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The North Western Ranger

The Newsletter of the 8/7th Battalion – 2RVR Assoc Inc -A0035094M

Volume 13 Issue 2 June 2010

Patron: Patron The Commanding Officer 8/7th Battalion the Royal Victoria Regiment – Lt Col Doug Laidlaw CSC

Presidents Message

It only seems like yesterday that we celebrated New Year and now half the year has gone. We had an enjoyable bus trip to Nar Nar Goon. We have gained a good number of new members. In August our men and women of 8/7th Battalion (approx90) will do their tour of duty in the Solomon Islands. We are sure they will carry out their task in a professional manner in which they have been trained. We all trust that they will gain valuable experience and return safe and well. We will endeavor to comfort parcels as we did in conjunction with the RVR Association when 5/6th Battalion carried out their tour last year. Hope all members and their families are fit and well and good luck for the remainder of the year. Remember the Warranambool dinner in October and Ballarat in November.

Dick Wilkie

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Bus trip to Nar Nar Goon

An enjoyable day was had by the 30 personnel who traveled to the museum at Nar Nar Goon . In the absence of Ken Brown, due to illness, John Coull took on the duty of head chef. Morning tea was enjoyed en route and the BBQ lunch was most enjoyable. The museum is fully stocked of all WWI equipment from weapons to horse drawn vehicles. A guided tour was conducted by the owner who is very knowledgeable. A relaxing trip home finished an enjoyable day. A big thank you to John Coull who organized the whole day.

New Members

To start the year rolling we have gained quite a few new members. This will help to maintain a level of the Associatation as we had quite a few valued members pass away last year

We welcome

- Gordon Sterling Portland
- Allan Taylor Portland
- Peter Malcolm Portland
- Darryl Williams Woolsthorpe
- Paul Mayman Ballarat
- Chris Ducardis Ballarat
- Adrian Van Hamond Ballarat
- Ian White Ballarat
- George Brown Ballarat
- Kevin Mc Keegan Ballarat
- Christopher Mathison Ballarat
- Roland Wade Ballarat

Membership Fees

The membership fees have been static at $10 per year since the Association was formed. We are endeavoring to maintain it at $10 as many members cannot attend functions due to their position on the map. The three newsletters per year cost us $10 per member. Raffles and sales of ties and badges and shirts etc provide the extra money required to run the Association covering stationary, get well cards, death notices etc. Donations to the Association have been made and have been greatly appreciated. Most other service associations charge $20 - $30 a year membership.

Members in ill health

If any member knows of another member not in good health or have been injured, please let us know and we will send a card and cheerio.

Guest Speaker Ballarat Dinner 2010

The Guest Speaker at the Ballarat Dinner 2010 will be an ex member of the 2RVR John Sonneveld. John was a member of 6th Platoon B Company at Maryborough before qualifying at Skyville as a helicopter pilot in the late 1960s. John was awarded the distinguished Flying Cross whilst serving in Vietnam.

A Joke

A Queensland Jackeroo is overseeing his herd in remote territory when suddenly a brand-new BMW advances out of a dust cloud toward him.
The driver, a young man in a designer suit, Guicci shoes, Ray Ban sunglasses and YSL tie, leans out the window and asks the ringer, “If I tell you exactly how many cows and calves you have in your herd, will you give me a calf?”

The Jackeroo looks at the man, obviously a yuppie, then looks at his peacefully grazing herd and calmly answers, “Sure, why not!”

The yuppie parks his car, whips out his Dell notebook computer, connects it to his Cingular RAZR V3 mobile phone, and surfs to a NASA page on the Internet, where he calls up a GPS satellite navigation system to get an exact fix on his location which he then feeds to another NASA satellite. That scans the area in an ultra-high-resolution photo. The young man then opens the digital photo in Adobe Photoshop and exports it to an image processing facility in Hamburg, Germany.
Within seconds, he receives an email on his Palm Pilot that the image has been processed and the data stored. He then accesses a MS-SQL database through an ODBC connected Excel spreadsheet with email on his Blackberry and, after a few minutes, receives a response. Finally, he prints out a full-colour, 150-page report on his hi-tech, miniaturized HP Laser Jet printer and finally turns to the cowboy and says, “You have exactly 1,586 cows and calves.”

“That’s right. Well, I guess you can take one of my calves,” says the ringer.

He watches the young man select one of the animals and looks on amused as the young man stuffs it into the boot of his car.
Then the ringer says to the young man, “Hey, if I can tell you exactly what your business is, will you give me back my calf?”

The young man thinks about if for a second and then says, “Okay, why not!”
“You work for the Australian Government”, says the Jackeroo.
“Wow! That’s correct,” says the yuppie, “but how did you guess that?”
“No guessing required” answered the Jackeroo. “You showed up here even though nobody called you, you want to get paid for an answer I already knew, to a question I never asked. You used all kinds of expensive equipment that clearly somebody else paid for, you tried to show me how much smarter than me you are, and you don’t know a thing about cows. This herd is a herd o sheep. Now give me back my dog.”

ANZAC Day March Ballarat

The biggest fall in for the Ballart ANZAC day March for the Association was enjoyed in mild weather (good for marching). Seventy five personnel marched behind the banner with Ballarat Brass Band leading us it made it easy for all to keep in step. The association was lead Lt Col Bert Fry who was CO in the mid 1960s. Lt Col Fry has been a member of the Association since it’s introduction. He was nineteen years old when he fought on the Kokoda track. After the march thirty members and family enjoyed a get together at Sebastopol RSL.

A Heart-Warming Story

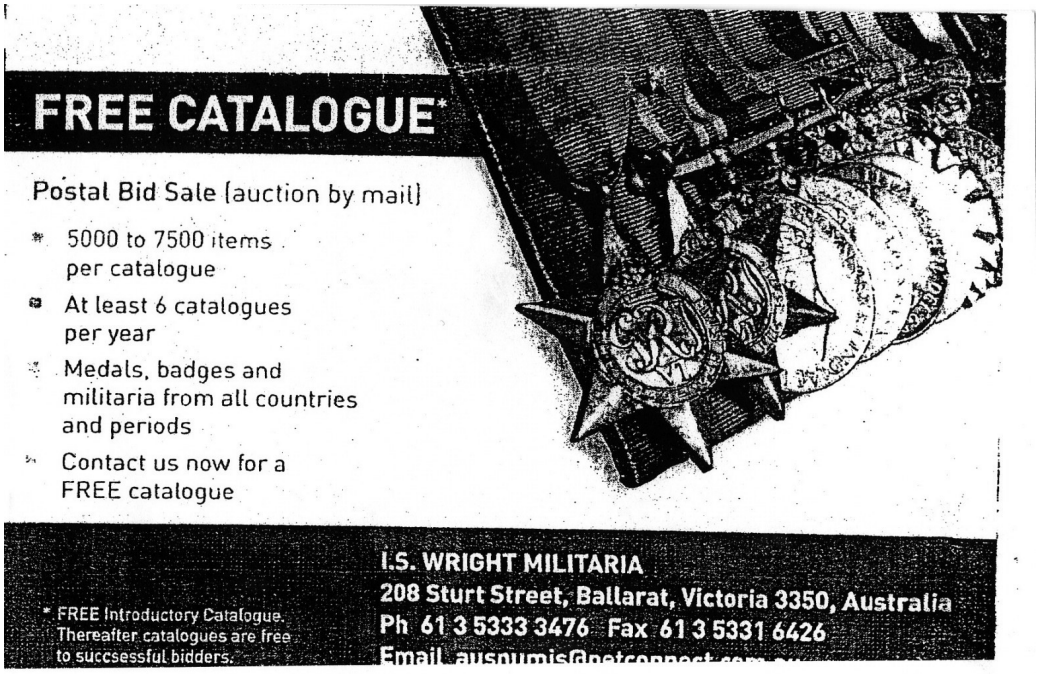
Here's a truly heart-warming story about the bond formed between a little 5 year old girl and some building workers that makes you believe that we can make a difference when we give a child the gift of our time…….

