



# Australian Peacekeeper

WINTER 2012

MAGAZINE

**Serving  
younger  
veterans**

**AFP achieving  
results in  
Afghanistan**

**PLUS**

**Joint operation targets illegal fishing**

**Engagement team bridges relationships**

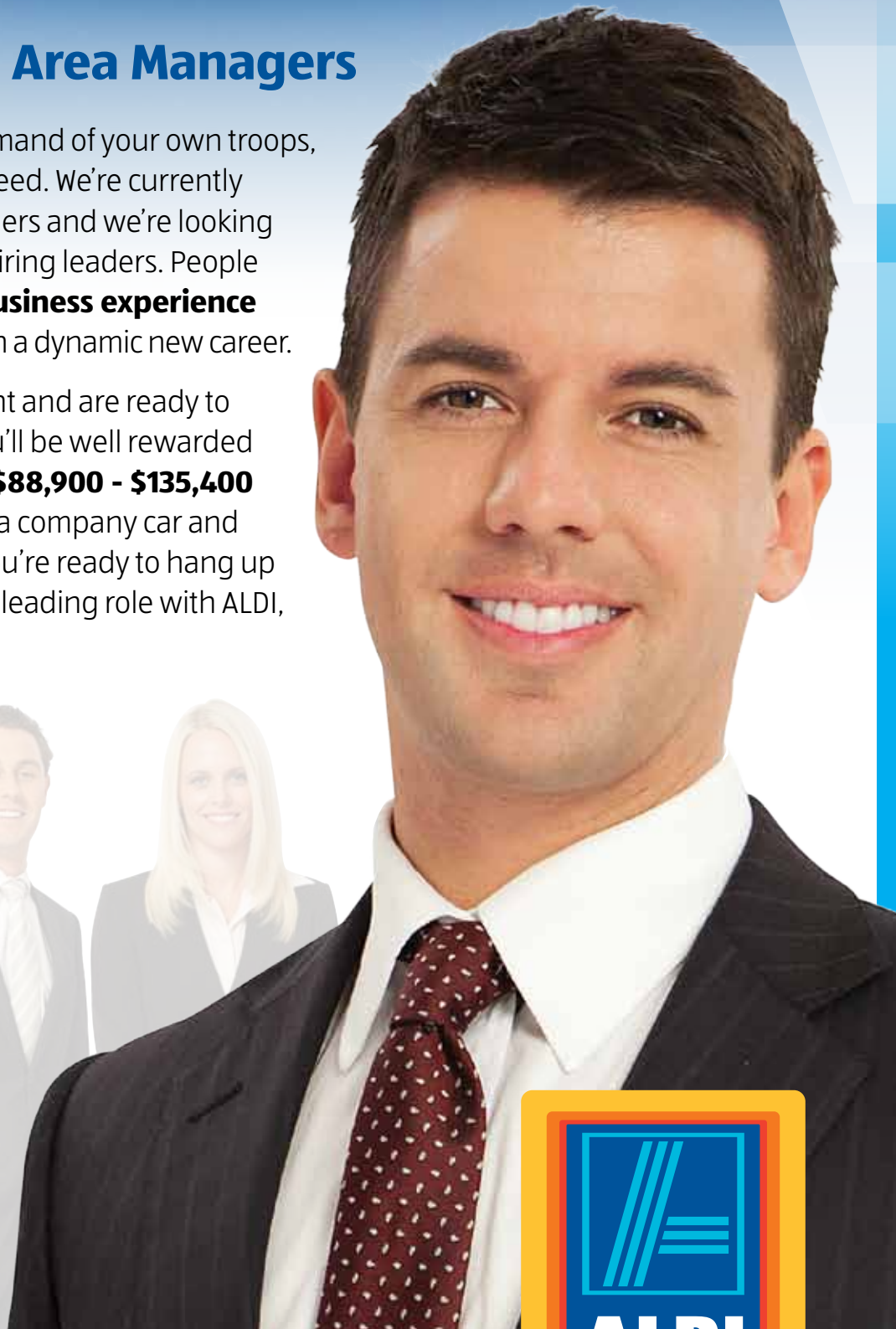
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Australian Peacekeepers Magazine attempts to provide insight into the experiences of peacekeepers, Defence members and war veterans and the issues that confront them together with encouraging informed debate regarding issues dealing with but not limited to Commonwealth compensation, pensions, superannuation and occupational health and safety that affect peacekeepers and their families. We welcome input from members and would love to feature personal experiences in each issue. Please email the editor with any stories you would like to see printed. The views expressed in the articles are those of the particular author and not those of the Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA). The APPVA will not be legally responsible in contract, tort or otherwise for any statement made in the articles in this publication.



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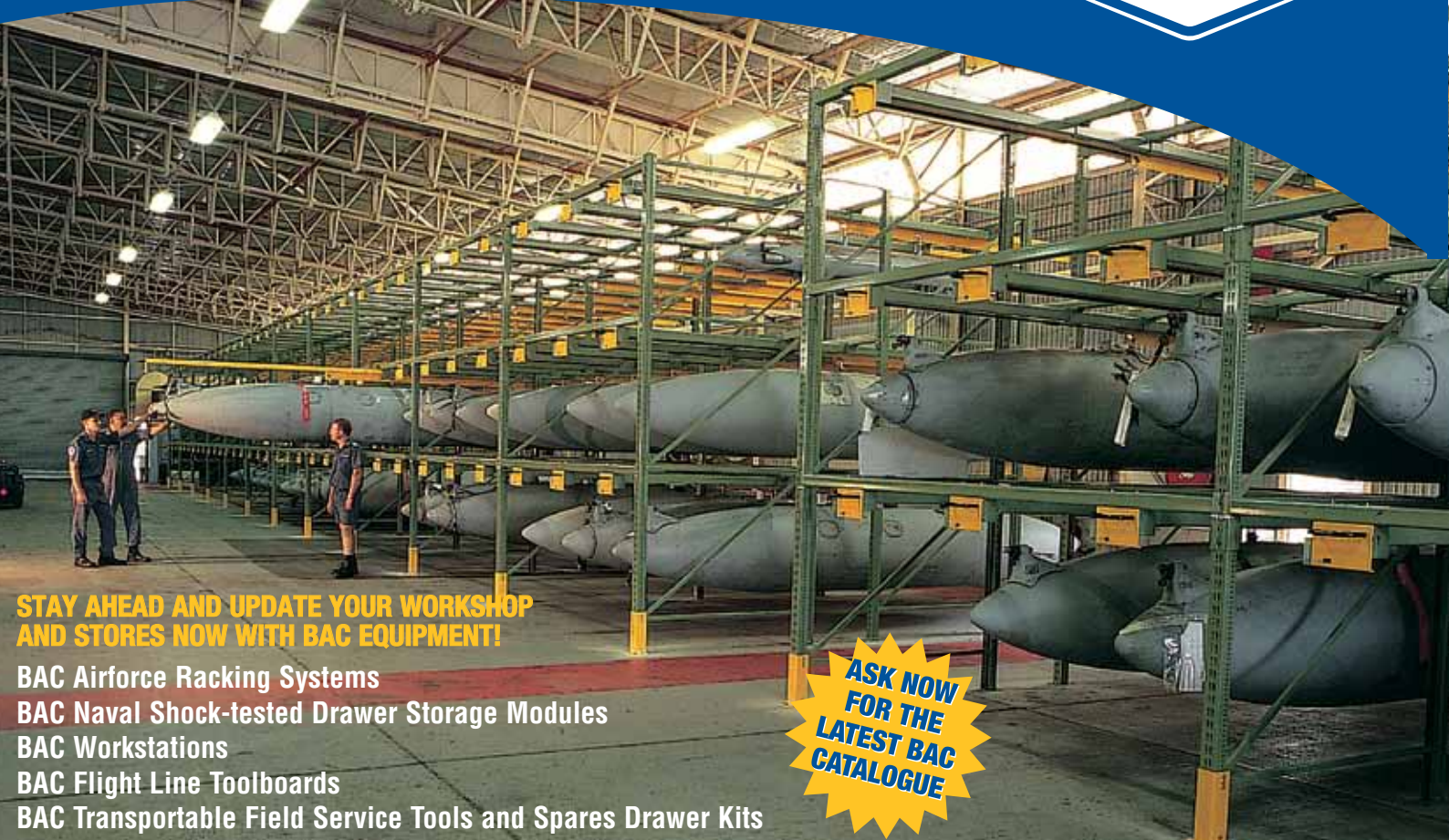
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### Front cover:

Poppies are laid to rest with the names of fallen soldiers near the eternal flame tribute at the ANZAC Day 2012 Afghanistan Dawn Service held at Multi-National Base Tarin Kot in Afghanistan. A moving Dawn Service was held in Multi National Base Tarin Kot in Afghanistan to commemorate ANZAC Day. The Governor General, Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC joined with the troops to pay tribute to those who have sacrificed their lives while serving. Approximately 500 people attended the Dawn Service, where an honour roll was called, naming those who have sacrificed their lives while serving in Afghanistan. A traditional ANZAC Day breakfast followed the Dawn Service. Image by Corporal Mark Doran.





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# From the President's Desk

I extend a warm welcome to all our members and constituents and hope all went well nationally commemorating ANZAC Day 2012. Since the autumn edition of the Australian Peacekeeper magazine, we have been continually consulting with government bodies regarding certain issues important to younger veterans.

The recommendations put forward by APPVA regarding the Review of the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission which was due out early 2012 has now been released with 96 of the 108 recommendations due to be implemented. To under what the Government has accepted please visit the Department of Veterans Affairs website [www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au).

The APPVA have numerous points being addressed with several Ministers at present. One of these is the securing of Deductible Gift Recipient Status for the APPVA. Government agencies have refused to provide the Association with this assistance, which we need to obtain to so sponsorships/funding from the private sector can be obtained to help build and erect the Peacekeeping Memorial in Canberra.

We are maintaining our position with Government bodies regarding the importance of having those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice while serving on operational service non-warlike service (peacekeeping, humanitarian and post armistice operations) outside Australia to have their names placed on the Honour Roll at the Australian War Memorial.

These members should be afforded the same respect as those who have died on operational service warlike service (WLS) as indicated in my media release "**Equal in Service, Unequal in Death**". They have given valuable service to Australia and paid the ultimate sacrifice only to be neglected through bureaucratic injustice.

Your membership to the APPVA allows our delegates to direct our concerns regarding younger veteran's issues directly to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, Secretary of

Defence regarding legislation, medallic recognition, changes to entitlement and welfare of our constituents who have required our services and continue to do so.

As the APPVA is currently collaborating with numerous ESOs to achieve better outcomes for all current serving ADF, post ADF and AFP members, the question that has been asked recently is why have ESOs taken this approach. I can honestly say that because of reduced government funding over the past years, we have seen active entitlements/ welfare officers re-evaluate their positions within their local ESOs because of out of pocket expenses they have incurred.

Since ESOs have adopted this collaborative approach we have seen government agencies review and consider the affects of some legislative changes that have now prompted these agencies to consult more with ESOs to achieve more positive outcomes.

To date we have seen the roll out of Service Delivery Integration (SDI) Plan where ESOs within any Local Government Area (LGA) are now forced into a more collaborative approach in order to provide the greater veterans' community with the same level service with less government funding.

If you want to help protect entitlement/welfare benefits, tell your friends or others you may know who have served and their family members to be a voice within the Association and share experiences they had during and after leaving the ADF.

If you have something that you would like the Association to answer, you can direct your query via email to: [www.peacekeepers.asn.au](mailto:www.peacekeepers.asn.au) or alternatively visit our Facebook or website.

