THEN AND NOW: CFS marked its 100th anniversary at RAAF Base East Sale on March 8. To illustrate the span of time, pictured is an inverted CFS Avro Cadet trainer from Point Cook in 1942, and a current CFS PC-9/A trainer from RAAF Base East Sale. Main photo: FLTLT Scott Bosman and historical photo courtesy National Library of Australia, vn3723168

HOW TIME FLIES

CFS celebrates a century in the air

P2-3
The Air Force celebrates a century of CFS history

CPL Aaron Curran

MORE than 230 people from around Australia came together at RAAF Base East Sale on March 8 for the 100th anniversary of Central Flying School (CFS).

CFS was the first Australian military flying unit formed at Point Cook on March 7, 1913. The determination of the Air Force personnel and invited guests to enjoy the anniversary festivities and catch up with old comrades was not dented by the 38 degree heat that enveloped Gippsland on the day.

It started with a barbecue and then a flying display from a Wnejal, an ex-Rhodesian Air Force Vampire and the Roulettes.

That night an all-ranks dinner was held in the Officers Mess with AIRMSHL Geoff Brown in attendance.

CAF spoke of CFS’s proud tradition of excellence and setting the highest standards. "One of those with fond memories of CFS who attended the celebrations was former WGCDR Ron Biddell, who said he had been out of the Air Force for more than 30 years but when I caught up with my old mates it was like yesterday."

Mr Biddell said, "It will be a new dimension for the school to explore qualifying pilots and instructors through simulation only, but CFS will always have a leading role in supplying flying instructors for new platforms."

"One of the most satisfying years he had while in the Air Force was some of the most satisfying years he had while in the Air Force."

WGCDR O’Neil said the need for military aviation excellence was first identified 100 years ago with the formation of the first flight school at Point Cook. "It was with incredible foresight that only 10 years after the first aircraft flew we established a school for military aviation;" he said.

"Since CFS re-formed in 1940, excellence in flying instruction has been at its core."

With that level of professionalism at the heart of the unit, CFS and its members are well placed to meet the challenges of the future.

The biggest challenge for CFS will be mastering the significant use of aviation simulation for new capabilities, such as the Joint Strike Fighter, and ensuring that we develop personnel with the right skills for that job,” WGCDR O’Neil said.

"I have been out of the Air Force for more than 30 years but when I caught up with my old mates it was like yesterday."

He said even though things were a bit rougher back then, his time at CFS was some of the most satisfying years he had while in the Air Force.

"I am very proud of what CFS does and I am humbled and proud to lead the unit in its 100th year," WGCDR O’Neil said.

The unit celebration was a huge day for everyone, meeting many new people and getting to hear their stories and experiences."

"The biggest challenge for CFS will be mastering the significant use of aviation simulation for new capabilities, such as the Joint Strike Fighter, and ensuring that we develop personnel with the right skills for that job,” WGCDR O’Neil said.

"It will be a new dimension for the school to explore qualifying pilots and instructors through simulation only, but CFS will always have a leading role in supplying flying instructors for new platforms."
Looking back at the birth of Australian aviation

CROWD PLEASERS: Above, the Roulettes taxi out for a flying display for CFS’s 100th anniversary celebrations. Left, an ex-Rhodesian Air Force Vampire, which joined the flying display, and the CFS Air Force Balloon in the background.

Photos: CPL Aaron Curran

CFI AIRMSHL Geoff Brown said it was a rare honour to celebrate the 100th anniversary of one of his units, particularly one with such a rich and significant history.

Being formed at Point Cook on March 7, 1913, Central Flying School (CFS) is the oldest military aviation unit in Australia and one of the oldest in the world, so it really is something to celebrate,” AIRMSHL Brown said.

“CFS has a fine heritage, a first-class history that stretches back to the very beginnings of military aviation in Australia, and a tradition of excellence and professionalism that is unsurpassed.”

Since its inception, several thousand personnel have passed through CFS as students or staff and the school has operated more than 50 different types of aircraft.

While the unit’s history officially began in 1911 when the Australian Military Board recommended the formation of an Aviation Corps, it was possible to trace the beginnings of CFS back to 1909 when the Department of Defence recognised the potential of aviation.

In 1912, Lieutenants Henry Petre and Eric Harrison were selected to establish CFS. Beginning with four mechanics, three other staff and five aircraft including a Bristol Boxkite for initial training.

The first flying course in 1914 had just four students, including AIRMSHL Sir Richard Williams – the RAAF’s first Chief of Air Staff.