A young family moved into a house, next door to a vacant block.
One day a building crew turned up to start building a house on the empty block. The young family's 5 year old daughter naturally took an interest in all the activity going on next door and spent much of each day observing the workers. Eventually the builders, all of them gems in the rough, more or less adopted her as a kind of project mascot.
They chatted with her, let her sit with them while they had coffee and lunch breaks, and gave her little jobs to do here and there to make her feel important. At the end of the week they even presented her with a pay envelope containing a couple of dollars.

The little girl took this home to her mother who said all the appropriate words of admiration and suggested that they take the two dollar 'pay' she had received to the bank the next day to start a savings account.
When they got the bank, the teller was equally impressed and asked the little girl how she had come by her very own pay cheque at such a young age.
The little girl proudly replied, "I worked last week with the boys building the house next door to us." "My goodness gracious," said the teller, "and will you be working on the house again this week, too?"
The little girl replied, "I will if those arseholes at Bunnings ever deliver the f*cking Gyprock….."

Warrnambool and Ballarat Dinners

The Warrnambool Dinner will be held in October and the Ballarat dinner in November. Move details to come in September Newsletter



Election of Office Bearers for 2010

Name	Position
D Wilkie	President
B McKinnon	Vice President
J Whateley	Treasurer
J Coull	Assistant Treasurer
K Fiscalini	Secretary
L Taylor	Committee
A Douglas	Committee
I Nunn	Committee
B Ackland	Committee
I Archibald	Committee
B Driscoll	Committee/Liaison
J Mack	Public Officer

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SECRETARY: K.FISCALINI
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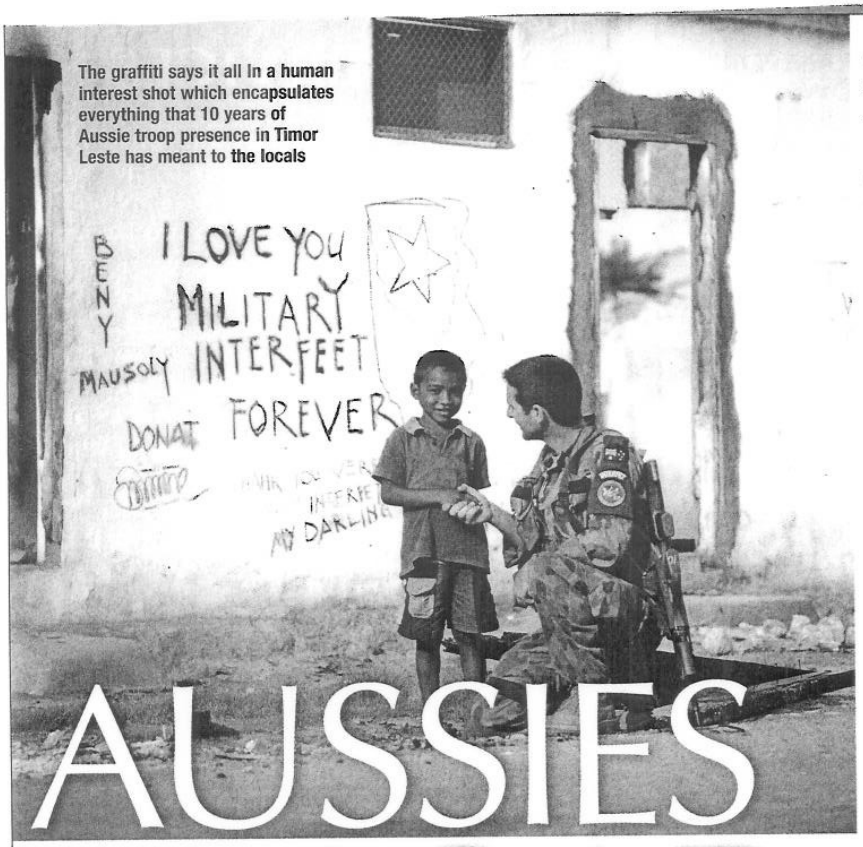


The graffiti says it all In a human interest shot which encapsulates everything that 10 years of Aussie troop presence in Timor Leste has meant to the locals

AUSSIES ABROAD

Thousands of our Defence personnel are currently serving in hot spots across the world, but remarkably little is known about what they are doing, writes freelance journalist Mike Butler. If you have an interest in where we are sending our military in our name, this is essential reading.

It's one of the ironies of the age of the internet and CNN that the Australian public knew more about what was happening to troops during the Vietnam War than in almost all of the 13 operations that see the Australian military overseas in 2010. At present, 3300 troops are stationed in global hotspots, from as far away as Sudan and Israel, to the nearby Solomon Islands and East Timor. And with the Government's desire to make Australia a bigger world player, there is every likelihood that Australian military will be committed to increasing numbers of future foreign missions.

However, a combination of seeming public indifference and government secrecy under the banner of protecting troops means that surprisingly little is known about the activities of our military acting in Australia's national interests and the risks they are subjected to. And yet all the facts are there in the open if you know where to look . . .

"In many cases the information is out there but it's most often in a format that means it may as well not exist and as a result that inhibits informed discussion," says security expert Prof Richard Tanter from RMIT University and Australian director of security think tank The Nautilus Institute, which produces briefing books on Australian forces abroad.

This article will give some idea of where Australia's foreign military policy stands in 2010.

Darfur, Sudan – Operations Hedgerow and Azure

Since 2003, this western region of Sudan has seen civilian massacres, mass rapes, starvation and anarchy unlike anywhere else in the world today. Up to 300,000 people are thought to have died and at least two and a half million made refugees as a result of fighting between the Arab-led government of Sudan and its allied Janjaweed militia against other predominantly black African rebel groups.

Four years ago, Australia's military became part of almost 30,000 United Nations and African Union personnel inside the country attempting to stop the violence across an area the size of France. Currently, 17 ADF specialising in air movements and logistics are there. Another group of eight ADF have been allocated to support the thousands of African Union troops on the ground, but to date they have not been able to arrive because of official stalling from the Sudanese government. Although details are scarce on conditions on the ground, DFAT says the whole of the country has an "extremely dangerous security situation, the risk of armed conflict, high level of violent crime and the high threat of terrorist attack." Around 100 peacekeepers have been killed to date, with no Australian casualties, but the situation is not expected to improve within the foreseeable future.

Sinai Peninsula, Egypt – Operation Mazurka

In 1982 Australia sent a joint Aust/NZ helicopter squadron to this former battleground between Israel and Egypt to supervise the peace between the two countries, and today we have a continued presence along this desolate desert border. Stationed in an isolated (but air conditioned) outpost on the north of the peninsula – officially called North Camp and more affectionately nicknamed the "Velvet Gulag" – its members leave its confines to operate checkpoints, reconnaissance patrols, and observation

posts along the international boundary. Currently there are 25 ADF personnel, ranging from corporal to lieutenant colonel, in Operation Mazurka as part of a body of around 1670 overseas troops from 11 countries, including France, Fiji and the US, serving in what is known as the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai. Each is posted there for a six month tour. In recent years, members of the MFO have been the targets of suicide bombers, although none has been Australian.