Regards

**Allan Thomas JP**  
**National President**

# From the Editor's Desk

With yet another ANZAC Day behind us, it was pleasing to see APPVA members present at most major commemorative services around the country. This edition of The Australian Peacekeeper reviews the parades, services and events held around the nation.

The book review; *Bully Beef and Balderdash*, isn't without controversy as indicated by two NZ based journalists shortly before ANZAC Day. But this book and author Graham Wilson's following works on the story Simpson and his donkey are challenging to the very core of the ANZAC stories we have been taught for decades.

As example: was Beersheba the last great cavalry charge in history? Did the AIF storm the red light district of Cairo

and burn it to the ground while fighting running battles with the military police? Was the AIF the only all-volunteer army of World War I? If you aren't afraid of being challenged, then I strongly recommend this book – it will change your view.

Speaking of book reviews, I am seeking other interested people to write reviews for the magazine. If you'd like to review military books or DVD's and write around 500 words, please drop me a line via the Editor email address.

Until next time

**Phil Pyke**  
**Editor**

# AFP Achieving Results



An AFP trainer with ANP recruits, showing off new training weapons. The blue plastic AK-47 imitation rifles were donated to the ANP by the AFP. The AK-47 assault rifle is the standard issue firearm for ANP members, and is the weapon of choice for insurgents.

# ults in Afghanistan





Above: An ANP recruit during his graduation ceremony at the Tarin Kot Police Training Centre. AFP members have assisted in the training of over 1,000 ANP graduates.

Below: ANP recruits on parade.





**The Australian Federal Police (AFP) has entered its fifth year of having members deployed in Afghanistan. Four federal agents first deployed to the war-torn country in October 2007, after agreement was reached between the Australian and Afghan governments to allow the AFP to assist the development of the Afghan National Police (ANP).**

The early focus of the AFP mission was to assist in counter narcotics operations, and to advise senior military officers of the International Security Assistance Force or ISAF, also called the Coalition.

Reflecting the dynamic nature of governance and policing in Afghanistan, the objectives of the subsequent AFP contingents evolved and the size of the AFP contingent grew.

Currently, under the banner of *Operation Illuminate*, 28 AFP members are deployed to three locations: the national capital of Kabul and two locations in the south of the country, near Kandahar City and the town of Tarin Kowt.

The focus of *Operation Illuminate* is to assist in developing the capacity and capabilities of the ANP through various advisory, training and liaison roles. Key partner agencies include the NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A), the Australian Defence Force (ADF), Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and, of course, the Afghan authorities.

## Kabul

In Kabul, a handful of members are located in strategic planning, advisory and training roles in various Coalition bases. Commander Wayne Buchhorn is 'embedded' as an advisor to the Deputy Minister for Security. Commander Buchhorn has an additional role of being the senior police advisor to NATO's Deputy Commander (Policing), a US military general. Each day Commander Buchhorn provides high level strategic advice on policing issues in general, and more particularly on how to assist in developing and evolving the ANP.

In providing his advice, Commander Buchhorn draws on an extensive policing career that includes federal policing in Australia (including leading counter terrorist operations), and overseas liaison duties in both Singapore and Indonesia. Immediately before his posting to Afghanistan, Commander Buchhorn completed a two-year posting in charge of the Australian police contingent in Solomon Islands.

Other members in Kabul are deployed to policy and planning duties, as well as assisting the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the training of the ANP's Major Crime Task Force (MCTF). Over the past two years the MCTF has evolved into a very effective body that investigates corruption, kidnapping and organised crime. The AFP has trained MCTF members in interview techniques, telephone intercept practices and surveillance.

## Tarin Kowt (also known as Tarin Kot)

Over the past three years most of the AFP contingent has been deployed to a training mission near the provincial southern town of Tarin Kowt, located in a valley in mountainous terrain.

New recruits are trained in basic policing at the ANP Police Training Centre (PTC) located inside a larger coalition base. More recently, the PTC has begun to conduct specific training courses for ANP non-commissioned officers. So far, the AFP has conducted or assisted in the training of more than 2,000 students at the centre.

Class sizes hover around the 200 mark and subjects delivered include defensive tactics, basic law, human rights and even basic literacy skills. Most Afghan recruits lack the ability to read or write, and considerable effort is made to ensure that they have a basic capability to read and understand the course content.

Whereas AFP members initially took the lead in providing training, an intensive train-the-trainer program and impressive performances by Afghan trainers have meant the AFP has taken a back seat and now mentors ANP instructors.

In addition to providing support to the ANP instructors, the AFP coordinates the provision of essential training aids and has funded improvements to the PTC. Everything from training weapons to first-aid kits and the construction of a parade ground has been funded by the AFP. Other critical aids have included sunglasses and water bottles for staff, especially the sentries who provide a constant 24/7 security presence in case of insurgent attack.

Outside the PTC, the AFP assists the ADF and ANP by conducting training in evidence procedures for ANP Provincial Response Companies. These teams deploy alongside Australian military forces on high-risk searches and warrant executions. Their focus is to extend beyond military operations into a traditional policing operation that focuses on gathering sufficient evidence for prosecution.

## Kandahar Airfield

Three members are located inside a large Coalition base at Kandahar Airfield (KAF), about 30kms from Kandahar City. KAF is the regional headquarters for Coalition operations, and in the past the AFP has played a liaison and information sharing role between the military, AFP, ANP and other policing agencies such as the UK's Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) and US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

## Daily life

Daily life for all AFP members is challenging and often frustrating.

Because of the threats of the insurgency, movement is limited. Flights into and out of the country are governed by the availability of military aircraft, and intra-country communications are often fragmented. Privacy is at a premium, with most members having to share small bedrooms as well as using communal ablution facilities. Every factor of life is dependent upon the security situation and the ability of the military or contractors to provide essential services such as food, water and the mail.

Add into this mix the challenges of working with people from other cultures, both Afghan and westerners, language difficulties and the separation from family and home for long periods, and the mission tests the patience of even the most hardened and experienced police officer.

Each AFP member in Afghanistan has elected to participate in this mission, and gone through a highly competitive selection process. Generally, those selected have either been on an overseas mission in the past, or possess extensive policing experience. Mission-specific training is also provided before departure, by both the AFP and ADF. This includes advanced first aid for the military environment.

## **Mission's future**

AFP operations in Afghanistan are part of a "whole-of-government" approach. The AFP, DFAT, ADF and AusAID work closely to ensure that Australia's efforts in both the military and civilian spheres are integrated and as seamless as possible.

Because of the successes over past months, planning is now underway to further evolve the mission and to focus future efforts on capacity building ANP operations at the leadership and strategic levels. With the agreement of the Australian and Afghan governments, it is planned that in mid-2012 most personnel at Tarin Kowt will transfer to Kabul in advisory and training roles at the ANP's Senior Staff College, the Ministry of the Interior and NTM-A.

## **An interview with Commander Afghanistan Mission Superintendent Chris Cooper**

Superintendent Chris Cooper is Commander Afghanistan Mission (CAM) for the current contingent. Before deploying to Afghanistan he spent two years as part of the AFP's mission to Papua New Guinea and four years in Solomon Islands. He has previously deployed to Timor Leste, Cyprus and Bougainville, and has also been a liaison officer in Cambodia. Altogether his career in the AFP has spanned 28 years. Superintendent Cooper and his contingent deployed to Afghanistan in August 2011. They are due to leave in mid-2012.

## **What are you hoping to achieve during the rest of your deployment?**

My primary focus is ensuring the safety and welfare of the contingent. Beyond that, I spend most of my time planning for future operations, particularly the roles that will be taken up for the first time when the next contingent arrives.

It's no secret that all nations involved in the Coalition, as well as the Afghans themselves, are evaluating how to transition from a predominantly military operation to a broader Afghan-led effort to restore order throughout the country. As part of that process, the Australian Government and its agencies are also defining the scope of future assistance.

Most of my efforts for the rest of the mission will be on getting the logistics and planning right, ensuring that agreements have been cemented and processes are in place, so the next contingent can hit the ground running

in their new roles. While there is a lot of goodwill by all parties involved, the complexities of mission life are such that it can be quite a protracted affair to get even simple agreements implemented.

## **What is involved in an average day for an AFP member?**

It depends on the location but the commonality is that members work seven days a week in high-risk environments, in a "battle rhythm" work pattern largely determined by military priorities.

In Kabul, members work extremely long hours in enclosed environments – small and cramped bases with very few opportunities for privacy. The work roles are strategic and dynamic in nature, and go to the heart of planning for the future of the country. They involve working with military and policing personnel from around the world.

The role is similarly strategic in nature at Kandahar, which is the size of a small city and has a population to match of around 25,000 military and civilian contractors. AFP staff work mostly with US, Australian and European military personnel, but also interact with senior ANP and Afghan Army personnel.

Tarin Kowt is a smaller base with military personnel from Australia, US and Slovakia, as well as a sizeable presence of civilian contractors. Also part of the complex, but separate to where we live, is the ANP's Training Centre and an Afghan Army base. Most AFP members spend their working days either at the ANP base or with the ADF training ANP teams.

## **What are conditions like?**

Afghanistan is a place of extreme weather.

At Tarin Kowt in February, for example, the base was snowed in for a week. Planes couldn't land or take off, and water froze. By the end of March the snow had melted and temperatures were pushing 30 degrees. It will be regularly over 40 degrees by late April.

Blinding sandstorms are common, with the dust penetrating everywhere and everything. There is generally an ever-present foul odour in the air. Sanitation arrangements are basic, and garbage (including hundreds of tonnes of plastic bottles) is burned rather than buried.

Bedrooms are small, about the size of a narrow prison cell. Most rooms have two occupants, with beds for four if needed. It really tests the people living in each other's personal space for such an extended period of time.

After-hours recreation is generally limited to watching movies on a laptop, reading, studying or checking the internet (if the connection is working). Each base has a gym, and KAF has a playing field and a sufficient road network to enable the holding of fun runs to raise money for military charities.

Dining facilities and messes vary from extremely average to very good. Finding a good coffee is a considerable challenge though!



Above: In a lighter moment, AFP members based at Kandahar Airfield donned santa hats at Christmas time. Members in the south of Afghanistan dress in tan uniforms because of environmental conditions. In Kabul, members wear tan pants with blue shirts and jackets.

Below: ANP recruits on parade.  
Below: AFP members stationed in Kabul pose for a photograph at the base of the multinational flag area, at Kabul Airport. A flag is flown for each nation that contributes personnel to the multinational coalition, and for NATO.



## Is it dangerous?

There is a degree of risk throughout the country, particularly from improvised explosive devices or insurgent attack. This is the reason why movements outside military camps are very limited and are only undertaken with extensive protection measures.

We travel in armoured vehicles or on military aircraft. We wear battlefield ballistic vests, helmets and ballistic eye protection. If intelligence exists indicating a heightened risk on a particular day or at a particular location, we don't travel.

In the south, rocket attacks by insurgents are not uncommon. However, Coalition military have equipment that generally gives warning of a rocket launch, and this is sufficient for us to take evasive measures.

Before deploying we received training on the risks and the safety drills, and as a group, we feel confident in dealing with the risk. The risk involved in the mission is one of the reasons *Operation Illuminate* members specifically volunteer for deployment to the mission.

## What do you most enjoy doing?

Civilian policing in Afghanistan is in a nascent state; the ANP is playing catch-up fast, and it is great to help them progress. I enjoy that we are making a difference to the

lives and opportunities of Afghan police.

We fulfil a niche role through providing a civilian policing perspective to planning and training. We help both the Afghans and the Coalition military to understand what it is to be a police officer and what is involved in fulfilling our mission of protecting the community.

