouring the 'first'. Given the significance of the Gallipoli landing to Australia's nationhood and sense of identity, continued public recognition and veneration of the first ashore is, therefore, justifiable and undeniable.

The status that Chapman's group of ordinary soldiers gained as the first ashore makes them a notable sample of all Anzacs. By acknowledging these men, proud connections with many Queensland communities, institutions and families are strengthened and extended. Their war experience also personalizes Anzac history. Through their lives, an intimate insight is gained into the individuals who, at Gallipoli, forged a new Australian identity and created the Anzac traditions of mateship and self-sacrifice.

Yet while being representative of all Anzacs, many of the first ashore were also extremely noteworthy. For instance, from the 26 identified members of the first boat, a disproportionate number displayed exceptional military service. It was as if their proud identity as First Ashore 'original Anzacs' instilled a heightened dedication to service and duty.

Incidents of heroic actions were numerous and often untold. Six of the first ashore Anzacs sacrificed their lives on the battlefield. Three were killed and nine wounded on the first day. One of those who died was Scout Commander Lieutenant Haymen. At sunset, although isolated, without support in the area of Lone Pine, he refused to retreat.<sup>3</sup> His selfless actions and fearless leadership helped stem the enemy's advance and allowed valuable time for the rest of the Battalion to dig in. Also, on the first day, Scout Sergeant Fred Coe, against overwhelming numbers, heroically held his ground. His group of 33 soldiers suffered greatly



with only three surviving. Their actions helped save the left flank.<sup>4</sup> On the Western Front, Sergeant Fred Thomas also gained acclaim for his calm leadership during the successful battle to take Lagincourt.<sup>5</sup>

Commendations for gallantry and heroism were officially given also to three other members of the first boat. Sergeant Robert McKenzie refused to leave the trenches at Gallipoli until two bullet wounds and a nervous breakdown forced his evacuation. For his gallant and selfless dedication to duty, his name was submitted for the Honours List.<sup>6</sup> On the Western Front, at Rouge-de-Bout, while under heavy shell-fire, his brother, Sergeant Sam McKenzie repeatedly risked his life to save the wounded and, for these gallant actions, he was Mentioned in Despatches.<sup>7</sup> Also in 1916, as the Australians were forced to retreat during battle for Mouquet Farm, Lieutenant Fred Fox tenaciously held on and managed to retain important trenches. For this, he received personal congratulations from the commander of the 4th Australian Division and also a recommendation for honours.<sup>8</sup>

As the war progressed, more than half of the surviving members of the first boat received significant promotions. Lieutenant Chapman became a Major shortly after the landing, and five others later attained the rank of Lieutenant. Six were also promoted to Sergeant. The career of Private Fred Fox was particularly outstanding. He rose meteorically through the ranks to become Captain on the Western Front, in charge of a company of 200 men, at the young age of 23.<sup>9</sup>

When the war ended, like all returned soldiers, the First Ashore veterans faced enormous challenges. However, while dealing with the problems associated with their physical and mental injuries, some sustenance and strength was gained from their proud identity as First Ashore Anzacs. For many, this inspired them to a selfless dedication to duty and service. Leadership roles were taken in the community and significant contributions were made, especially in veteran affairs.

After being repatriated, wounded, from Gallipoli, Lance Corporal Claude Henderson (later Lieutenant) devoted the next six years of his life to helping returned soldiers and the dependents of deceased soldiers. With incredible energy, he took leadership roles in almost every wartime project and organization that existed in Queensland. As well, as becoming State Secretary and Superintendent of Queensland's War Council,<sup>10</sup> in early 1916, he helped establish the Queensland Returned Soldiers Association and became its Honorary Secretary.<sup>11</sup> Claude was also one of the founders of the RSSILA, the forerunner of today's RSL. His work for digger welfare, especially in the area of employment, became renowned. His greatest achievement, among many, was the effective implementation and administration of Queensland's first system of soldier repatriation. Upon the Federal government taking control of repatriation, Claude was placed in charge of Queensland's Repatriation Board.<sup>12</sup>

Private 'Andy' Fisher also returned from war with a proud determination to make a difference. Like Claude, he was one of the founders of the Queensland Returned Soldiers Association and the RSSILA. In 1917, he was elected to the powerful position of State Secretary of Queensland RSSILA which he held for five years.<sup>13</sup> In this role, Andy became a vocal and radical advocate for soldier welfare and the war effort. He was a prominent leader in Brisbane's 1919 Red Flag Riots<sup>14</sup> and also played a notable, albeit secretive, role in the birth of the Commonwealth Police Force and its operation in Queensland.<sup>15</sup>

Private Jim Bostock (later Captain) dedicated much of his post-war life to improving the welfare of ex-servicemen and to ensuring the Anzac Legend was not forgotten. He worked passionately on numerous veteran welfare projects, served as an early member of Brisbane's Anzac Day Commemoration Committee<sup>16</sup> and campaigned strongly for the preservation and extension of the city's Anzac Square.<sup>17</sup> His proudest achievement, as secretary for the organizing committee, responsible for fundraising, was the establishment of 'Kingshome', Brisbane's first residential home for unemployable and burnt-out diggers.<sup>18</sup>