The Aviation Flying Corps was disbanded in December 1919, including CFS – having trained 152 pilots.

With the formation of the RAAF in March 1921, the remnants of CFS was formed into No. 1 Flying Training School (IFTS) for all basic flying training.

CFS was re-formed in April 1940, seven months after Britain declared war against Germany during World War II. The unit had a number of homes including Camden, Tamworth, Parkes and Point Cook before being moved to its current home of East Sale in November 1947.

With IFTS now responsible for initial pilot training, CFS moved into conducting flying instructor training which has remained its core function to this day – with the first course graduating in June 1948.

AIRMSHL Brown said CFS had some impressive statistics in relation to instructor training.

“During World War II, CFS trained 3600 instructors – a phenomenal effort,” he said.

“From 1948 to the present, almost 2000 instructors have graduated from CFS, which is a tremendous achievement. I don’t think I go too far in saying that these 2000 have in many respects formed the backbone of the Air Force since WWII. Our flying instructors are the linchpin in our ability to train pilots and generate air power for Australia’s security.”

“I am enormously proud of the tradition of teaching and learning that CFS has ‘lived’ this past 100 years, developing a body of professional airmen, skilled in their trade and expert in their business.”

Air Force will celebrate a centenary of Australian military aviation next year with an air pageant at Point Cook on March 1-2.
KeePsak es for 35SQN

Eamon Hamilton

RARELY do Air Force squadrons pause to give fellow units a birthday present.

For the 71st anniversary of 35SQN, a King Air light transport from 38SQN flew into RAAF Base Richmond to deliver some 35SQN memorabilia, including the unit’s Honour Roll from operations during the Vietnam War. On arrival, CO 38SQN WGCDR Stewart Dowrie, left, presented CO 35SQN WGCDR Bradley Clarke with the Honour Roll.

Preparing to operate the C-27J Spartan from next year, 35SQN’s keepsakes and photos have been held at RAAF Base Townsville until this month, when they were handed over by 38SQN.

Making the handover, CO 38SQN WGCDR Stewart Dowrie said the two squadrons shared close history.

“The first 38SQN crews receiving the Caribou in 1964 were diverted to Vietnam, where they formed the RAAF Transport Flight Vietnam, which subsequently became 35SQN,” WGCDR Dowrie said.

“Both squadrons have had the distinction of being the Air Force’s North Queensland-based flying squadron, and have a long history of supporting the region.”

WGCDR Dowrie said that as an Air Force Cadet in Cairns, he attended camps in Townsville and flew with 35SQN Caribous and Iroquois.

“The impact they had on the local community was profound,” WGCDR Dowrie said.

“The choice of the 35SQN current slogan ‘Dingo Airlines’ was specifically to echo the continuity of 35SQN’s ‘WallaWallay Airlines’ in far north Queensland. 38SQN continues in that vein, regularly supporting the exact same customers in the region, and now many others much further afield.”

Receiving the memorabilia, CO 35SQN WGCDR Brad Clarke said that honouring the history of 35SQN and Wallaby Airlines was important.

“We’re looking forward to the introduction of the Spartan, and continuing the proud history of delivering airlift support onto the battlefield as well as supporting the Australian and international communities in times of need,” WGCDR Clarke said.

More time for abuse response taskforce

Michael Weaver

The Government has extended the duration of the Defence Abuse Response Taskforce from December this year to May 2014 to allow completion of its scope of work.

Defence Minister Stephen Smith said the number of cases before the Taskforce has been receiving about 15 new matters a week.

“Advice from the Taskforce Chair is that he considers an extension of this deadline is necessary as there is no realistic prospect the work required by the Terms of Reference could be completed within the present 12-month timeframe,” Mr Smith said.

The Minister tabled the Taskforce’s first interim report in Parliament on March 14.

The 31-page report provides an update on progress made in establishing the Taskforce. The Taskforce is now preparing to transition into its Operational Phase, in which the assessment of allegations and complaints will be considered in accordance with the Taskforce’s protocols.

Mr Smith announced that the cut-off for allegations of abuse that occurred before April 11, 2011, would be May 31 this year.

“This will ensure that people who have experienced abuse prior to April 11, 2011, but who have not yet brought their case forward, have the time to consider doing so,” he said.

The Minister also said that Government had approved the Defence Abuse Reparations Payment Scheme, in which to individuals could receive up to $50,000.

The Taskforce members will liaise with those who have made allegations of abuse, to determine the most appropriate response.