## What do you see the future holding for the ANP?

It's a delicate time for the ANP; they are slowly learning and the overall calibre of the ANP is now markedly better than just a few years ago. Senior officers are grasping the challenges and are beginning to take the lead in relation to day-to-day policing as well as major security operations. While their solutions and approaches to issues don't always coincide with how Australian police would deal with matters, it is an Afghan solution that often works.

The ANP continues to face serious challenges and it will be a long haul before they are able to operate totally on their own.

A promising factor is that most ANP recruits join for the same reason that Australians join a police force – they want to protect their community and make a difference. While ever that is the case, there is hope for the future.



Top: ANP recruits on parade.

Below: AFP Assistant Commissioner Frank Prendergast with Afghan National Police Colonel Dil Arga, during a meeting in December 2011. Colonel Dil Arga is the Commandant of the ANP Training Centre in Tarin Kot, Uruzgan. AFP members have assisted at the camp for three years.

Top: The entrance to Australia's Camp Baker, inside the Kandahar Airfield base.

Below: A standard sized room for members in mission. Privacy is at a premium for the entire 11 month deployment.



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# Joint Operation Targets Illegal Fishing

Illegal fishing was targeted by a joint Australian Defence Force (ADF) and Indonesian Armed Forces operation which was conducted between mid to late April.

The third Australian-Indonesian coordinated maritime security patrol, AUSINDO CORPAT 2012, started in Kupang, West Timor on 16 April and was held in the waters between Australia and Indonesia from 19-27 April 2012.

The operation included aircraft, ships and headquarters staff from both nations in a synchronised task group. The ADF contribution was an Armidale Class Patrol Boat, *HMAS PIRIE* and an AP-3C Orion aircraft. The Indonesian Armed Forces provided naval vessels *KRI KAKAP* and *KRI TONGKOL* and a *CASA NC-212* aircraft.

The combined operation aimed to improve coordinated maritime security along the Australian and Indonesian shared maritime boundaries in the vicinity of Ashmore Island, the Provisional Fisheries Surveillance Enforcement Line (PFSEL)

and the Australian Indonesian Seabed Line (AISBL).

Air Commodore Ken Watson, Commander of the ADF Task Group, said the patrol had strengthened both Australia's and Indonesia's ability to detect and deter illegal fishing activity in the region.

"Combining the skills of our personnel at sea, on land and in the air helps to strengthen our ties and build the relationship which is vital to providing security at our maritime boundaries," Air Commodore Watson said.

"The patrol provided an excellent opportunity for the exchange of ideas and skills development between the two nations.

"Our defence forces have once again made progress in improving our maritime security procedures through developing our communications and information sharing techniques. We look forward to undertaking this coordinated approach again." Air Commodore Watson said.

**Crew members of Assail Three conduct an ANZAC Day Dawn Service on the quarterdeck of Armidale Class Patrol Boat HMAS Pirie joined by the Ship's Company of KRI Kakap. HMAS Pirie was patrolling areas of the Timor Sea including Ashmore Island with Indonesian naval patrol boats KRI Kakap and KRI Tongkol in the final stages of the Australian-Indonesian Coordinated Patrol 2012. Crew members of KRI Kakap and KRI Tongkol joined Royal Australian Navy personnel in their ANZAC Day commemorative service including the catafalque party.**



# ADF Injured and Ill Report Released

The Support for Injured or Ill Project's (SIIP) Report on the Review of Current Practices was recently released by the Department of Defence and Department of Veterans' Affairs.

The review, completed during the second half of 2010, was initiated by Defence to support the development of a seamless and integrated support process for injured or ill Australian Defence Force (ADF) members.

Head People Capability for the Department of Defence, Major General Gerard Fogarty said Defence is committed to caring for ADF members, especially if they are wounded, injured, or ill.

"The report concluded that the current system is generally good, and results indicate a high return to work rate for rehabilitated ADF members. It also recommends that outcomes would be improved through a more coordinated and integrated approach to health care and support.

"Our close involvement with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) is essential to the development of a seamless and integrated system."

Major General Gerard Fogarty said a great deal of progress had already been made to improving support services, including adopting many of the recommendations included in the SIIP report.

"Significant progress has been made on implementing recommendations from the review, however, this will take some time as it is critical we execute it successfully," Major General Fogarty said.

Defence and DVA have now jointly initiated a second phase of work to continue improving the system.

This second phase of work, renamed the Support for Wounded, Injured or Ill Program (SWIIP) to recognise those wounded during combat operations, aims to deliver consistent support to all wounded, injured or ill members during their service and after transition from the ADF.

Work to implement the 31 recommendations from the review is well underway and much of the work is expected to be complete this year.

One of the key SWIIP initiatives which has already been introduced by DVA is the On-Base Advisory Service (OBAS), placing specially trained DVA staff at over 35 Defence bases on either a full or part-time basis.

"This initiative will not only assist those leaving the ADF, but it ensures current serving members understand and are informed about the support and services they may be eligible to receive, including health services, rehabilitation, compensation and income support," Major General Fogarty said.

The review will also see ADF personnel provided with electronic health records through a new electronic health system to simplify their transition to civilian life and help streamline interaction with DVA.

Mental health is also a priority for both Defence and DVA. In Defence, significant changes have been made to improve the provision of mental health care across the ADF with significant funding allocated to mental health over the past three years.

\$83 million has been provided to the ADF over four years to implement recommendations from Professor Dunt's ADF Mental Health Care Review and \$9.5 million to DVA over four years to implement recommendations from Professor Dunt's Suicide Study.

Through veterans' affairs arrangements, there are a range of other supports available, including on-line resources which may be found at <http://atease.dva.gov.au/>, counselling services through the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Services - VVCS, and mental health treatment for those with an accepted mental health condition after discharge.

Defence and DVA are both committed to dealing with support for wounded, injured or ill soldiers as their highest priority.

Soldiers wounded or injured in the line of duty are already seeking care and services at soldier recovery centres - two have opened at Army bases at 3rd Brigade in Townsville and 1st Brigade in Darwin, with a third on its way at 7th Brigade in Brisbane.

These centres provide the wounded with a dedicated health precinct where they are given the best opportunities to rehabilitate, recover and return to their duties.

The Review of Military Compensation Arrangements, released in 2011, showed that the compensation system introduced in 2004 is based on sound policy principles and objectives but, like any new arrangement, also identified some areas of improvement. As part of Budget 2012-13, the Government's response to the review will be announced.

A copy of the Support for Injured or Ill Project's Report on the Review of Current Practices can be found at:

[www.Defence.gov.au/Publications/SIIPReviewCurrentPractices.pdf](http://www.Defence.gov.au/Publications/SIIPReviewCurrentPractices.pdf)



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# Serving Young Veterans



## Single Mum Serves the Nation

There's nothing as special as commemorating ANZAC Day while on operations, and 38-year-old Lea-Anne Olsen is about to discover this for herself.

Townsville based Lea-Anne is a clerk in the Army, who is currently serving in Afghanistan on Operation Slipper.

"I really enjoy doing my job overseas," Lea-Anne said.

"Being a clerk, I get to help a lot of people when they arrive in theatre. It's really fulfilling."

Lea-Anne says that having a family history of service in the Army was what drove her to join.

"Before joining the Army, I worked with my family in a courier business," Lea-Anne said.

**"But having a long and proud family history in the Army made me want to join and serve."**

Lea-Anne may have only been in Afghanistan for three

weeks, but she is already discovering the highlights of serving Australia overseas.

"Helping people send their mail home, making sure they're looked after and that they get all of their entitlements is really the highlight for me," Lea-Anne said.

"It just means so much more to the team who are serving over here to know that everything is being taken care of."

Being a single mum to Samantha, 20 and Cianhe, 12, means that Lea-Anne has had to rely on her parents, Bev and Jim, while she is deployed.

"I'm very lucky that my parents were willing to move up to Townsville from Coffs Harbour to look after my daughters," Lea-Anne said.

"I wouldn't be able to be here without them."

When Lea-Anne is at home, she enjoys catching up with friends over a coffee at Odyssey. But the first thing she is looking forward to doing when she returns from her deployment is catching up with her children.

"We're planning a trip to Europe, so it will be a fantastic time to catch up with my girls."



## Operational Service a Family Affair

Most parents are at home waiting for news when their son or daughter goes on a deployment, but for Major Steve Pata and his son Trooper David Pata, they get to share their time in Afghanistan together.

Father and son catch up for coffee each Friday after they both deployed to Afghanistan several months ago.

“It’s great knowing that he’s here with me,” Major Pata said. “These are memories that we will share with our kids and grandkids for a long time to come.”

Major Pata is on exchange with the United States 82nd Airborne as an engagement plans officer at Kandahar Airfield while Trooper Pata is nearby working as a command post operator with the Rotary Wing Group.

They both left Australia at the same time and did reception and integration training together at Al Minhad but nobody picked the connection until two Patas were called on the nominal roll.

“It was surreal at times, having my first-born by my side

preparing to deploy on operations in Afghanistan,” Major Pata said. “But we’re both professionals and made sure we kept it cool.

“It was funny watching the look on people’s faces when they worked out we were related.”

**Major Pata was extremely proud when he discovered he would get to share a deployment with his son but had some reservations like any father.**

“We’re both very close and very much alike so it’s great to have some family close by for both of us,” he said.

“I was also a bit nervous, knowing the hazardous nature of this place.”

**Photo above: Trooper David Pata (left) and Major Steve Pata in Kandahar**



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## Landlocked in Afghanistan

Landlocked Afghanistan is not where you'd expect to find Kendenup's Brett McKenzie especially as he's a Navy Lieutenant.

Brett, 32, is normally more at home navigating an Australian warship on the high seas.

"There aren't a lot of Navy personnel in Afghanistan and it's certainly unusual for a seaman officer to be here, but it's been an incredible and interesting experience," Brett said.

Brett is currently working alongside Australian Army and United States military personnel as part of the headquarters staff at Tarin Kot in Uruzgan province.

"I've really enjoyed it. They do things differently — and you can always learn better ways to do your job!

"The US personnel have typically done one tour in Iraq and many have done one or two tours here, so I've learned a lot from them."

After three-and-a-half years in Darwin, where he was an executive officer on the landing craft HMAS *Balikpapan* and on two Armidale-class patrol boats, Brett's job is now very different.

Brett and the other 1550 Australian Defence Force personnel currently in the Middle East Area of Operations are part of Australia's contribution to the international campaign against terrorism.

"My job is largely office-based, but I've had the chance to go 'outside the wire' with our reconstruction team doing some work in a nearby village and I visited three Australian patrol bases over Christmas time," Brett said.

Brett is not the first family member to earn a living in uniform.

"My dad spent 26 years in the Army so I was always around the military as a kid," Brett said.

"Dad retired as a Warrant Officer Class One and was in the infantry, serving with the Special Air Service, commando units and other infantry units."

When his deployment ends in a few weeks Brett is eager to catch up with his fiancée, Tara, an occupational therapist in Albury, NSW, so they can plan their wedding.

"When and where the wedding happens is a little up in the air at the moment, because I'm not sure where the Navy will send me next," Brett said.

"But I'll get some leave when I get home and then we can start to sort out our future together.

"I'm also keen to get back to Western Australia to see my sister in Perth and get out to my parent's farm at Kendenup so I can help out — and mum can cook for me again. I miss her cooking."

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# Catholic education a firm favourite for families

**Fair play:** Everybody gets involved at the annual Immaculate Heart Catholic Primary School, Leichhardt school fete.

With places in Catholic schools quickly being filled as more families choose a Catholic education, now is the time for parents to think about enrolling for 2013.