First Ashore Anzac, Private Fred Uden was a prominent office-bearer at various RSSILA branches throughout northern N.S.W. At Ballina, while serving as a member of the RSL's Executive Committee, he was also a Board member of the Ballina Hospital taking the important role of Treasurer.<sup>19</sup> In Lawrence, he was also elected Secretary of the Red Cross branch where, in 1942, he received much acclaim for organizing an extremely successful fundraising event.<sup>20</sup>

Although Private Ben Kendrick's (later Sergeant) post-war life was marred by depression and ill-health, he also worked tirelessly within the Brisbane community to promote and preserve the Anzac Spirit. He was elected President of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Reunion Association in 1926 and again in 1927.<sup>21</sup> Ben also served as the event organizer for the Omrah Association, an organization founded in 1930 to preserve the comradeship of the men who sailed on the first troopship.<sup>22</sup>

Like Ben, Private Cecil Holdway (later Sergeant) was also an active member of the Omrah Association and the Gallipoli Legion of Anzacs. In the post-war years, he contributed much time and effort to the RSSAILA project to establish a Memorial Hall at Bardon. Leadership roles were also taken within the Tramways Union and, for almost a decade, Cecil served as the Union's Vice-President.<sup>23</sup>

Among the other members of the first boat ashore, more achievements can be recounted. The many examples of leadership, service and sense of duty performed by this small group of soldiers are outstanding. These men are as a notable sample of Queensland's Anzacs, connecting us with Gallipoli and inspiring a deep appreciation of the sacrifices of all Anzacs. Their lives are, undoubtedly, worthy of our recognition.

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<sup>1</sup> Burgess, P. *The First Ashore. The Stories of our First Anzacs*, Publicises, 2021, p.iv

<sup>2</sup> Bean, C.E.W., *The Official History of Australia in the War 1914-18*, Vol 1, Angus & Robertson, 1941, p.xi

<sup>3</sup> Harvey, Norman, *From Anzac to the Hindenberg Line*, Naval & Military Press, 1941, p51

<sup>4</sup> *Brisbane Courier*, 18 Aug 1915, p.7

<sup>5</sup> Keating, M.T., 'Unofficial History, Lagincourt, 17th April 1917' *Journal of the Fighting Ninth*, 16, 1963 p.29

<sup>6</sup> AWM: 4 23/26/2, AIF Unit War Diaries – 9th infantry Battalion

<sup>7</sup> NAA: B2455, Samuel Aubrey McKenzie

<sup>8</sup> *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton), 5 Dec 1916, p.5; AWM: 281/184, Honours and Awards (Recommendations) Frederick Young Fox

<sup>9</sup> NAA: B2455, Frederick Young Fox

<sup>10</sup> QSA: 16748, Queensland Council Minute Books

<sup>11</sup> Hills, L., *The Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia*, Southland Press, 1927, Appendix V

<sup>12</sup> *Daily Mail* (Brisbane) 23 Jul 1922, p.8

<sup>13</sup> Hills (1927), Appendix V

<sup>14</sup> Evans, Raymond, *Radical Brisbane. An Unruly History*, Vulgar Press, 2004, p.34

<sup>15</sup> Evans, Raymond, *The Red Flag Riots. A Study of Intolerance*, University of Qld Press, 1988, p.24

<sup>16</sup> *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 3 Feb 1939, p.7

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 6 Aug 1935, p.12

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 16 Apr 1938, p.3

<sup>19</sup> Northern Star (Lismore), 3 Feb 1945, p.7; 20 Jun 1952, p.5

<sup>20</sup> Daily Examiner (Grafton), 24 Jun 1942, p.4

<sup>21</sup> Brisbane Courier, 10 Aug 1927, p.10

<sup>22</sup> Courier Mail (Brisbane), 6 Mar 1937, p.25

<sup>23</sup> Daily Star (Brisbane), 23 Jan 1926, p.6; 15 Dec 1934, p.1



Lieutenant Duncan Chapman coming ashore

(Source: Fraser Coast Regional Council)

## 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><b><u>IMPORTANT EVENTS AND DATE</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 April – Anzac Day</li> <li>• 14 May – Bi-monthly Meeting</li> <li>• 9 July – AGM</li> <li>• 10 September – Bi-monthly Meeting</li> <li>• 14 – 16 October – Military Spectacular</li> <li>• 11 November – Remembrance Day</li> <li>• 12 November – Bi-Monthly Meeting</li> <li>• 12 November – Bi-Monthly Meeting</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>FELLOWS of MHPA</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Meyers</li> <li>• Anthony Staunton</li> <li>• Donald Wright</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>NEW MEMBERS</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duncan MacConnell</li> </ul>
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