Israel – Operation Paladin

While little is known about this operation in the heart of the historic troubles of the Middle East, at 54 years, this is Australia's longest continuing overseas deployment. In 1956 Australia started sending military to Israel as part of the UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) to overlook the truce agreed at the conclusion of the first Arab/Israeli war. Since then it has become involved in various Israeli conflicts, including the ceasefire in the Suez Canal area, the Golan Heights and South Lebanon. Headquartered in Jerusalem with bases and observation points also in Egypt, Syria and Lebanon, 11 Australians are currently part of UNSTO's 151 military observer force which, until Feb 2008, was commanded by Australian Major General Ian Gordon.

Forty nine members of this largely unarmed force have been killed in action to date.

Iraq – Operations Kruger and Riverbank

Australia's involvement in the war with Iraq started in March 2003 when up to 500 special forces soldiers infiltrated Iraq's western desert slightly ahead of official hostilities. It was part of a 2000 man force from all three services that stayed until its official withdrawal in July 2009.

However, a sizable contingent of 80 infantry and cavalry combat troops remain today charged with protecting Australian embassy staff in Baghdad. It consists of personnel from the 2nd Battalion Royal Australian Regiment and 2nd Cavalry Regiment operating in ASLAVs. Duties include guarding the Embassy and the protection vehicle convoys. Although there have been serious injuries, no Australian servicemen have been killed as a result of enemy attack throughout its seven-year deployment in Iraq. Through FOI laws, however, *The Australian* has established 738 military are officially recognised as casualties with problems ranging from mental damage to missing limbs. The security situation remains highly dangerous and there are no plans for this contingent of Australian troops to withdraw in the foreseeable future.

There are also two Australian officers in Iraq as part of the ADF's contribution to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). A colonel is a senior military adviser to the Special Representative to the Secretary General in Baghdad, while a lieutenant colonel is in Kirkuk as a military adviser.

East Timor – Operations Astute and Tower

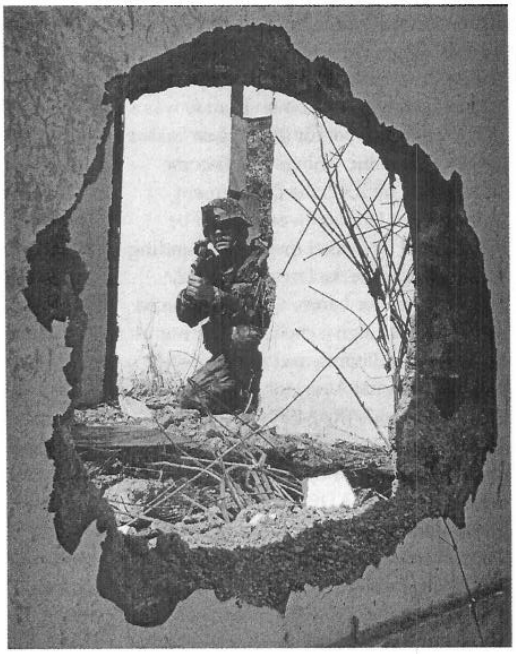
Arguably our most legitimate and most noble overseas deployment in recent times, and certainly the largest, Australia stepped up to the international plate in 1999 when more than 5500 ADF personnel spearheaded the 12,600-strong International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) UN peacekeeping force. By the time it had arrived about 70 per cent of East Timor's economic infrastructure had been destroyed by Indonesian troops and anti-independence militias, and 260,000 people fled westward, but Interfet's success in stopping the violence and stabilising the country was a major turning point in changing Australia's policy on intervention in neighbouring states, and a precursor to other ADF operations in Solomon Islands and Tonga.

Since then, Australian and New Zealand forces have made up the Australian-led International Stabilisation Force (ISF), which supports police operations by UN Police (UNPOL) made up of officers from 20 other countries, and Force Protection Units from Portugal, Malaysia, Pakistan and Bangladesh. While ISF's numbers have swelled during times of crisis, at present around 650 Australian navy, army and air force staff are involved in the operation, and, while the ADF is scaling back its commitments, essentially Australia is maintaining a permanent garrison in there with little chance of its completely withdrawing in the future.

At present, three ADF have been killed in East Timor, but in terms of casualties it is by far our most costly overseas operation in recent times. According to figures obtained by *The Australian*, 2863 military personnel are recognised to have successfully claimed for injury and illnesses as a result of serving in East Timor.

At present, Australian forces include:

Headquarters Joint Task Force 631 (HQ JTF 631) drawn from throughout the ADF;



Above: A New Zealand Defence Force soldier serving with the International Stabilisation Force, Timor Leste Battle Group VI, during training missions in Urban Operations. Below: Mutinational Force & Observers – Sinai

An ANZAC battle group made up of Battle Group Headquarters;
An infantry battalion group comprised of Australian rifle companies and administration company from the RAR, and a rifle company from the Royal NZ Infantry Regiment (Kiwi Coy);
Parts of the Combat Engineer Regiment, Royal Australian Engineers;
Elements from the 1st Military Police Battalion.
Elements of the Townsville-based 3rd Combat Service Support Battalion; and about 70 RAAF personnel equipped with Black Hawk helicopters.

Solomon Islands – Operation Anode

With a heavily armed and volatile militia army like the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army and the Marau Eagle Force destabilising a government already wracked with bankruptcy, incompetence and instability, the Solomon Islands was a major league player for the biggest basket case in the Pacific. Things had become so bad that, by 2002, the Department of Finance in Honiara would often be surrounded by armed men when funding was due to arrive. In December 2002, Finance Minister Laurie Chan was forced at gunpoint to sign a cheque made out to some of the militants, and not long after that the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) was formed. Made up of 2200 international police and troops, and led by Australia (which contributed 1400 ADF personnel) and New Zealand, and with representatives from 20 other Pacific nations, it entered the country to enforce law and order and get the militia to lay down their sizeable caches of firearms on the promise of better and fairer government. Essentially an extreme policing mission, the ADF's role has been to protect the police as they do their jobs. Around 80 troops drawn mainly from the 8th Brigade are currently serving there, while an extra 30 more will arrive in early 2010.

As of August 2009, the force included: an ADF-led combined headquarters in Honiara; a platoon from the ADF rotations of infantry from the Australian Reserves; air transport units from the RAAF; a small maritime task group, including patrol boats, landing craft and a mine hunter, support units, including engineers, communications and logistics.

To date, two Australia personnel have died in the Solomons, a police officer who was shot and an Army private who fell down a deep shaft while on patrol. Details on injuries are scarce but several Australian Federal Police serving there have been seriously hurt during violent protests. "Dodging rocks the size of house bricks, high-speed defensive driving, glass showers, and negotiating large fires," is how one officer has described a day at the office.

With the Solomon Islands government still struggling and with the prospect of lasting law and order looking unlikely, the Australian military is not expecting to pull out any time soon.

Afghanistan – Operation Slipper and Palate II

As the dubious reasons for the Iraq War and subsequent failure of bringing "peace" to the former Saddam Hussein regime became more apparent, attention started swinging towards operations in Afghanistan. It came to be known as the "just war" and Australia began committing increasing numbers to this area of conflict. After the SAS were sent in as part of the US and NATO-led operation to topple the Taliban and find Osama bin Laden not long after 9/11, they were withdrawn in 2002, only to return in 2005. The Australian contingent, going under the banner of Operation Slipper, is "an important component of the Australian government's commitment to working together with the international community to help prevent acts of terrorism around the world." According to the Department of Defence there are around 1550 ADF in Afghanistan as part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force. These include:

a National Command Element in Kabul;
a Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force based in Tarin Kowt, Oruzgan Province, as part of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Provincial Reconstruction Team;
a Special Operations Task Group deployed to Oruzgan province as part of ISAF operations against insurgents; and
an RAAF Control and Reporting Centre (CRC) deployed at Kandahar Air Field;
a Chinook helicopter detachment based at Kandahar in Helmand province in support of ISAF operations;
an artillery contingent of 16 soldiers deployed with British forces in Helmand province;
an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Detachment of approximately 30 personnel;
Force Level Logistic Asset consisting of approximately 60 personnel at ISAF headquarters in Kandahar;
Three Operational Mentor and Liaison teams (OMLTs) embedded with the Afghan National Army in Oruzgan;
Along with Australian Federal Police operations in Afghanistan, and Australian Secret Intelligence Service personnel.