A historic 68,000 students filled classrooms at the beginning of 2012, building on a 35 per cent growth over the past 10 years in 134 schools run by Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) across Brisbane archdiocese, which covers metropolitan Brisbane, the Gold and Sunshine coasts, west through Ipswich and the Lockyer and Brisbane Valley's and the South Burnett district and north to Childers.

Executive Director of Catholic Education David Hutton said with Catholic schools now educating almost one in five Queensland children, BCE's community of schools were well placed to meet the challenges ahead, including the roll out of the new Prep – Year 10 Australian Curriculum across our schools.

He said Catholic schools recognised that Prep was about establishing strong foundations for success in life-long learning and empowering students to make transitions throughout their schooling and into the world of work.

"Children in the early years of schooling are provided with a holistic, outcomes based curriculum that is responsive to each child's diverse and unique spiritual, social, emotional learning and developmental needs and circumstances," he said.

During the Early Years of schooling Catholic school students have access to continuity in their learning.

This is enhanced through the establishment and maintenance of effective, collaborative partnerships within the learning community and learning experiences that are relevant and meaningful and activity based.

Students are seen as active participants in the learning

process and their spiritual, physical, emotional, and social development were of equal importance with teachers aware of the wide variation within any one group of students in their development.

Pastoral care also is a distinguishing feature in Catholic schools with students gaining a sense of identity, purpose, success and wellbeing within the context of a Catholic community.

BCE is responding to the changing demographics of the Brisbane Archdiocese through the location of its newest school - Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School at Springfield Lakes, to open in 2013.

Mr. Hutton said the provision of Catholic education in the new growth areas of the archdiocese was always at the service of the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church.

"While we seek to bring high quality education to all the students in our schools, it is always within the context of the message of Jesus Christ and the mission of the Church, the community of believers, which proclaims, teaches, challenges and transforms the world," Mr. Hutton said.

Catholic schools offer single-sex and co-educational secondary institutions that provide a wide selection of curriculum offerings in an affordable manner.

As welcoming communities, those of different cultural backgrounds and faith traditions are made to feel at home and every student is given the opportunity to experience success by reaching their full potential in all aspects of school life.

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# ANZAC Day Tasmania



Above: Last Post is played at the Younger Veterans' Service at Anglesea Barracks Peacekeeping Memorial  
Below: Phil Pyke leads the Younger Veterans' Commemorative Service

ANZAC Day in Hobart was a great success with the largest group of younger veterans coming together for a day of commemoration than in previous years.

"Many came into Hobart after dawn services around the southern part of the State to attend the inaugural younger veteran's service at the Anglesea Barracks Peacekeeping Memorial, organised by Phil Pyke," said APPVA-TAS President, Mike Romalis.

The short service brought together over 50 politicians, veterans, serving ADF and Tasmanian Police members, families and friends who all joined in commemoration and remembrance not only of the ten Australian servicemen and two New Zealanders who have lost their lives on operations during the last 12 months, but also two Tasmanians in Captain Mark Bingley (Fiji 2006) and Corporal Richard Atkinson (Afghanistan 2011).

A special participant was Wing Commander Shanley from the RNZAF, a younger veteran with UN service in East Timor. He was the official representative of the New Zealand Defence Force at the Hobart ANZAC Day commemorations. Local media provided great coverage of the service, with an ABC radio interview just prior to the service, and TV and newspaper coverage that evening and in the local News Ltd paper.

Following the memorial service, the APPVA contingent migrated to the Greater Hobart RSL for a re-supply and sustenance before assembling for the Hobart ANZAC Day parade.

"Last year we had half a dozen under the banner and this year we had 40-50 march behind the APPVA banner with Police peacekeepers just behind us," said Mike.

"There was a good representation of mission berets throughout other contingents in the parade. This was an excellent result, and we have already approached the Parade Committee about adding an additional two banners to the parade to cater for contemporary Veterans and serving members."

One banner will be for operations such as the Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan; while the second banner will be South West Pacific operations including East Timor, Bougainville and the Solomon Islands.

In Launceston, the APPVA attended the Dawn Service before forming up as a contingent for the 11am March.

Mike thanked the Committee members and membership for their ongoing support and whose effort allows us to make a difference and help ourselves. He also wanted to dispel the rumour that Nigel McIntosh's recruiting success has been due to his stalking potential members until they sign up.

"This is definitely not the case, and is merely a mis-interpretation of his earnest desire to have someone else to drink with at the Greater Hobart RSL bar," said Mike.







Above: Attendees at Younger Veteran Service at Anglesea Barracks Peacekeeping Memorial - from left Tony Kaine, Andrew Herbert and Mike Howarth

Below: Younger Veteran contingent ANZAC Day Hobart 2012





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AUSTRALIA  
**POST**

# Remembering No 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital Harefield Park, Middlesex, England ANZAC Day 2012

In November 1914 Mr. and Mrs. Charles Billyard-Leake, Australians resident in the UK, offered their home, Harefield Park House and its grounds, to the Australian Defence Ministry for use as a convalescent home for wounded soldiers of the Australian Imperial Forces. The offer was gratefully accepted, the home becoming the only Australian hospital in England.

The first 8 patients arrived on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1915 and by 1916 the convalescent home had 960 patients. Various medical procedures were being carried out by this stage for the occupants of the home. The decision was soon made that Harefield Park should become a general hospital. At its height the hospital had 1000 patients and a staff of 300. With the end of the war the hospital began to wind down and eventually closed in Jan 1919. By then 50,000 patients had gone through its doors!

Land adjoining the local church of St. Mary belonged to the Lord of the Manor, Sir Francis Newdigate. He gave the land to be used as a military cemetery. Sir Francis went on to become Governor of Tasmania (1917-1920) and Governor of Western Australia (1920-1924). The cemetery was formally laid out in 1921 being designated a Commonwealth War Grave. The first memorial service was held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1918 on the third anniversary of Gallipoli and has been held ever since.

The cemetery is the resting place for 112 ANZAC's being 111 servicemen and one nurse, Ruby Dickinson, from Sydney, who died of pneumonia in 1918. Each grave has a scroll headstone with the details of the person buried.

The memorial service at St. Mary's takes the form of a service within the 1000-year-old church and then moves outside to the cemetery for the laying of wreaths. Children from the local schools walk among the headstones laying flowers on each one.

Australian and New Zealand Services are represented at the ceremony with the First Secretary of the New Zealand High Commission in England, Mr. Jock Gilray, representing the Governments at this year's service. Also laying a wreath was the Worshipful Lord Mayor of Hillingdon, Mary O'Connor. Wreaths were laid by other service personnel along with the local branch of the British Legion and many other local organisations and bodies.

All present shared the gratifying belief and indebtedness to those ANZAC's who gave their all for freedom and now rest in a little quiet corner of England.

**Story and images by Michael Goldsmith, APPVA Member, London, England**



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The ADF's Network Centric Warfare (NCW) strategy has a number of challenges especially around how the various platforms, command systems and sensors in the battlespace interoperate and share information – this is often referred as the Systems of System challenge.

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# Engagement Team Bridges Relationships

Australian Defence Force (ADF) women are engaging with the local population in Afghanistan as part of the International Stabilisation Assistance Force's (ISAF) Female Engagement Teams (FETs).

FETs enable bonds to be formed between ISAF females and the local female population and already the successes are apparent.

The FETs support education programs, economic development and the provision of health services to the local population and provide an opportunity for Afghan women to openly discuss their concerns and needs for improving their lives and those of their families with the female soldiers. The FETs also provide school supplies and medicine to the villagers.

FETs work in close conjunction with the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Uruzgan, a multinational effort led by Australia, which has a female development assistance program. Within this program there are specific female engagement projects relating to women's education and healthcare. The PRT also works with the Director of Women's Affairs in the Provincial Government.

Together, the FETs and the PRT work to improve the living conditions and access to basic services for rural Afghan women and their families in Uruzgan, who represent one of the most isolated and disadvantaged population groups in the country.

At the compound of Uruzgan's recently appointed provincial Chief of Police, Mutullia Khan, 12 women from Coalition

forces and 13 from the Afghanistan Uniformed Police (AUP) shared a dinner just after Ramadan in late August 2011.

Corporal Katie Lockwood of Mentoring Task Force - 3 (MTF - 3) was one of the FET members attending, on her first mission outside the wire.

"I was excited about undertaking this mission, being able to meet with fellow women in uniformed roles," Corporal Lockwood said.

The Afghan women who attended the dinner were all members of the Afghanistan Uniformed Police who assist ISAF by providing administration and logistic support.

"Through our interpreters we spoke about the roles and responsibilities of Afghan policewomen," Corporal Lockwood said.

Corporal Jenny Sapwell, of Mentoring Task Force - 2 (MTF - 2), participated in a FET patrol with a female interpreter in the village of Sorkh Lez.

"There were no problems entering the qualas (compounds) and speaking to the women. It was great to engage with them, as it is rare to see females out of their homes, let alone being able to speak to them," Corporal Sapwell said.

In a significant milestone for women in Afghanistan, Uruzgan province Governor Mohammed Omar Shirzad recognised the role of women in Afghanistan by hosting more than 150 Afghan and Coalition Defence Servicewomen at an International Women's Day function on 6 March 2011.

More stories can be accessed at [www.army.gov.au](http://www.army.gov.au)

**The Combined Team - Uruzgan Female Engagement Team, comprised of United States Navy Lieutenant Renee Baggot (left), Afghan interpreter (2nd from left) and Australian Army Captain Julie Williams (right), visit with the Mayor of Nili District in Daykundi Province, Azra Jafari, at a Patrol Base in Nili.**





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# Urgent Counter-IED Protection Nears Delivery

The threat of Improvised Explosive Devices has increased exponentially since 2006, becoming the weapon system of choice for insurgents because it doesn't involve direct engagement with Western forces.

A project dubbed NINGAUI will provide vehicles to assist in detection, clearance and bypass of explosive hazards to make roads safer for soldiers in Uruzgan province.

Current route clearance capability relies heavily on combat engineers dismounting to undertake manual searches in order to detect and defeat explosive hazards at great personal risk. The outcome of Project NINGAUI will significantly enhance Force Protection levels provided to Australian personnel.

Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) represent the greatest threat faced by Australian Defence Force (ADF) and coalition forces in Afghanistan.

Approximately 40 percent of Australian troops Killed in Action and over 60 percent of our Wounded in Action over

the duration of Operation SLIPPER have been as a direct result of IED attacks.

The ADF response to the IED threat includes thorough training, adaptive tactics, techniques and procedures and other measures focused on mitigating the effects of IED attack and defeating the device prior to detonation. Current route clearance capability relies heavily on combat engineers dismounting to undertake manual search in order to detect and defeat explosive hazard threats.

While dismounted manual search offers an effective and battle proven method of route clearance, it can be time consuming and exposes personnel to significant risk of injury and loss of life. Systems acquired through this Project will significantly enhance the Force Protection levels provided to Australian personnel. It will deliver advanced technology and detection, allowing Australian troops to maintain operational tempo, preserve tactical freedom of action and offer greater safety to personnel.



Given the current nature of operations and the IED threat faced by Australian soldiers on a daily basis, a dedicated and well-designed route clearance system is the Australian Army's most urgent counter IED capability need.

Project NINGAUI responds to this capability need and the associated operational urgency. The Project aims to provide a phased capability and will acquire an Australian Protected Route Clearance Capability (APRCC).