The Minister will be looking at further avenues for parliamentary oversight of the management of allegations of abuse in Defence, and implementation of cultural change measures including the first Annual Report on Defence’s implementation of the cultural reform program, Pathway to Change, in June this year.

Wedgetail flies first flag

Jaimie Abbott

AIR Force’s E-7A Wedgetail aircraft has debuted on Exercise Red Flag Nevada – the most advanced international air combat and surveillance training activity for allied air forces.

The US-led large-force employment exercise – held from February 22 to March 15 – was designed to replicate a high-end combat and surveillance environment and the Wedgetail did not disappoint.

2SQN deployed two Wedgetails, along with 67 members consisting of pilots, air combat officers, airborne electronic analysts, maintenance crews, administration staff and intelligence officers.

CO 2SQN WGCDR Paul Carpenter said the crew were exposed to training scenarios on a scale not possible in Australia.

“Red Flag Nellis was a fantastic opportunity to put the aircraft, crews and mission support systems through their paces across a range of counter-air, strike and other airborne early warning and control roles in what was the most complex and demanding exercise undertaken so far in the aircraft’s development,” WGCDR Carpenter said.

“The lessons learned over the three-week period can now be applied to the task of progressing the Wedgetail to Full Operational Capability.”

To achieve that milestone, the Wedgetail needs to complete critical tasks to ensure it is capable of accomplishing command and control battle management mission requirements.

A Wedgetail flew daily sorties during the exercise above the Nevada Test and Training Range and produced a real-time surveillance picture of the air activity to control the battlespace.

2SQN Maintenance Performance Officer FLTLT Scott Harvey said both Wedgetails did well.

“From a maintenance perspective, the exercise has given the guys the opportunity to see how the aircraft performs in a realistic environment,” FLTLT Harvey said.

During the exercise, numerous aircrew performed counter air, precision strike and offensive air support missions as large coordinated packages of aircraft.

Now they have returned to Australia, the hard work still continues for 2SQN personnel.

“Red Flag Nellis put everything to the test which allowed us to find where the weak points were so we know where we have to go,” WGCDR Carpenter said.

“This opportunity also allowed for our members to hone their particular skill sets with our major allies at one of the world’s best air combat training facilities.”

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Gender equality in the ADF

CPL Max Bree

WHEN two female clerks were posted to an Army base in the 1970s, more than a few eyebrows were raised, according to CDF GEN David Hurley. "This was unheard of," he said. "Women served in a separate part of the Army – the Women’s Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC) – and they wore distinctly different uniforms."

I recall a fashion parade in Victoria Barracks in Sydney, to which I wasn’t invited, when new WRAAC uniforms were modelled by professional models.”

More than 40 years later, and after the removal of gender restrictions in the ADF, men and women from around the world came together to hear 20 speakers discuss issues facing women in the military and law enforcement in Canberra.

"The changes we have made are both necessary and valuable. To sustain a viable workforce we simply cannot ignore half of the nation’s talent pool," GEN Hurley said.

Changes include flexible work arrangements and support mechanisms to make sure everyone in the ADF had the same opportunity to pursue a military career.

GEN Hurley said as the ADF sought to increase the number of women serving, the military would need to start thinking about where it would ultimately lead.

"What is the appropriate target – 50:50? 60:40? 40:60? Is there a mix of men and women between the combat and non-combat elements of our force that optimises the force?" he said.

"I think that we need to undertake more modelling of our workforce to inform this discussion." He also said the ADF needed to explore ideas to develop a better childcare model for military families’ requirements, such as allowing members to purchase additional leave, allowing shared leave between service couples and reviewing service residences to offer an extra bedroom for a full-time career.

"We are also currently examining part-time or remote access to key professional courses, increased flexibility in meeting key milestone requirements and greater access to part-time or flexible work arrangements," GEN Hurley said.

Also speaking at the conference, Defence Science and Personnel Minister Warren Snowdon said when he began floating the idea of women in combat he anticipated a backlash.

"I started socialising it through the community, through RSL conferences expecting a negative reaction. It never came, so I wasn’t surprised at the end when the announcement was made there was hardly a trickle of opposition," he said.

He dismissed suggestions that the new employment standards would stop women entering combat roles.

"With physical employment standards, many men won’t get the job, because they won’t pass the PES test, a lot of women will," he said.

Defence Minister Stephen Smith said increasing the number of females in Defence would be essential in the coming years.

"Australia’s ageing population, combined with fewer school-leavers and an increasingly strong employment market means that in forthcoming years there will be fewer people available to meet demand," Mr Smith said.