While there are many instances of ADF troops winning both the peace and the hearts and minds of the Afghanis, evidence

A Tongan section including Australians support Royal Solomon Islands Police Force Explosive Ordnance Technician Noel Bako, with a presence patrol at Hell's Point near Honiara in Solomon Islands. Tongans, Australians and New Zealanders worked closely together on Rotation 19 of Operation ANODE in Solomon Islands

is mounting that the overall mission to stabilise the country is failing. The Afghani government of Hamid Karzai is infected with deep corruption, increasing civilian killings are creating resentment and the hope of a successful outcome is in no way clear at the moment.

At present, more than 1600 ISAF troops have been killed, 11 of these being Australians. In terms of casualties, almost nothing is known except for an investigation by *The Weekend Australian* that that found 83 soldiers have been wounded in Afghanistan since late 2005. It says the soldiers have a range of damage, from severe bruising, concussion and fractures, to gunshot and shrapnel wounds and significant blast trauma. Any further breakdown of those figures is not available.

In terms of major battles and contact with the enemy, Afghanistan is the most active of Australia's overseas operations. Australia has the largest number of the special forces of the ISAF in Afghanistan that have been successful in actively hunting insurgent groups but, at the same time, reconstruction and general troops are also regularly under attack and, although Australia's kill count is by far in its favour, most often the enemy disappears into the landscape using hit and run tactics. Afghanistan is probably the most dangerous place in the world at the moment and it looks like things aren't going to change in a hurry.

Kyrgystan, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE and other Middle Eastern countries

Since the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the number of Australian bases in the Middle East has mushroomed. Initially they were mainly set up to support Iraqi operations but now the focus is moving to supporting Afghanistan into the future. At the moment 800 ADF are stationed in Middle Eastern bases or offshore supporting the war in Afghanistan. The bases are widely in the public domain – including a new military base in Dubai costing $87.5 million that's being built – but the Department of Defence keeps them secret to the Australian public because of security considerations and "host national sensitivities", an investigation in *The Sunday Age* has found out. "The coyness has less to do with security and more to do with the 'sensitivities' of the Arab hosts, who don't want to advertise that they accommodate foreign troops and their hardware," says the Tom Hyland article published in November last year.

The article goes on to describe how Liberal Senator David Bushby visited the base on an ADF-escorted trip and told the Senate all about it on June 18. "The ADF conducts a training course for all personnel arriving in the Middle East theatre at Billabong Flats, a base Australia maintains in Kuwait," he said.

"The community information page on the website of the army's 3rd Brigade also mentions the Kuwait base and its fast food outlets, including one that boasts 'the world's best cheesesteak' ". Despite this sort of information, the Department of Defence still will not reveal even the countries where they are located.

• • • • • •

As well as supporting Afghanistan, the RAN has increasing found itself getting involved in fighting Somali pirates. As of 29 May 2009, Frigate HMAS *Warramunga* (FFH 152) has been diverted from duties in the Persian Gulf to assist in bringing order off the African coast.

GOOGLE EARTH AUSTRALIA'S BASES

As part of the Nautilus Institute's Australian Forces Abroad briefing books, you can now get a global perspective of Australia's military presence across the Middle East and the Pacific thanks to Google Earth. The virtual tour starts with key bases and facilities in Australia itself and goes through facilities used by the ADF in the Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Diego Garcia, the Gulf region, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

To watch it, go to www.globalcollab.org/Nautilus/australia/bases/google-earth-tour-of-australian-bases-abroad

All images apart from the Sinai pics (courtesy Multinational Force & Observers) are Commonwealth copyright and Department of Defence origin

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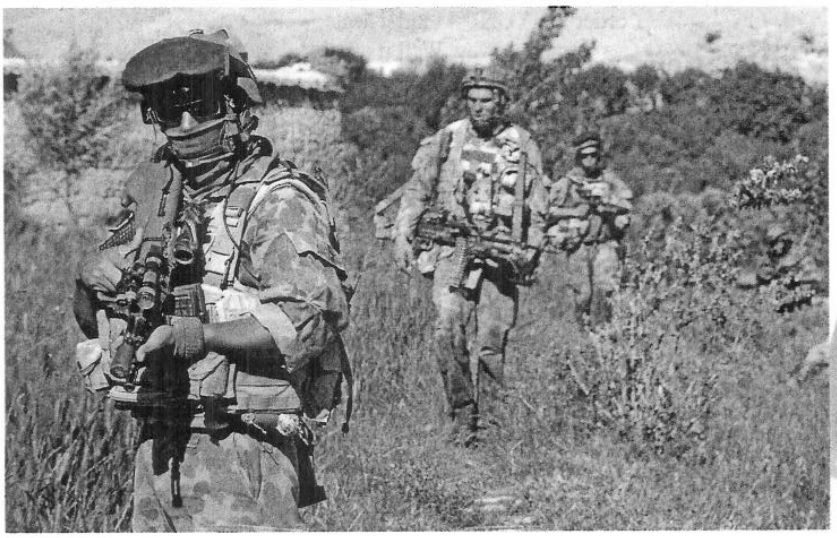
BACK ON HIS OWN TWO FEET

General Peter Cosgrove says mateship underpins the essence of the team work, trust and cohesion required at the unit, section, platoon and battle group levels for successful military operations.



By Michael Brooke, Service News

It has transcended the trenches of Gallipoli to flourish in the mountains and valleys of Afghanistan, where the Australian Defence Force and her Coalition partners are conducting military operations in order to establish peace and stability.

The core value of mateship coupled with leadership and training has enabled Australian soldiers to conduct highly successful military operations in Oruzgan Province that have defeated the insurgent terrorists in several large scale battles.

Mateship, in fact, saved the life of an Australian commando who lost both legs in an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blast in southern Afghanistan.

Pte D, of 2 Cdo Regt (who cannot be identified for security reasons), said he would not have survived an IED strike on his vehicle on April 3, 2009 if not for his mates.

Private D's mates worked feverishly with combat first aid kits to stabilise the severe wounds to his lower limbs, which combined with MEDEVAC within the 'golden hour', ultimately saved his life.

Even the Chief of Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston, said "the immediate first aid that his mates applied, and the surgery he received at the coalition hospital saved his life."

Private D, 28, said he remembers little from the IED attack.

"From what I'm told, even the other wounded soldiers put aside their pain and concerns for their personal safety to apply tourniquets to my lower limbs and treat other parts of my body that were burnt and lacerated by the IED blast," he said.

"There's no amount of training you can do to prepare yourself for something like that."

But what really matters now to Private D is the immediate care and support he is receiving from his Army family, which is crucial to his long-term rehabilitation and recovery.

• • • • •

The wounded Special Forces soldier commenced his long journey home when he was flown from the incident site to a NATO medical hospital in Germany, where he was treated by some of the most experienced trauma-care specialists in the world.