The APRCC incorporates both mounted and dismounted practices in the conduct of route clearance missions. Dismounted tactics, techniques and procedures coupled with mounted detection, interrogation and neutralisation systems, will assist to enhance overall Force Protection levels. The strength of each method – mounted and dismounted – will cover the inherent weakness of the other. By maintaining dismounted search practices greater emphasis will be placed on protecting vulnerable vehicle platforms. Protection for dismounts will be provided, in turn, by the systems and platforms that provide options to the tactical commander for hazardous detection, interrogation and neutralisation tasks to be conducted by soldiers under armour.

The United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, France and Italy have developed mounted protected

capabilities that are currently being utilised in Afghanistan.

The development of the APRCC has been based upon the operational lessons learned by our coalition partners in the Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO), and incorporates elements from the American, British and Canadian systems in the Australian solution. Each of the solution systems are battle proven and currently serving in the MEAO with Australia's coalition partners.

Project NINGAUI aims to provide equipment by the end of 2012 to the MEAO for current operations. In the interim, Army has loaned elements of two systems of Canadian Expedient Route Opening Capability (EROC) route clearance equipment in order to provide a degree of capability, and to inform the future Project NINGAUI requirements. Project NINGAUI will provide deployed ADF personnel in the MEAO with significantly improved force protection capability to counter the rapidly evolving IED threat.

Australian Army engineers detecting explosive hazards and creating a safer pathway for troops as they patrol Uruzgan province in Afghanistan will use route clearance systems.

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

## Army Website Tells a Story

The Army has a new website at [www.army.gov.au](http://www.army.gov.au) which hosts a range of stories from current and past operations, events and exercises. The website is a significant departure from the standard corporate (and somewhat bland) design of the past and is well worth visiting.

There are stories, general information for members and families in addition to specialised information for those who have been wounded, injured or become ill in the course of their duties, including operations. In essence, Army's new website is a portal to a whole range of information which supports serving and ex-serving members. Don't take my word for it – have a look for yourself.

Phil Pyke - Editor

Chief of Army released at statement at launch of the website:

The Australian Army has a great story to communicate to our people and the Nation. Harnessing the power of the internet we have developed a new, dynamic website to inform, educate and engage.

As Chief of Army, I invite you to explore Australia's modern Army – a reflection of our ANZAC heritage, performing a vital role in today's world with a deep commitment to the security of Australia in the 21st century.

People are Army's most valuable asset. The website conveys their story. While my greatest priority is to ensure that today's soldiers are fully prepared for their roles on operations, I also recognise the importance of past

members whose service created the respected national institution that I now proudly lead. With this in mind, our new website provides audio and visual information of what we are doing now, as well as what has made us who we are.

In addition to our uniformed personnel, we recognise the invaluable contribution that civilians make to our organisation. An inclusive workforce ensures that Army meets contemporary challenges of warfighting, peace operations, disaster recovery and government assistance. We are an Army that fights, protects and supports. Our contributions to Afghanistan, Timor-Leste, the Solomons and recent Australian disaster relief are a testament to these efforts.

While focussing on today's Army, I am also dedicated to ensuring that we provide a highly capable land force for the future. At the core of this endeavour is Plan BEERSHEBA which defines Army's role for the next two decades – securing Australia's future through combining land, air and sea power. Army's role is key to creating a formidable Australian Defence Force.

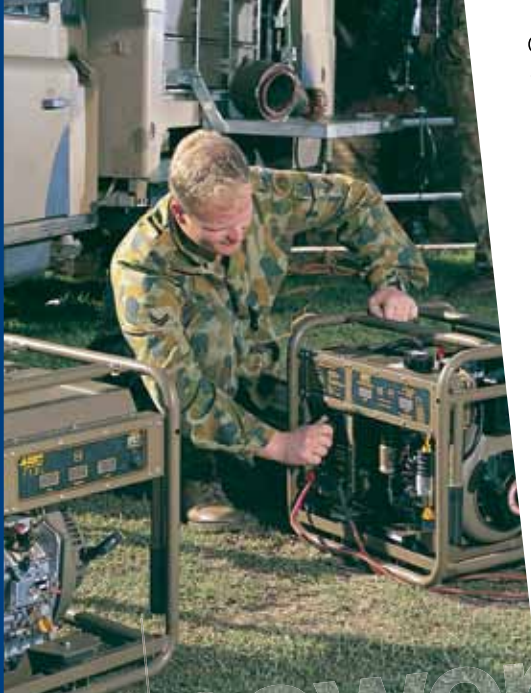
Finally, and by no means least, our website supports the Army Family. We hope that the information provided is not only informative but assists you in your daily lives. In particular, we hope the website helps our wounded, injured and ill soldiers and their families, whose lives have been changed in service of our Nation.

**Lieutenant General David Morrison**

**27 February 2012**

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# Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Project

## The Peacekeepers

Australian military, police and civilians have been undertaking peace operations for over 60 years. Over 90,000 Australians have served in more than 60 peacekeeping missions around the world. Reflecting the commitment and sacrifice of past, present and future peacekeepers, the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial will be a living memorial on ANZAC Parade. This will be the first Australian National Peacekeeping Memorial.



## The Memorial - a Design and a Site

We have the design. The Memorial will be an enduring landmark. The design encompasses a glowing passage of light that is the powerful entry for the Memorial. The passage is between two massive monoliths, raised slightly off the ground in a stone courtyard. The lit interior will evoke the Australian Peacekeepers' role and their help to local populations.

## We have the site

The Canberra National Memorials Committee has approved a site for the Memorial on ANZAC Parade in Canberra. The Memorial will be a focal point for national parades and remembrance ceremonies in recognition of Australian peacekeeping on occasions such as ANZAC Day, UN International Day of Peacekeepers, Australian Peacekeepers' and Peacemakers' Day and United Nations Day.

## The Management

A voluntary Committee of peacekeeping veterans includes representatives from the Australian Defence Force, the Australian Federal Police, the United Nations Association of Australia, the United Nations Police Association of Australia, the Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans Association and the National Headquarters of the Returned and Services League of Australia.

## The Support

Patrons, Champions, Partners, Friends and Mates

We have wide ranging support. Our Patron-in-Chief is Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and our Patrons are John Sanderson AC, Geraldine Doogue AO, and Tony Negus APM. Our Champions have donated \$100,000 or more and are The Department of Veterans' Affairs and PDL Toll. Our Partners have made donations of \$25,000 or more and our Friends have made donations of \$5,000 or more.

Mates of Peacekeeping are individuals who support the Memorial Project by making regular contributions using their credit card or by direct deposit from a bank account.

## The Target

Our funding target is \$3.5m. We have raised over \$600,000 to date and have spend part of those funds on the Memorial design and prototyping. We feel that we need to raise a further \$2m to bring the project to completion. We need your help.

## Communications

You can visit our website at <http://www.peacekeepingmemorial.org.au> You can subscribe to our Newsletter by sending a note to [secretariat@peacekeepingmemorial.org.au](mailto:secretariat@peacekeepingmemorial.org.au)

## What we hope you will do

Subscribe to the eNewsletter, become a Mate and pass on the word!





Above: Jeremy Muhling leads the APPVA contingent in the Melbourne march  
Below from left to right: Jane and Jeremy Muhling, Mick and Fiona Quinn and Lyn Bradford.



## To the Members of APPVA Victoria Branch

APPVA has been gifted the "Veteran Opportunity Shop" in Erica St, Boronia from the RAASC association so that this established business will continue to service the veteran community into the future.

We have a few members who are already volunteering their time to help run the shop however; more are still needed. As you can picture there is no lower or upper limit of the skills we need from our volunteers, and if you have the commitment to assist I hope to hear from you.

In Victoria we are constantly striving to provide quality veteran services in welfare and advocacy; this is continuing to grow as our network of authorised practitioners are now working from Heidelberg Repat Hospital, Surf Coast Veteran Centre, Shepparton Veteran Centre, Veteran Opportunity Shop pension office and the Frankston RSL. To book an appointment to see one of our authorised practitioners call Lorelle on (03) 9496 2263.

We acknowledge the Veteran work being provided from many other areas in the Victorian Veteran network however; I know when I needed the assistance of an advocate there was little experience across the multitude of Veteran Acts and superannuation schemes; and the assistance I received took me many years to correct with the assistance of the then President Paul Copeland OAM, JP. Over this period of time things have become more complex with the introduction of MRCA 2004. My personal goal since the late 1990s has been to improve services and we will continue to do so into the future. I am hopeful to grow what is already a very competent network of authorised practitioners with knowledge of modern service that are trained and mentored. These practitioners also have the backing of Advocates who can represent at appeal level under all legislation.

**Mick Quinn**  
President APPVA Vic

## Annie Ryan

Annie Ryan is the daughter of Kevin Ryan JP - National Secretary APPVA. Annie is a 10 year old 5th Grade student who attends Yering Primary School in the Yarra Valley VIC. Although the school is a small school in comparison to most schools, in that it has only an average of 25 students, the school is well represented in a number of commemorations and other activities throughout the year.

Of most significance to the students at Yering P.S, is their involvement in ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day commemorations. Annie and a number of her class mates have represented Yering P.S. for a number of years now throughout the Yarra Valley. In fact, Annie has been laying wreaths since the 3rd grade.

This year, however, was of more significance to her and her classmate Liam Barry, in that they were each invited by the Yarra Glen RSL to recite a poem for the ANZAC Day commemoration as well as laying a wreath.

Considering also, that the number of general public attending the ANZAC Day commemoration has significantly increased over the past two years. The number in attendance this year easily exceeded 500 people up from an average of around 200. It was noted by many in the crowd of the excellent job both Annie and Liam did this year.

Annie treasures the moments when she is able to wear her Great Grandfather's service medals and her father's miniatures and the opportunity to march alongside her father for the annual ANZAC March.

### Annie's Acrostic Poem

**A = Australian Army fights for us**  
**N = Nurses help if the soldiers' are hurt**  
**Z = Zeppelin air ships are what the soldiers used**  
**A = ANZAC cookies are what we eat on ANZAC Day**  
**C = Courage is what they have**

I chose these words because they remind me of ANZAC Day.

AnnMarita (Annie) Ryan

*Photographs courtesy of Kevin Ryan JP*



## Remembering Mark – Legacy Lends a Hand

Mark James was in the Australia Army with service as a peacekeeper in Cambodia.

When he met Debbie she thought that Mark was Mr Wonderful and her two sons from a previous marriage embraced their new stepfather. Savannah was born in 1997 and sadly not long after Mark's daughter arrived it became apparent that Mark was suffering mental health problems and 'Mr Wonderful' became 'Mr Troubled'.

The peacekeeper no longer had any peace and tragically, Mark took his own life in October 2002.

Debbie said, "A legatee arrived with Christmas presents for my three children six weeks later. I really don't know how I would have coped without the help of Legacy.

"I am lucky that the Legatee who is assigned to me is a woman not much older than me and Denise has been a great support," said Debbie.

"We often have coffee or lunch and I feel free to discuss day to day issues and concerns that I don't wish to burden my family or other friends with."

Debbie said that as single parent Legacy's assistance has been vital – not just in terms of organising fun holidays for the children and financial assistance with their education but also for moral support.

Debbie said that her two sons suffered badly when they lost their father and it really helped them to adjust when they started attending the Legacy monthly outings.

"My boys have made friends with others who have experienced similar grief," Debbie said. "My eldest son, Sam, has recently qualified as an Interior Decorator and Zac is studying at university in Ballarat."

As for Savannah, she represented the Junior Legatees at Legacy's ANZAC Commemoration Ceremony for Students in April 2012.

"Savannah has gained a lot of confidence through Legacy and is now quite the young lady and to think she carried the Legacy torch in front of an expected audience of 3,500 children was an honour indeed".