"Greater inclusion of women in Defence’s core business will establish and cement its place as a workforce leader.”

Rent Allowance Review commencing soon

The Rent Allowance Review begins on 23 April.

If you receive Rent Allowance (RA) you may be included in this years review.

What is the RA Review?

The RA Review looks at your personal circumstances and confirms an ongoing entitlement to RA.

If you are selected for this review you will be notified by email.

Here’s what to do – it’s online and easier than ever.

If you receive a notification you can log onto Online Services at www.dha.gov.au and complete the review online.

If you haven’t used this service before, contact us on 139 342 and ask to register for our Online Services.

You can follow the prompts online if you’ve forgotten your login details.

Are you being deployed during April, May or June?

You may still need to complete the review and should be prepared.

The fine print

The review is a requirement of the Department of Defence, as detailed in PACMAN reference 7.6.35.

If you don’t respond by the due date your RA may be suspended, as detailed in PACMAN reference 7.6.36.

Stage play to tell story of wounded personnel

DEFENCE has announced a joint venture with the Sydney Theatre Company to develop a stage play based on the personal stories of servicemen and women who have been wounded or injured in their service. Their stories will be the basis for the production and they will be the cast.

The ADF Theatre Project will use the performing arts to support the recovery of wounded, injured and ill ADF personnel and provide Australian audiences with a unique insight into some of the impact and challenges associated with Defence operations.

Sponsored by CDF GEN David Hurley, the ADF Theatre Project has been endorsed at the highest levels in Defence, including the Service Chiefs.

Defence Housing Australia
spotlight at conference

FRIENDLY ADVICE: AIRCDRE Kathryn Dunn shared her experiences in the Air Force at the Gender in Defence and Security Leadership Conference. Inset, FSgt Nicole Turnbull of RAAF Base Williamtown, was among the participants at the conference.

Photos: CPL Max Bree and Phillip Vavasour

CPL Max Bree
HEAD of the new Sexual Misconduct, Prevention and Response Office (SeMPRO) AIRCDRE Kathryn Dunn shared her experiences in the Air Force at the Gender in Defence and Security Leadership Conference.

She said it was humbling to be a presenter and to represent the Air Force but found it “pretty daunting with all the spotlights and TV cam-
eras”.

AIRCDRE Dunn joined the Air Force Reserves as an operations officer in 1984 and transferred to the Permanent Air Force as an Education Officer (now Training Systems Officer), thanks to her background as a teacher.

She hoped to become an F-111 navigator but, when positions were opened to women in 1992, she wasn’t eligible to apply as she was over the age of 28.

Being one of three women in the Air Force currently at star rank, AIRCDRE Dunn credited her family with helping her achieve success, but said women shouldn’t put too much emphasis on “having it all”.

“I wouldn’t be able to achieve what I have without the sup-
port of my family,” she said. “But the Women’s Weekly is wrong; women can’t have it all, though we shouldn’t be too hard on ourselves. “I think I’m an amazing wife and mother and effective in my job but there’s always a need for me to take more care of myself in terms of my fitness and staying in touch with friends.”

For the next two to three years, AIRCDRE Dunn will serve as the Head of SeMPRO, working with commanders and managers with respect to improved prevention strategies and to ensure sexual assault victims are supported.

“ADFIS have received an average of 80 reports of sexual assault each year over the last five years,” she said. “Sexual assault is happening, it is a crime, and it is a capability issue.”

“I hope to survive and thrive in my job for a couple of years. This is important work and I’m hoping we can better support our people and better protect Defence’s reputation.”

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AIR Force marked International Women’s Day on March 8 with a range of events and activities designed to acknowledge the contribution of women to Air Force and the ADF.

Units across the country celebrated the achievements of women as well as their valuable contribution to Defence and the wider community.

ADF men and women in Canberra found a novel way to mark the occasion, with a fancy dress tug-of-war competition at Russell Offices, while in the MEAO, prominent women in operational positions were guest speakers at an event at Al Minhad Air Base in the United Arab Emirates.

This included Base Commander WGCCdr Lee de Winton, who said she was honoured to speak to her colleagues about the importance of International Women’s Day and its significance to her.

At the event she delivered her most important point to all of her female colleagues.

“The key message I would pass on being a woman in Defence is please don’t forget you are still a woman,” WGCCdr de Winton said.

“You don’t have to think and act like men in order to achieve success in the ADF. Being yourself is important – don’t give that up.

“Air Force certainly has the attitude that if the best person for the job happens to be a woman, then that woman is the one to get the job.