Private D endured six major operations during which time he was so incapacitated by his wounds that he had to rely on others to operate the self-administered morphine-based pain-relief system.

"With so many burns and lacerations to my lower limbs, arms and face, the pain was excruciating," he said.

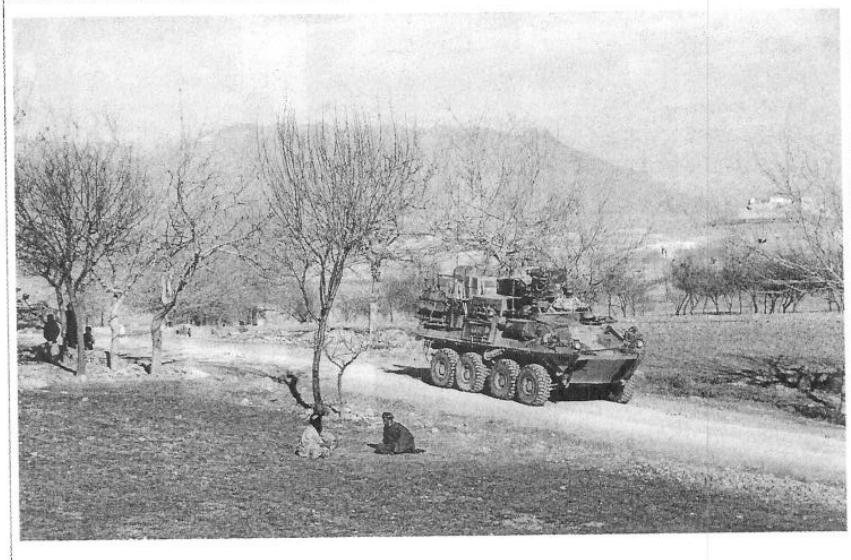
Private D said he was treated like a king in the NATO hospital while he recovered to the point where doctors believed he was strong enough to survive the long flight home to Australia.

"I suppose you could say that my long journey home actually commenced during one conscious moment after the IED attack, when I was lying on the ground and looked up to see one of the sergeants standing over me, who told me what had happened.

"Then I blacked out," he said.

The medical treatment provided by Defence enabled him to walk with prosthetic legs within eight weeks of returning to Australia after extensive

Shadow pic shows Pte D on his prosthetic legs. He cannot be identified for security reasons. Other pics relate to Operation Slipper and are from ADF website www.defence.gov.au/opEx/global/opslipper/images/gallery/2010/0112 b/index.htm



surgery in Germany.

"(This) allowed me to achieve my first important goal, which was to be standing on my new legs at the airport to welcome home my mates when they returned from their tour of duty," he said.

"This was an important part of the healing process for all of us because they initially feared I wasn't going to make it home alive."

Although Private D is scheduled for several more minor operations, he recently returned to duty at 2 CDO Regt, where he is again one of the boys.

"I have been working two days a week in the Development Cell, which is really exciting as it allows me to make a small but meaningful contribution to operational support," he said.

• • • • •

Private D joined the army in order to walk in the footsteps of his grandfathers.

He is taking his recovery one step at a time and with the support of other wounded and injured ADF personnel, including the Navy Clearance Diver Paul De Gelder who fought off a shark, is making good progress recovering both mentally and physically.

• • • • •

He is very optimistic about his future, his long-term employment in the army, and has even started swimming with his local surf life saving club.

Perhaps most important of all is the way Private D has settled back into the local community and is comfortable to talk about his sacrifice for the nation with members of the public, who have all expressed their sympathy and appreciation.

Private D. said he wants to adopt a mentoring role to help other wounded and injured ADF personnel along the road to recovery as a way of expressing his thanks for the help he has received.

The cheerful Digger says the new army-integrated framework is designed to help soldiers who have experienced severe injuries and psychological medical problems.

Private D.'s fighting spirit and courage was saluted recently by champion boxer Danny Green, who invited him back to his change-room for a talk, only minutes after knocking out boxing legend Roy Jones Jnr (on December 2.)

"He had the world at his feet after knocking out Roy Jones Jnr but he turned his back on the media and well-wishers to talk to me about my miraculous comeback from the dead," he said.

Report from John Coull

Recently I borrowed a magazine called CHIN UP, published by the T P I .Association. In this publication was an article about the origin of THE LAST POST, written by a person of the name " Ladner Hanlon". This is an interesting article, as I never knew, where or how this piece of music originated, following is the account of it's origin.
If any of you have ever been to a military funeral in which The Last Post was played; this brings out a new meaning to it.
We have all heard the haunting song, " THE LAST POST".
It's the song that gives us the lump in the throat and usually tears in our eyes.
But, do you know the story behind the song?

Reportedly, it all began in 1862 during the American Civil War, when Union Army Captain "ROBERT ELLICOMBE" was with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia.
The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land.
During the night, Cpt. Ellicombe heard the moans of a soldier who lay severly wounded on the field.
Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the Cpt. decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention. Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the Cpt. reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him back towards his encampment.

When the Cpt. finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead.
The Cpt. lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock.
In the dim light, he saw the face of the soldier. IT WAS HIS OWN SON.
The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out.
Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial, despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted.
The Cpt. asked if he could have a group of Army Band members to play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral.
The request was turned down since the soldier was a Confederate. But, out of respect for the father, they said they could give him only one musician.

The Cpt. chose a Bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform. This wish was granted.

The Haunting Melody, we know as "THE LAST POST ' was born.

THE WORDS ARE AS FOLLOWS,==

DAY IS DONE.
GONE THE SUN.
FROM THE LAKES.
FROM THE HILLS.
FROM THE SKY.
ALL IS WELL.
SAFELY REST.
GOD IS NIGH.

FADING LIGHT.
DIMS THE SIGHT.
AND A STAR.
GEMS THE SKY.
GLEAMING BRIGHT.
FROM AFAR.
DRAWING NIGH.
FALLS THE LIGHT.

THANKS AND PRAISE.
FOR OUR DAYS.
NEATH THE SUN.
NEATH THE STARS.
NEATH THE SKY.
AS WE GO.
THIS WE KNOW.
GOD IS NIGH.

The writer of this letter concludes with a few of his own words to sum up his feelings in relation to " THE LAST POST" and are as follows, " I TOO HAVE FELT THE CHILLS WHILE LISTENING TO " **THE LAST POST**" but I have never seen all the words to the song until now. I did'nt even know there was more than one verse or knew the story behind the song.
I now have an even deeper respect for the song than I did before.

LEST WE FORGET.

Conrtibuted by JOHN COULL. Many thanks to the T P I. Association Victoria and their publication " CHIN UP".

Restored memorial in the spotlight

THE 58th/32nd Infantry Battalion Association has unveiled its re-dedication of the restored 58th Battalion World War I memorial.

The memorial was completed after the battalion received a $10,000 grant through the Restoring Community War Memorials Grant.

Veteran Affairs Minister Tony Robinson officially conducted proceedings on Saturday.

Association treasurer Everett Reynolds said the restored memorial meant a lot to the Essendon regiment.

The association originally formed as the Essendon Rifles in 1913 and has undergone five changes during its history.

Robert Fedele

Supreme command: David Cadogen-Cooper, officer in command at the barracks. **Pictures: Cathy Jackson**

Looking on: Tony Robinson, Major General Kevin Cooke and Essendon MP Judy Maddigan.

New start: Tony Robinson unveils the plaque.

Timely reminder: East Keilor RSL president Peter Dodds at the ceremony.

History gets an update

By Robert Fedele

THE 58th/32nd Infantry Battalion Association, originally formed as the Essendon Rifles in 1913, will unveil its rededication of the restored 58th Battalion World War I memorial this Saturday.