Savannah with Alex Chernov AC, QC, Governor of Victoria

## Inaugural ANZAC Day Cricket Match a Hit

The Inaugural 20/20 cricket match between an Army XI and a Brookfield United Invitational XI which included Jodie Fields, the current Australian Women's Captain and wicket keeper and Brett Henschell an ex- Queensland Bulls player, was attended by a small but enthusiastic crowd on a cool but fine ANZAC Day afternoon.

Representatives from all levels of government and the local community turned up to witness what was an enthralling game of cricket. The toss was won by Brookfield. Army was sent in to bat on good wicket and lost wickets early and at one stage were 4/32 off 8 over's.

A solid partnership between Martin Smith (38) and Craig (28) ensued, lifting the total after 20 overs to 9/128. Brookfield took up the case with gusto and lost their first wicket after 5 over's with the score on 46, Army managed to slow the scoring rate and picked up 3 cheap wickets, the game went down to the wire with Brookfield needing 10 runs from the last over and a run from the last ball to win which they were not able to achieve and the match finished as a tie with Brookfield 6/128 after their 20 with Mark Fletcher (33) and Calem Hoffman (40\*) being the best for Brookfield.

A tie was a very fitting result as the game was played at a very high standard and was enjoyed by the seventy or so spectators who turned out to watch the event. Representation and support from all 3 levels of government included Jane Prentice (Federal Member for Ryan) and Margaret De Wit (Councillor for the Pullenvale Ward) presented the teams with the commemorative shirts before the game. Bruce Flegg (State Member for Moggill and State Minister for Housing and Public Works) also attended during the day.

The event was a success with \$700 raised toward the Peacekeeping Memorial Project and many offers of support for next year from the elected representatives and the local community. Sadly it should also be noted that a huge Police and SES presence at the Showgrounds (HQ for the search for missing local woman Alison Baden-Clay) on the day didn't encourage attendance. We discussed cancelling the event with the family and police but were encouraged to continue by both parties.

### Rod Thompson



The ANZAC Day Match held in Brookfield

# Support For Successful Recovery or Transition

Army Support to Wounded, Injured and Ill Program (SWIIP) will be bolstered with the roll out of Soldier Recovery Centres (SRC) in Darwin, Townsville, Brisbane and Special Operations Command. SRCs will provide commanders with additional resources through which to manage complex cases and/or members undertaking extended rehabilitation or transition.

Army has established the Soldier Recovery Centres (SRC) under Army's contribution to the Support to Wounded, Injured and Ill Program with the first SRC, located in Townsville, now operational. SRCs in Darwin and Brisbane will be rolled out in early 2012.

SRCs aim to optimise recovery for soldiers with complex needs following wounding, injury or illness. Their mission is to provide Command, leadership and management of complex rehabilitation cases.

While the majority of personnel health and welfare issues can be resolved through normal Command and management processes, Army recognises that additional resources and management are required to coordinate the support and services provided to personnel and their families with complex care requirements.

The SRC aims to provide a positive recovery environment where personnel are engaged in meaningful activities and are enabled to focus on their recovery mission.

It also links in with the DVA On Base Advisory Service (OBAS) and will see the collocation of DVA personnel on over 35 bases on a full or part-time basis as necessary.

DVA General Manager Executive Division, Ms. Liz Cosson (ret'd) said the OBAS initiative was established as part of the joint ADF/DVA Support for Wounded, Injured or Ill Program (SWIIP).

Ms. Cosson said OBAS recognised under the SWIIP initiative that medical care for a service person and family required a whole-of-life approach and Defence and DVA were connected in this process.

"It recognises that military service is unique and Australian society wants to make sure we look after those who make sacrifices to the nation," she said.

It is part of the broader SWIIP strategy to connect with people early and avoid them having to work through what are complex processes to get the help they need after they have separated from the ADF.

Ms. Cosson said many current ADF members didn't see themselves as veterans while they were still serving and the aim was to educate ADF members that they could still be clients of DVA and as well as a serving members.

Director General of Air Force Health Services and Director General Garrison Health Operations, Air Commodore

Tracy Smart said that "The OBAS supports Defence moving toward a fully integrated unified health system, combining uniformed members, civilians and contractors who will

deliver and manage health care for ADF personnel."

"Under the OBAS model, personnel will be referred by medical staff or be able to make their own appointment with the DVA representatives collocated at Regional Health Centres."

**Support is out there** - the internet is a goldmine of official and credible information.

Along with transition programs such as Stepping Out, information packages can give members a head start on where to go for further help.

**Wellbeing Toolbox** - a pilot website at [www.wellbeingtoolbox.net.au](http://www.wellbeingtoolbox.net.au) was developed as an online mental-health resource allowing users to self-assess their needs and work through a self-management plan. It aims to facilitate early intervention for those experiencing difficulties in their post-military life and may prevent more serious issues developing.

**At Ease** - the At Ease mental health support internet portal is at [www.at-ease.dva.gov.au](http://www.at-ease.dva.gov.au). The web portal encourages people to recognise signs, take appropriate action and assume more responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

**New booklet** - the new Mental Health and Wellbeing after Military Service booklet provides information and advice for veterans and former serving personnel and their families about mental health and wellbeing following military service.

**Stepping Out** - the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) runs the Stepping Out program. The free two-day program was developed for

ADF members and their partners who have recently, or are about to be, separated from the military. VVCS can be contacted on 1800 011 046.

Month	Date	Location
June	5 - 6	Perth
	13 - 14	Newcastle
	19 - 20	Bandiana
	27 - 28	Canberra
July	3 - 4	Brisbane
	10 - 11	Sydney
	24 - 25	Carins
August	7 - 8	Shoalhaven
	14 - 15	Hobart
September	19 - 20	Adelaide
	25 - 26	Brisbane
October	9 - 10	Melbourne
	16 - 17	Canberra
	23 - 24	Townsville
November	13 - 14	Darwin
	20 - 21	Perth
	27 - 28	Liverpool



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## Army's Abrams gets its first lift on board Air Force C-17A

For the first time, an Army M1A1 Abrams tank has been flown on board a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) C-17A Globemaster III transport.

In early May, the C-17A carried the Abrams from RAAF Base Darwin to the Capricornia region as part of Exercise Hamel, where it will participate with other Defence units in the Shoalwater Bay Field Training Area.

Air Commodore Gary Martin, Commander Air Lift Group, said the Abrams is one of the heaviest single loads which can be carried on board the C-17A.

"At 61 tonnes, the Abrams comes close to the total payload capacity of 70 tonnes for the C-17A," Air Commodore Martin said.

"Loading an Abrams on board a C-17A is a careful task requiring a steady hand and close cooperation between the driver and loadmaster, to ensure no damage to vehicle or aircraft."

The Abrams is carefully driven up the cargo ramp of the C-17A and restrained to the cargo floor in a precise

position, allowing the aircraft to remain balanced in flight.

The flight of the Abrams provides vital experience for Army and Air Force personnel, and emphasises a key strategic capability for Defence.

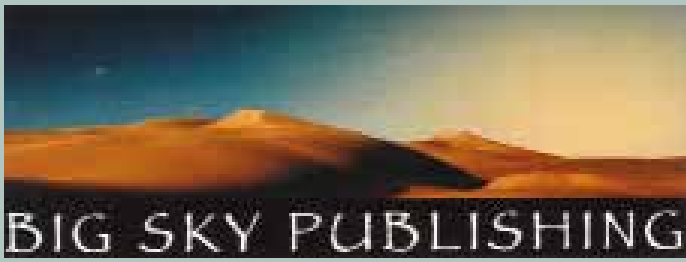
"Australia is possessed with a great geographic expanse, requiring a responsive strategic airlift capability to quickly deliver Defence Force personnel and cargo," Air Commodore Martin said.

Commander of the Darwin based 1st Brigade, Brigadier Gus McLachlan AM, says the airlift demonstrates the high level of interoperability now available between the branches of the Defence Force.

"The airlift of the M1A1 Abrams by Air Force C-17A is an important milestone," Brigadier McLachlan said.

"It demonstrates the great capability now afforded to the Australian Defence Force and shows the Australian public that we have the ability to deliver our forces if needed, with relative ease to any place we need them to be."

# Bully Beef & Balderdash



The latest book from Big Sky Publishing is a critical examination and debunking of some of the myths of the AIF. The book also comes onto the market amid controversy with two NZ journalists labeling soldiers from the AIF as “bludgers” and “thieves.”

Author Graham Wilson’s *Bully Beef and Balderdash* shines a critical light on some well-known myths of the AIF in World War I, arguing that these spectacular legends simply serve to diminish the hard-won reputation of the AIF as a fighting force.

Was Alfred Gaby VC’s eerie studio portrait actually taken after his death? Did the AIF fight the war on an unrelieved diet of bully beef and biscuits? Did the men of the Light Horse shoot their horses rather than see them sold off to the hated ‘Gippos’?

In *Bully Beef and Balderdash*, Graham Wilson mounts his own campaign to rehabilitate the historical reputation of the AIF in World War I free from hyperbole and jingoism to demonstrate that misleading and inaccurate embellishment does nothing but hide the true story of Australia’s World War I fighting army.

It wouldn’t be accurate to consider Wilson an AIF Basher. Instead he could be considered more an AIF Rehabilitator, asserting that the story of the AIF is extraordinary in its own right; its fighting record so well established that there has never been a need to embellish that story.

**However, as *Bully Beef and Balderdash* demonstrates, and as many now know, the history of the AIF has become so shrouded in misinformation that what is now generally accepted as ‘history’ is often little more than myth and legend.**

He painstakingly examines a number of myths associated with the AIF, some cherished and well seasoned, others obscure and even whimsical. He sets out to debunk these myths meticulous analysis, using a range of first-hand accounts and official records to unravel the facts and set the historical record straight.

*Bully Beef and Balderdash* deliberately targets some revered legends and, for those who cherish the mythical story of the AIF, this will be uncomfortable but essential reading. Yet, given the extraordinary truth of the AIF’s history, it is certainly compelling reading.

Some of the other myths examined by the author include: Was Beersheba the last great cavalry charge in history? Did the AIF storm the red light district of Cairo and burn it to the ground while fighting running battles with the military police? Was the AIF the only all-volunteer army of World War I? Were Catholics in the AIF denied the VC because of their religion? And, as often considered, was Gallipoli an intelligence failure?

Reading this book challenges much of the teaching of history and much of our beliefs. As an example, Wilson argues that the slaughter on the slopes of Gallipoli on that first day was caused in part to “friendly fire” from the inexperienced Australians – a challenge to the allegations of deaths by charging into the murderous fire from the Turkish lines.

Some of these myths are cherished and well seasoned, others obscure and even whimsical. With meticulous analysis, Wilson sets out to debunk these myths, using a range of first-hand accounts and official records to unravel the facts and set the historical record straight.

Wilson responded to the claims by NZ journalist Jock Anderson regarding the Aussie soldier’s character, “There is no question that the AIF included its leavening of bad characters - however, the same can be said of every army involved in the First World War, including the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. To focus on this as a wrap up of my book on myths in the AIF is simplistic and misleading.”

He addresses Anderson’s comment regarding the link between Gallipoli and the Australian national identity, “There is no escaping the fact that Gallipoli was the first major engagement for the AIF, it is therefore not surprising that it has to some extent become fixed in the national psyche as the defining point of nationhood. I think we can say that this was a monumental time for Australians and across this war, not just at Gallipoli, we proved our ability to stretch beyond what many would ever have believed possible.”

Wilson affirms, “I’m happy for people to keep their myths simply understanding that myths are different to the record of history and I reiterate that. I have nothing but the utmost respect for the AIF and its history and that the AIF is extraordinary in its own right; its fighting record so well established that there has never been a need to embellish that.”

Wilson hopes some readers will enjoy reading the real, as opposed to the mythological story of the AIF while others will enjoy for their own sake some of the stories used to refute the myths, as many of these stories are fascinating in their own right.

I personally found *Bully Beef and Balderdash* a challenging

read. Myths that remain unchallenged for decades have become fact in the minds of many – including myself. But we should never be afraid of revisionist thinking, especially if it ground in fact. My particular point was the myth that the charge at Beersheba in 1917 was the last great cavalry charge in history. This myth was reinforced in the 1987 film, *The Light Horsemen*, but isn't the truth – with the British carrying out a similar charge a week later and cavalry battles between the Polish Army and the Soviets occurring through the 1920's.

**If you're not afraid to be challenged,  
read this book - Phil Pyke**

## An Interview with Graham Wilson

### What prompted you to write this book?

I was originally victim to many of the myths myself, however, over the years, as my knowledge and expertise as an historian has grown and matured I came to realise just how much of what is generally accepted by the general public as the "history" of the AIF is in fact myth, legend or outright lie. I am determined to set this right, to the very best of my ability.

### Why do you think this approach of yours is so important?

As both an historian and a soldier, I have special affinity for the AIF. From years of reading and research I am a firm believer that, from a very shaky start, the AIF developed into a formidable fighting machine and that the record that this fighting machine forged – the actual record that is – is able to stand very much on its own and does not need the corpus of myth, legend and lie that surrounds it to bolster or boost it.

### Are you prepared for the backlash from people to whom the cherished myths are actually truth?

Very much so; I am aware that there are plenty of people out there who subscribe the idea of "history as they want to have been" rather than history as it actually was and who will refuse to believe the facts put before them in the book. I am aware that some of these people will take huge exception to what I have to say in the book. Unless these people can show my research to be faulty, however, then their outrage will not bother me in the slightest.

**What would your reaction be if someone was able to demonstrate that something you have stated as fact in the book is actually wrong?** I would be delighted and I make this clear in the book. My whole aim in writing the book is to get the history of the AIF right. If someone can prove that I have got something wrong, and, most importantly, back that proof up with irrefutable sources, then I will feel that I have achieved my aim. History will have been set right.

### What makes you an expert on the subject?

Years of research, both personal and professional - As to the latter, I spent 10 years working in the Defence Department's Directorate of Honours and Awards, mostly in the policy area. Over that time I was exposed to numerous myths related to all three of Australia's armed forces and was required to research these in depth to prepare complex Ministerial or Departmental responses.

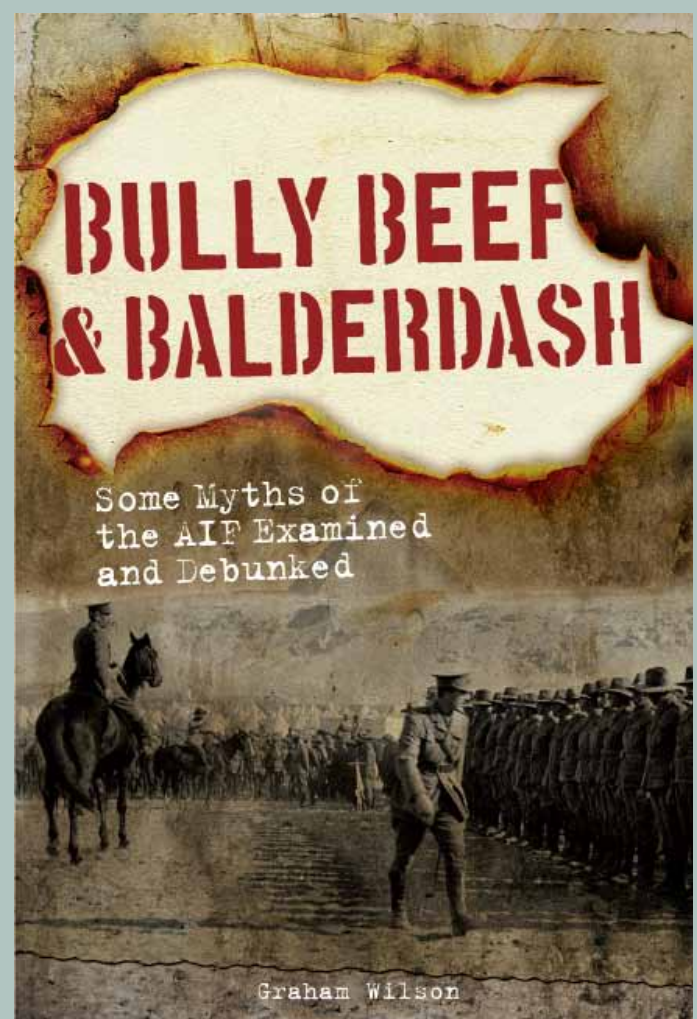
### Do you have any military experience or background yourself?

I come from a military family, with service to Crown and country going back to at least the Boer War. Both of my grandfathers served in both world wars; my father served in the RAN for 42 years; all of my brothers served more than 20 years in either the army or the navy. Personally, I served 26 years in the Australian Regular Army, including nine years in the infantry and 17 years in the intelligence corps and retired in 1996 as a Warrant Officer Intelligence Analyst.

### Do you address the story of John Simpson Kirkpatrick, the "Man with the Donkey" in this book?

Only a passing mention; the myth of John Simpson Kirkpatrick is so huge that it deserves a book all of its own and I have already written one due out June 2012.

Phil Pyke



# RAAF Base Townsville – In Readiness

By FLGOFF Alan Nolan, Administration Officer, 27 Squadron, RAAF Base Townsville

Townsville Airport was originally established in the late 1930s for civilian aviation. With war clouds looming in April 1939 the Commonwealth Government approached the Townsville City Council and compulsorily acquired the airport in December 1940. The Department of Defence recognised the need to establish or upgrade military establishments in the north of Australia and Darwin and Townsville were identified as primary sites to improve capability. Townsville performed a vital role in supporting RAAF and USAF operations in WWII, evidenced by more than 25,000 air movements recorded in the 14 months to December 1944.

The base is dual purpose sharing military and civilian aircraft operations, with an array of different military aircraft operating from Townsville during and since WWII. Of all the aircraft operating from Townsville since WWII, the Caribou has left an indelible mark on the history of aviation in this region evoking fond memories for the people of Townsville. The Caribou has been retired from service and, along with the Neptune reconnaissance aircraft, now forms a gate guard at the main gate of RAAF Base Townsville. The King Air B350 is now flown by Number 38 Squadron as an interim measure pending the identification of a suitable capability replacement for the Caribou. RAAF shares the airfield with Army's 5th Aviation Regiment, established in 1987, currently flying Blackhawks and Chinook helicopters in support of their operations in Timor and Afghanistan. The Army Multi Role Helicopter 90, also located at 5th Aviation Regiment, is undergoing test and evaluation.

As a mounting base, RAAF Base Townsville has a significant surge requirement which typically covers six to eight months per year in support of numerous exercises, operations and emergency response, and aid to the civil community. Exercises such as Precision Red and Precision Support help to hone RAAF aviation and combat support capabilities prior to deployment on operations. Exercises such as High Sierra are used for final testing prior to fighter aircraft conversion. During these exercises there can be as many as 500-700 extra personnel on base above the approximately 1100 Defence personnel and contractors normally on base at any one time. These exercises often create a great deal of media and public interest.

Aviation focused combat support is a critical capability provided by the Number 27 Squadron – City of Townsville. 27 Squadron is a Combat Support Group (CSG) Unit that controls or coordinates a range of base services including air movements, air traffic control, emergency response, airfield and base safety, catering, administration, accommodation, equipment and vehicle maintenance, security, VIP and ceremonial support, infrastructure development, search and rescue, airfield rescue and fire fighting, public affairs, community engagement and the airbase command post. Number 27 Squadron was formed in July 2010, encompassing both permanent and Reserve members from the now disbanded Number 323 Expeditionary Combat Support Squadron and the 'old' 27 SQN which provided support to our RAAF reservists.

There are a number of other RAAF Units on RAAF Base Townsville including the following: Number 1 Airfield

Operations Support Squadron (1AOSS); a detachment of Number 1 Combat Communication Squadron; a Flight of 452 Squadron (Air Traffic Control services); a detachment of Number 1 Expeditionary Health Squadron; and Combat Survival Training School (CSTS). The headquarters of 1AOSS is located at RAAF Base Townsville but it has detachments at a number of other RAAF bases providing air movement, airfield engineering and supply support for fixed base and expeditionary operations. CSTS is the only school of its kind within Air Force that teaches students capture, evasion and survival techniques in a variety of environmental landscapes such as sea, jungle and desert. During times of emergency, such as Cyclone Yasi, the Queensland floods and the Victorian bushfires, the men and women of RAAF Base Townsville provide an exceptional and dedicated service in support of emergency services. Air Force works closely with the civilian authorities to ensure the airport is re-opened as quickly as possible, and then returned to full capacity as soon as possible to enable the continuation of both military and civilian aviation.

Townsville is a military town supporting both RAAF and the largest Army base in Australia – Lavarack Barracks. The population is very appreciative of its military, showing wonderful support at public events such as the 2009 Airshow, the recent arrival in Townsville of 3 RAR, and the return of our soldiers and airmen from Timor and Afghanistan through the gates at RAAF Base Townsville. The help and support of the variety of units and civilian organisations on base make it possible every day.

## **RAAF Base Amberley – From Dairy Farm to 'Super Base'**

By Wing Commander Simon Nickson, Commanding Officer, 23 Squadron.

In 1938, 357 hectares of dairy farm were acquired by the Commonwealth Government to provide a modest beginning to what is now the Air Force's largest operational base. With nearly 5000 service and civilian personnel calling RAAF Base Amberley home, and over 50 units represented, the base has sometimes been called the first 'super base.'

Amberley and attached properties cover approximately 2020 hectares, excluding the Purga Range and the Evans Head Air Weapons Range. The base is in the midst of a 10-year plus redevelopment. Originally master planned in 1996 and still with a few years to fruition, the current building program is as history-making as the significant expansion in the late 1960s/early 70s associated with the acquisition of F-111s. In fact many an Air Force member who has not visited Amberley for a few years find themselves in an almost unrecognisable landscape. Rest assured the 15/33 runway hasn't moved, nor has the 04/22 cross runway, although the latter doesn't see too many military aircraft taking off from it nowadays. Whilst many buildings have changed, the familiar Canberra and Phantom Drives are still there, as is Aviation Drive. Many of the older hangars remain and are being well utilised by units such as the Restoration section of the Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre and as temporary hangar space for the SAR helicopter contracted to support the F-18F Super Hornets.

The greatest change, unsurprisingly, has been the arrival

of new aircraft. We farewelled the F-111 in December 2010 but rest assured we still have a 'pig' or two here, including one on permanent display accessible to the public as part of the heritage centre. No's 1 and 6 Squadrons now operate the F-18F Super Hornet out of their squadrons' lines – 1 Squadron resplendent in a brand new building and hangar. Even more conspicuous is the new, giant-sized hangar of 33SQN, now operating KC30s (based on the Airbus A330 airframe) performing air-to-air refuelling and transport roles. In the same precinct is the new apron where 36SQN is based with its Boeing C-17 'Globemaster' heavy lift aircraft. As an indication of the pace of change, whilst the C-17 is still new in the minds of many, it is now the oldest in-service aircraft based at RAAF Base Amberley.