The memorial was completed after the battalion received a $10,000 grant under the Restoring Community War Memorials Grant.

Veteran Affairs Minister Tony Robinson will officially mark the event.

Treasurer Everett Reynolds, who served in Vietnam, said the unveiling was a historic moment for everyone involved in the City of Essendon Regiment.

"It's fantastic now. It's quite a history going back to the first World War. Times have run things out. The blokes are getting much older."

The association has undergone five name changes since it began as the Essendon Rifles in 1913.

In 1948 it was known as the Melbourne Rifles and in 1955 as the City of Essendon Regiment.

It has 130 members who meet annually at the Brass Tavern restaurant in Pascoe Vale Road.

"It's mainly traditional," Mr Reynolds said.

"All the guys who have served, they catch up with all the friends they served with."

Member John Magill joined in 1954 and completed his two-year service commitment.

His father fought in World War II in the Middle East and Mr Magill was proud to continue the family tradition.

"We were all dressed up with nowhere to go," Mr Magill said.

"It was a busy period. I just saw it as a hoot for young blokes at that time. I thought it was really great for individuals at that time."

Timely reminder: John De Oleveira, Everett Reynolds and John Magill outside the new memorial. Picture: Darren Howe

The 58th/32nd Infantry Battalion Association's unveiling and rededication of the WWII Memorial will be held this Saturday, at the Menin Army Barracks, 127 Pascoe Vale Road, Moonee Ponds, at 11am.

The Old Warrior himself – Jack Haley

Budget 2009 – Harmer Review

Service Pension Changes Effective 20 September 2009

Overview

On 20 September 2009, the Australian pension system will begin the most significant and widespread reform in more than 20 years.

This Factsheet is a summary of the changes to Service Pensions effective from 20 September 2009 only.

For general information about Service Pension refer to *Factsheet IS01 Service Pension Overview*.

Will anyone be worse off after 20 September 2009?

No. There is a minimum pension increase of $20.20 a fortnight for pensioner couples and single pensioners.

Why has the Government decided to change the pension system?

The Government's pension reform package is addressing the following Harmer Pension Review findings:

- The rate of single service pension and age pension as a proportion of the combined couples rate is lagging behind other developed countries and does not adequately recognise the costs for those wholly reliant on the pension to support themselves
- The current system of pensions and allowances could be simplified by integrating them into either a new pension supplement or the base pension
- Pension payments should be tied to changes in the actual cost of living faced by pensioners
- There is scope to target pension increases more towards those who have little or no private means.

Boost to pension rate

From 20 September 2009 the full rate single service pension will be increased by $65.00 per fortnight on top of normal indexation.

From the same date the full rate pensioner couples will receive an additional $20.20 per fortnight on top of normal indexation.

Streamlined allowances

The Government will simplify the existing pension allowances by creating a new fortnightly Pension Supplement. The Supplement incorporates the value of these four existing supplementary allowances:

- Goods and Service Tax supplement
- Utilities Allowance
- Telephone Allowance at the higher internet rate
- Pharmaceutical Allowance

and a one-off increase will be applied to the payment

Note: The portion of the Pension Supplement representing the telephone allowance and utilities allowance is not payable to pensioners who live permanently outside Australia, or who are absent from Australia for more than 13 weeks.

Keeping pace with pensioner costs

It is important that pension increases keep pace with the rise in costs that pensioners experience.

The Government will develop a new price index, to apply from 20 September 2009, designed specifically for households that rely on the pension. This new measure of price changes, the Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index (PBLCI), will be used to increase pension rates when it is higher than CPI. The CPI will still be used to index relevant eligibility thresholds.

Change to income test

To ensure a sustainable pension system into the future, the pension income test will be changed.

From 20 September 2009, the rate at which pension is withdrawn for each one dollar of income over the free areas (known as the taper rate) will be increased from 40 cents to 50 cents per fortnight (from 20 cents to 25 cents each for couples). The additional income test threshold (free area) for dependent children will also be removed and no longer form part of the calculation of a person's income free area.

Transitional arrangements

A range of saving and transitional provisions will be in place to ensure no existing pensioner will be worse off.

The entitlements of existing pensioners who would otherwise be affected by the income test changes and whose pension would be reduced, will be maintained assuming no change in circumstances. The transition rules will ensure that they stay on the 40 cents taper until such time as the new arrangements provide a higher rate of pension.

Pensioners whose rate of pension is determined by the transitional arrangements will receive an increase in their maximum payment rate of $20.20 per fortnight for singles (or $20.20 combined for couples).

Around 70% of pensioners will move to the new rules immediately with only 30% needing the protection of the transition rules.

Workforce participation

The Government is encouraging workforce participation for older Australians by introducing a Work Bonus which treats earned income more generously.

From 20 September 2009, under the Work Bonus only half the first $500 of earned income per fortnight will be counted in the income test for those over pension age and not protected by the transition rules. The $500 amount will be increased by CPI each 1 July.

Example: A single person over pension age whose only income is earnings of $700 a fortnight, will have $450 held as income with a further reduction of $142 for the free area. Only $308 of the $700 per fortnight will reduce this person's pension by 50 cents in the dollar.

$700 less $500	=	$200
$500 divided by 2	=	$250
$200 plus $250	=	$450
$450 less $142	=	$308
$308 times .50	=	$154

This means that for the $700 wages the pension is reduced by only $154 or the pensioner keeps $546.

The current Pension Bonus Scheme will close to new entrants from 20 September 2009. The Scheme will continue to be available to existing members who accrue entitlements under existing rules.

Aged Care

The Government has announced that resident contribution in aged care will rise to enable the appropriate and equitable flow of the pension increase to both the care recipients and approved providers.

Of the $64.98 per fortnight increase in the single rate of service pension, current aged care residents will receive $20.18 and $44.80 will flow to the aged care provider.

Those who do not benefit from the full pension rise will be "protected" from paying higher aged care fees and will remain on their existing fee rate until they leave care. New residents (entering care on or after 20 September 2009) who do not benefit from the pension changes will initially pay the same rate as 'protected' residents and the higher rate will be phased-in over time.

Public Housing

It is expected that Public Housing tenants will receive the full benefit of the pension increase.

State and Territory Housing authorities are reviewing rent arrangements so that the boost to the pension rate will not result in a rent increase. Regular consumer price index adjustments will continue to be included in rent adjustments.

What do I have to do?

Nothing. DVA will calculate any required change for eligible pensioners.

Will my pension rate go down because of the change?

No, nobody will have a pension reduction because of the new rules. Your pension rate could only go down in September if you had an unrelated change of circumstances at the same time.

Will I get a letter to tell me what my new rate is?

Yes. DVA will write to pensioners to tell them what their rate of payment will be.

Oral advice

While we make every effort to ensure that you are given accurate information, it is important that you seek written confirmation of oral information or advice before making any major decisions based on that information.

We continually strive to improve the level of service you receive and make this request as an added safeguard for you.

32a Kars st
Maryborough Vic 3465

Dear Kev,

Some info from ANZAC day , About 25/30 members Turned up with 47 having lunch at the Albion Hotel , most were from the day's after I was retired to the reserve list, some I new from napkin days , all were great to the old man of the Depot & allowed Him to lead them in the march, it felt a hell of a lot better the coming up the rear at the closing of the Depot, some of the boys are about to take up overseas duties & we wished them good luck, they hope to Conduct another one in a couple years time, the shorter the better for us older ones.

Photo of the guard boys are the same boys that were used at Ballarat at the Dawn service.