There has also been growth and development with our supporting elements. Up on 'the hill' significant building has allowed for new accommodation for the RAAF Security and Fire School, and No's 1 and 2 Airfield Defence Squadrons. Another significant undertaking and change to the flavour of RAAF Amberley is that we now host Army lodger units, such as 9 Force Support Battalion, HQ 6 Engineering Support Regiment and 21 Construction Squadron which have relocated here. The planned redevelopment will see the base further new works and expansion with arrival of 17 Construction Squadron, additional aircraft apron areas for the large aircraft, and more training areas around the extremities of the base for supporting units such as 395 Expeditionary Combat Support Wing. As a result of cooperation between Defence, local and state governments on the drawing board is the Aerospace Park immediately south of the runway, being an aviation industry hub with access to the main runway. Throughout these redevelopments the RAAF has enjoyed the close cooperation and support of the local community and Ipswich City Council—a symbiotic relationship that has reaped benefits and has enabled the Air Force of today to plan confidently for the future.

Although RAAF Base Amberley certainly had humble beginnings, it's now full throttle pace with a bright future. Whilst there may be a few more green uniforms around, we love our Army brethren—they add to the richness of service life here. We also don't forget where we came from, and the large heritage precinct here complete with display aircraft well recognises our past achievements. Most importantly, with the existing four flying squadrons including the C-17 and KC30 airframes yet to arrive, the future of Amberley as an Air Force 'super base' is assured.

#### RAAF Heritage Centres

##### RAAF Base Wagga

Sturt Highway, Wagga Wagga NSW  
Switchboard: 1300 DEFENCE (1300 333 3623)  
Heritage Centre Open: Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. Entry is free

##### RAAF Base Amberley

South Amberley Road, Amberley QLD  
Phone: (07) 5361 1245  
Heritage Centre Open: second Sunday of each month  
Entry is free

##### RAAF Base Townsville

Ingham Road, Garbutt QLD  
Phone: (07) 4752 1712  
Heritage Centre Open: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9am to 12pm; Sundays 10am 4pm

## Captain Shout VC

Halt! Attention First Battalion!  
Send your rifles to the earth  
And bow your heads in sorrow  
For this man of priceless worth.

We have lost a gallant leader  
So you all join in with me  
And pay a last long tribute  
To Captain Shout VC.

We all know how our hero died  
In that blood stained khaki line  
With the true and the famous  
First Brigade of the charge of Lonesome Pine.

He nobly fought with his men that day  
Till we had the trenches won  
And said when we were finished  
Good old First Brigade. Well Done.

We know his men all loved him  
And counted him their friend  
Were sorry though we grieve for him  
He had a painless peaceful end.

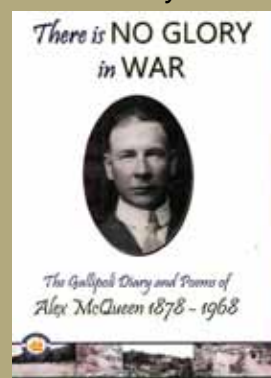
The waters closed around him  
In the blue Aegean sea  
A fitting grave for a soldier brave  
Like Captain Shout VC.

We see his loved ones mourning  
In far off Australia fair  
But if soldiers go to heaven  
Then Captain Shout is there.

So farewell for a season  
Till we join our heavenly host  
And life's long dream is over  
And the trumpets sound last post.

*Captain Shout, a veteran of the Boer War, travelled with the 1st Battalion, including Alex McQueen, on the HMAT 'Africa' to Egypt for training them on to Gallipoli. He earned the Military Cross for action during the first landing at Anzac Cove, but it was a fatal last charge at Lone Pine that earned him the Victoria Cross. He was wounded and extracted but died on the way home and was buried at sea.*

*Poem extract from Alex McQueen's book There is No Glory in War – The Gallipoli Diary and Poems of Alex McQueen 1878 -1968. Contact Yamba Museum for copies of the book or any more information on 02 6646 1399 or email: yambamuseumnsw@gmail.com*





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## Sapper Jamie Larcombe's Inquiry Finalised

Defence has finalised the inquiry into the death of Sapper Jamie Larcombe who was killed on operations in Afghanistan on 19 February 2011.

Sapper Larcombe was an Australian Army combat engineer serving with Mentoring Task Force – Two (MTF-2). He was killed in action during an engagement with insurgents in the Mirabad Valley region of Uruzgan Province.

An Inquiry Officer was appointed to examine the circumstances surrounding the incident. Inquiries into combat deaths are conducted primarily to determine what operational and tactical lessons can be learnt from the incident. Importantly, they also provide information to the soldiers' families.

Sapper Larcombe's family has received a copy of the Inquiry Officer Report and have been briefed on the findings of the Inquiry into the circumstances surrounding his death.

The Minister has weighed the wishes of the family and the public interest in the release of the Report and agreed with the recommendation of the Chief of the Defence Force not to release the Inquiry Officer Report.

A sapper from the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment lays a poppy at the unit memorial wall, which commemorates the loss of Corporal Richard Atkinson and Sapper Jamie Larcombe who died on active service in Afghanistan.



## Coles Discount Recognises Digger Effort

Younger veterans and serving members benefited from a generous offer from Coles over Easter with the national supermarket chain launching a discount of 10 per cent for all serving, returned and retired Australian military and their families across all stores.

The deal was offered in response to a recent appeal by Melbourne comedian Mick Molloy, after he returned from an Australian military base in Afghanistan.

Molloy called on Australians to show support to "our Diggers" and their families, particularly those separated over Easter.

A Coles spokesman said the Diggers deal was a "small gesture of thanks" for the men and women who have put their lives on the line.

"It's easy to be cynical about it, but it's a small gesture and we've seen a good response to it so far on radio," he said.

"We hope to raise awareness of our Australian troops and other military personnel, and the role they play."

National Secretary, Kevin Ryan JP, wrote on behalf of the APPVA to extend the appreciation of the generous offer from Coles.

"It is not often that companies such as Coles offers assistance to veterans and recognises the commitments of not only the veterans, both current and former, but also their families," Mr. Ryan said.

"Without support from corporate Australia, many veteran families would often struggle, particularly when many veterans are totally and permanently incapacitated - unable to work due to their respective injuries incurred from warlike operational experience."

Coles Managing Director, Ian McLeod, said the supermarket chain has responded to Mick Molloy's experience in Afghanistan that highlighted stories of great Australian camaraderie, friendship and bravery amongst the Australian troops.

"Our Digger's Discount was our way of saying thanks on behalf of 100,000 of our team members for the great jobs our Diggers have done and continue to do for Australia," Mr. McLeod said.

*Background information: [www.couriermail.com.au](http://www.couriermail.com.au) 9 April 2012*



## Veteran Service Goes Online

A new website, offering veterans a more immediate way of conducting business with the Department of Veterans' Affairs was launched in mid-May by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Warren Snowdon.

Making the announcement at the Tasmanian Returned and Services League annual congress, Mr. Snowdon said *MyAccount* was a new innovation in service delivery for the veteran and Australian Defence Force communities.

"*MyAccount* is an online service centre where clients can engage with the Department anytime, anywhere and all they need to get started is a computer and internet connection," he said.

*MyAccount* offers a variety of services including: viewing and requesting forms and factsheets; booking transport to medical appointments; viewing payments and card information; requesting replacement cards; lodging travel claims; requesting additional entitlements; changing contact details; and viewing the status of claims.

"This website responds to the evolving needs of our veteran community, offering clients choice, control and convenience when contacting DVA, without the restrictions of physical location or business hours," Mr. Snowdon said.

Mr. Snowdon stressed the service would not replace traditional means of communicating with the Department but is another channel in which to engage with it.

"Change can be a good thing, and I assure the veteran community that this service is not the end of traditional ways of communication – you will still be able to contact DVA via phone, face-to-face, fax, email or mail. The Department will also continue to contact you using these channels.

*MyAccount* is an evolving service and additional features will be added over time. The service is optional and veterans who wish to set-up an account can phone 1800 173 858 to receive a personal registration number.

While at the congress, Mr. Snowdon also provided a summary of 2012-13 Federal Budget measures to benefit the veteran community.

"Our priority is to make sure we look after those who have sacrificed so much for this country: Australia's 350,000 veterans and their families," he said.

"That means those who have served and those currently serving, including forces now deployed in Afghanistan, will be cared for today and into the future by our Government.

"While returning the budget to surplus, the Government has protected veterans' entitlements and provided funding to ensure the Centenary of ANZAC is appropriately commemorated.

"The 2012-13 Budget will go towards strengthening our support for veterans and their families in recognition of the contributions they have made in serving our country.

For more information on how to access *MyAccount* visit [myaccount.dva.gov.au](http://myaccount.dva.gov.au) and phone 1800 173 858.

## Navy joins China for maritime exercise

The ANZAC-class Guided Missile Frigate, HMAS Ballarat, began a five-day ship visit to Shanghai, China, with the ship docking at the northern end of Shanghai's historic Bund between 17-21 May.

The visit will involve cultural exchanges and visits to significant icons in Shanghai.

The exercise will involve a variety of interactive activities including communications and rescue exercises and joint manoeuvres with the PLA-Navy on departure from Shanghai.

The ship's commanding officer Commander Jonathan Earley says his crew is ready for the challenge.

"We have recently come from a long work up to achieve this mission," CMDR Earley said, "so we are used to dealing with other nations from our region but this is the first time we have exercised so intensely with the PLA-Navy."

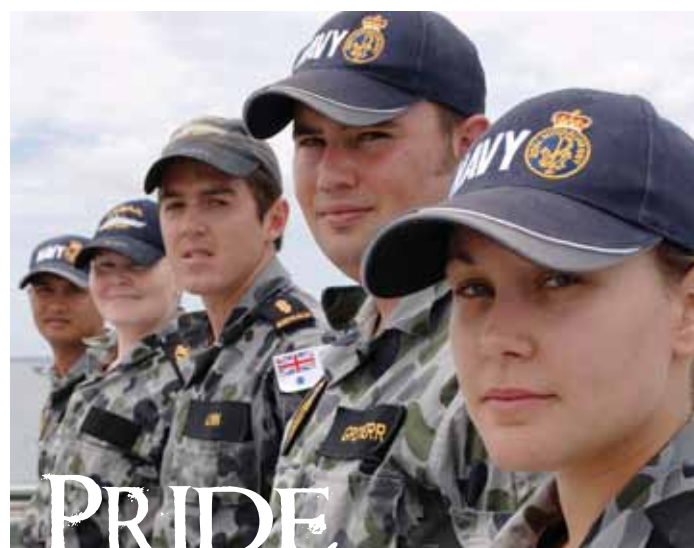
"This is diplomacy at its best," CMDR Earley said. "There is nothing more effective than face to face contact to build trust and friendship between Navies and nations."

HMAS Ballarat's visit to China comes at a time when Australia is celebrating 40 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Australia and the People's Republic of China, in December 1972.

The visit points to the constructive and beneficial links between the militaries of the two countries, and underlines the value both China and Australia place on the broader bilateral relationship.

Australia has conducted a senior-level defence dialogue with China for 14 years.

Australia and China have enhanced bilateral defence engagement in recent years to include working level exchanges, and practical cooperation in the areas of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercises, maritime engagement and peacekeeping.



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Name of Parent/Partner/Child ..... Email.....  
(Complete only for Affiliate Membership)

Phone ..... Mobile .....

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Post Nominal ..... Date deployed ..... to .....

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And after 100,000 accumulated flight hours, the C295's higher utilisation rates and availability over similar aircraft mean it's proven to be simply more efficient. A fleet of ten C295s could save the taxpayer at least \$300million



over its operational life, versus ten competitor aircraft. In an uncertain world, the C295 is the proven, cost effective solution.



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