Find enclosed the 58/32 write-up & photo's sent to me from the assoc As you will see in the photo's Tony Robinson, the man who found the bodies of all the 58Bn men Killed in WW1.

Maryborough Reunion
Lunch at Albion Hotel

8/7th Battalion ANZAC Guard

ANY WO'S ABOUT?

A cynical old digger dies, and, being pure of heart and clean of mind, he is instantly transported to the Pearly Gates.

St. Peter looks through his personnel file and grants the digger access to heaven.

"One question" says the Digger, "No bloody Warrant Officers up here are there?"

"No" replies St. Peter, "You're ok."

"Good" says the Digger, "I'm not coming in if there is."

"No mate...job's right, enjoy."

For three days the Digger is literally in heaven, free rum, hot and cold running water, no guard duty, heaven every day ... until he spots a figure in the distance!

Immaculately pressed polyesters, the light glistening off his beautiful polished brass, three rows of ribbons, steely gaze surveying all around him, swagger stick clamped under his highly muscled left arm & ... horror of horrors, on that arm a large crown.

The Digger races back to St.Peter & bails him up; "Hey mate, you told me there were no Warrant Officers up here."

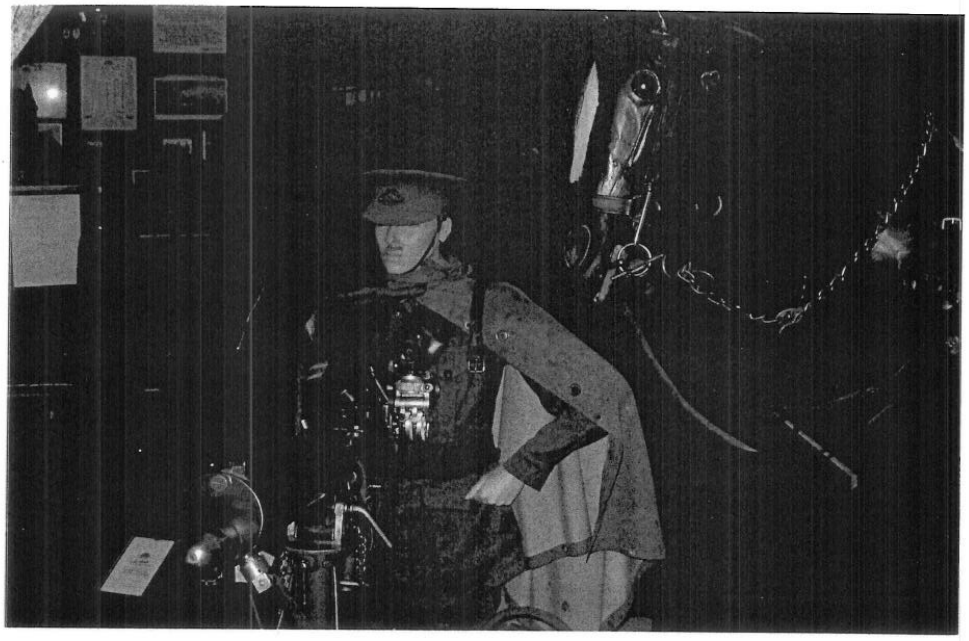
"Yeah that's right, there's none."

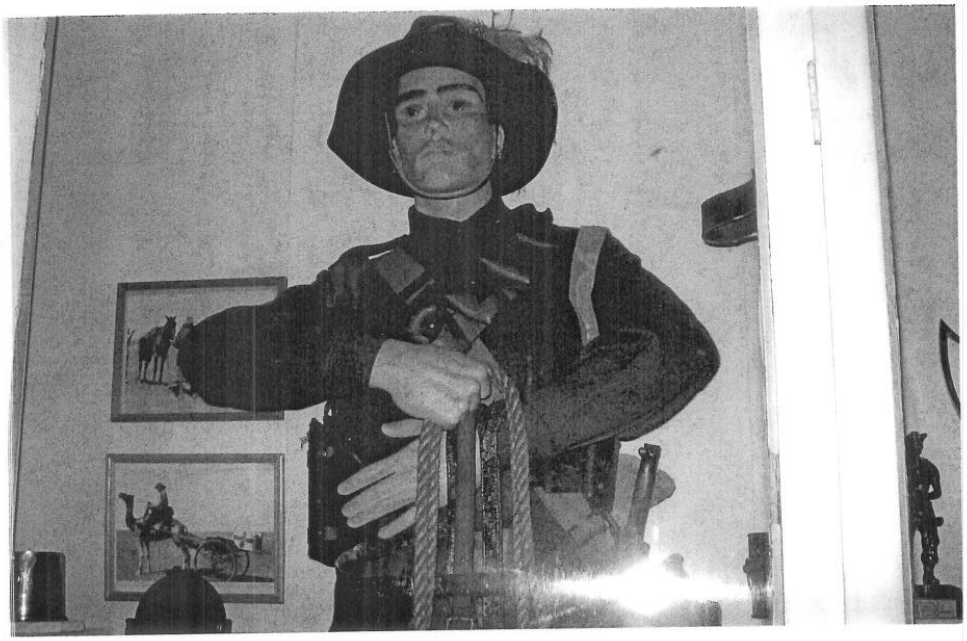
"Oh yeah - then who's the bloke in the pollies?" asks the Digger.

"No mate, that's not a Warrant Officer, that's God

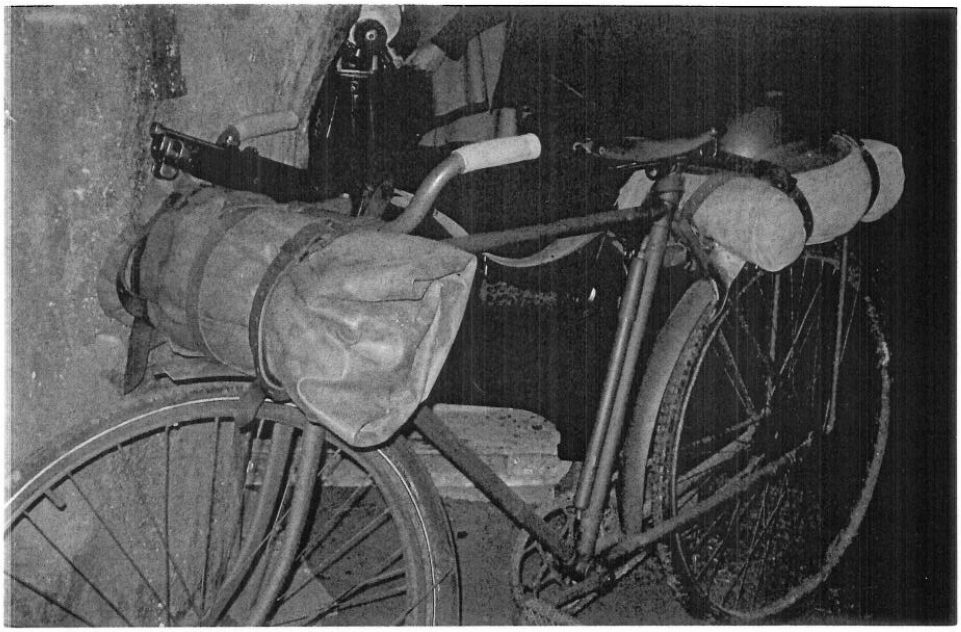
...He just thinks he's a warrant Officer."

Nar Nar Goon Bus Trip

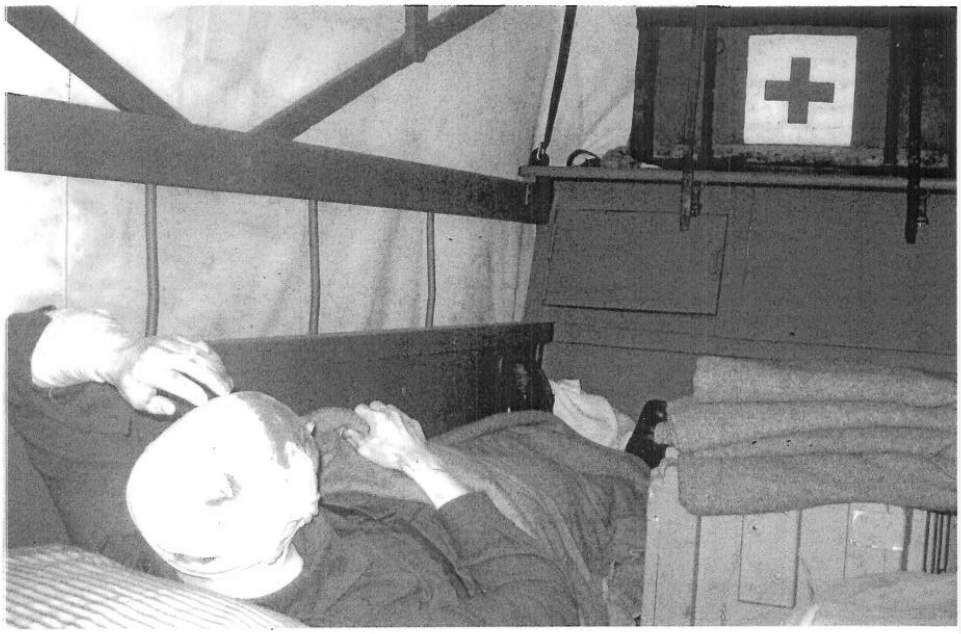




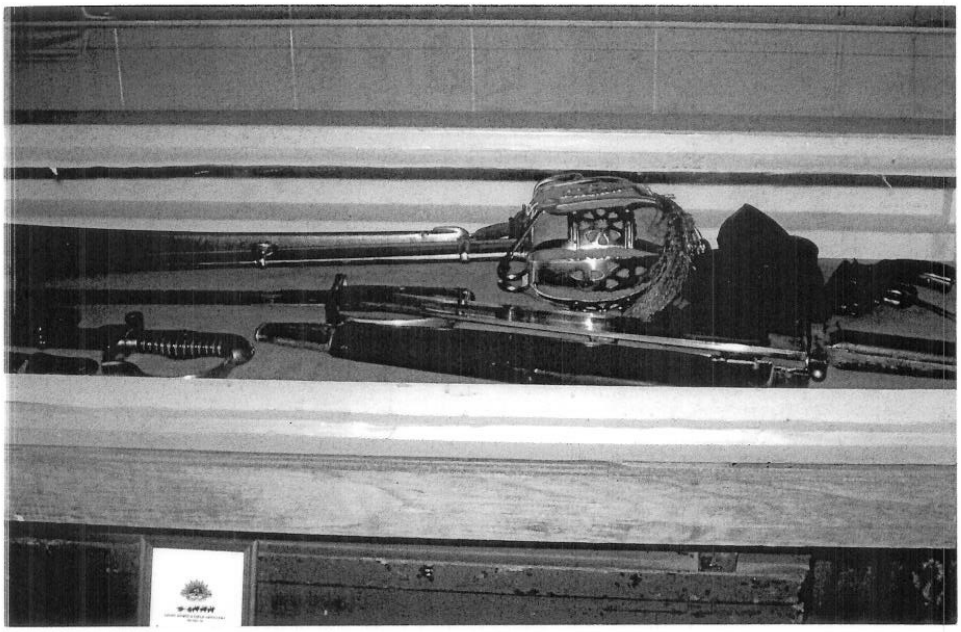
Nar Nar Goon Bus Trip



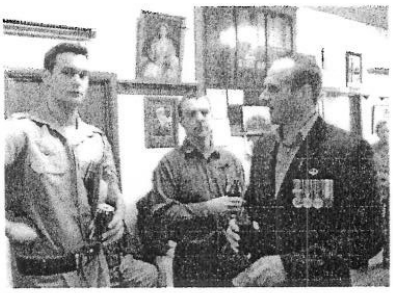
Nar Nar Goon Bus Trip



Nar Nar Goon Bus Trip



Maryborough Reunion



OP ANODE – 8/7 RVR's SUPPORT TO RAMSI

The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) is a partnership between the people and Government of Solomon Islands and fifteen contributing countries of the Pacific region. These nations are: **Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, FSM, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu** and **Vanuatu**. Australia plays a lead role in the mission. The Australian contribution to the RAMSI has been the provision of military, police and civilian personnel to RAMSI since July 2003. The current Australian contribution is 169 Civilian advisors and 210 Participating Police Force advisors.

RAMSI is helping the Solomon Islands to lay the foundations for long-term stability, security and prosperity – through support for improved law, justice and security; for more effective, accountable and democratic government; for stronger, broad-based economic growth; and for enhanced service delivery.

The overarching goal of RAMSI's work is for a peaceful, well-governed and prosperous Solomon Islands. This goal will be pursued over the long-term through a mutual commitment with the Solomon Islands Government, which supports RAMSI's mandate to:

- Ensure the safety and security of Solomon Islands
- Repair and reform the machinery of government, improve government accountability and improve the delivery of services in urban and provincial areas
- Improve economic governance and strengthen the government's financial systems
- Help rebuild the economy and encourage sustainable broad-based growth
- Build strong and peaceful communities

The Australian military support to RAMSI is the provision of an Infantry Company Group. The group is predominately manned by Army Reserve members and operates under the heading of Operation Anode. The last full 'rotation' to Op Anode this year is a Company Group mainly from 8/7 RVR, with a sub-unit from one of the other participating countries. In all almost ninety 8/7 RVR members will deploy on this rotation.

Lead-up training commences in early June with a four-month deployment commencing in early August. The Reservists will return to Australia in December and will complete their leave before Christmas before returning to their civilian occupations.

+ If you need a good laugh, try reading through these children's science exam answers.

Q. Name the four seasons ?
A. Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

Q. Explain one of the processes by which water can be made safe to drink. ?
A. Flirtation makes the water safe to drink because it removes large pollutants like grit, sand, dead sheep and canoeist's.

Q. How is dew formed.?
A. The sun shines down on the leaves and makes them perspire.

Q. How can you keep milk from turning sour. ?
A. Keep it in the cow.

Q. What causes the tides in the oceans.?
A. The tides are a fight between the Earth and the Moon. All the water tends to flow towards the moon, because there is no water on the moon, and nature hates a vaccuum. I forget where the Sun joins in this fight.

Q.What are steriods.?
A. Things for keeping carpets still on the stairs.

Q. What happens to your body as you age.?
A. When you get old, so do your bowels and you get intercontinental.

Q. What happens to a boy when he reaches puberty.?
A. He say's goodbye to his boyhood and looks forward to his adultery.

Q. Name a major disease associated with cigarettes.?
A. Premature death.

Q. How are the main parts of the body categorized.? (e.g. ABDOMEN).
A. the body is consisted into three parts -- the brainium, the borax and the abdominal cavity. The brainium contains the Brain; the Borax contains the heart and lungs, and the Abdominal cavity contains the five bowels A,E,I.O,and U.

Q. What is the Fibula.?
A. A small lie.

Q. What does 'Varicose' mean. ? (I reckon this is great).
A. Nearby.

Q. Give the meaning of the term 'Caesarian Section'.?
A. The Caesarian section is a district in Rome.