“I can see that attitude all over the ADF these days.”

Back at home, students and staff at the RAAF School of Administration and Logistics Training at RAAF Base Wagga marked the day by hearing about some of the challenges and opportunities for women in the ADF from GPCAPT Dee Gibbon, Director of the ADF Review into the Treatment of Women Project.

In her address, GPCAPT Gibbon said her advice to women in the ADF is that all of the women in your workplaces are somebody’s wife, girlfriend, daughter, aunty, granddaughters or sister – so if you respect the women in your workplaces the way you’d like the women in your own family to be respected, we won’t have a problem.

At RAAF Base Glenbrook, a morning tea was held at Headquarters Air Command, attended by more than 100 people, including Air Commander Australia AVM Mel Hupfeld.

WCCDR Karen Breaden opened the event by explaining the history of International Women’s Day and why it needed to continue, after which CAUAST gave a short history of women in the Air Force.

AVM Hupfeld said it was only in 1979 that women were granted equal pay to men.

“It is disappointing that the increase in the number of women in the ADF has only increased by 3 per cent in the past 24 years, and the Air Force increase is only slightly higher,” AVM Hupfeld said.

“We still have a long way to go but a lot has changed for the better and continues to improve with policies such as flexible employment.”

Canberra teams show support with strength and spirit

CPL Max Bree

Air Force may not have won the first International Women’s Day tug-of-war at Russell Offices in Canberra on March 7, but they gave a strong showing.

Donned in purple togas, the “Toganaut” team of male and female Air Force members from across Canberra knocked out Army in the first round, much to their delight.

Cadets from the Royal Military College took the overall title after beating teams from Navy, Defence People Group, ADF, Australian Command and Staff College and the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies.

Event organiser GPCAPT Dee Gibbon said the tug-of-war was a light-hearted tribute to military fitness with teams encouraged to dress in costume.

“People said it was one of the most enjoyable, team events they had participated in for a long time,” GPCAPT Gibbon said some people thought a tug-of-war was too “masculine” as an event to celebrate the day, which she found annoying.

“Who says women aren’t strong, competitive and capable?” she said.

“This event showed just how competitive and tough women warriors can be, especially the awesome women in the Air Force team, some of whom are still bearing the bruises of their massive and much-celebrated win over the Army team.”

Two prizes were presented after the event, one to the winners and one to the best-dressed team.

The best-dressed prize was awarded to a mixed team of APS and military members representing Defence People Group.

COT GEN David Hurley presented the prizes. All proceeds from gold coin donations collected on the day were donated to UN Women Australia.

“This was a great event to mark International Women’s Day. I congratulate the winners on their skill and participation, and for making time to recognise this great cause,” GEN Hurley said.
Leading the way in SAR

Orion crew sent to help look for lost vessel

Simone Liebelt

IN A MONTH where the ADF’s commitment to gender equality and diversity has been highlighted, two female AP-3C Orion pilots led their crew in a successful maritime search and rescue (SAR) mission in Australia’s northern waters.

The 92WG AP-3C Orion launched in minimum time from RAAF Base Darwin on March 13 to support the SAR request from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

The aircraft tracked towards the position of a vessel, broken in two pieces with 77 survivors afloat, about 60 nautical miles north of Ashmore Island.

FLTLT Jovanivich said her crew all played an essential part in the mission.

“We have a crew of 13 dedicated members, and they all have an equally important role to play, so it was a normal sortie, almost an important one,” she said.

“We were prepared to support the recovery of survivors but the Navy did an excellent job and recovered all persons overboard, then we carried on with routine surveillance,” FLTLT Jovanivich said.

“We have a crew of 13 dedicated members, and they all have an equally important role to play, so it was a normal sortie, almost an important one,” she said.

“With P-3s, there is a very strong emphasis on competence and proficiency, rather than gender or anything else. This is part of why I love flying with these crews and on this aeroplane. This flight was no different.”

Shortly before the aircraft arrived on scene, all 77 survivors were recovered from the water by patrol boat HMAS Childers.

“We were prepared to support the recovery of survivors but the Navy did an excellent job and recovered all persons overboard, then we carried on with routine surveillance,” FLTLT Jovanivich said.

Both Childers and the AP-3C were assigned to Joint Task Force 639 in support of Operation Resolute.

Three Orion aircraft are assigned to the task force at any one time and available for SAR missions when required.

New engineer likes to think outside the box

Simone Liebelt

WITH a love of science, maths and aviation, it’s no surprise FLGOFF Dinda Vasile wanted to become an Air Force aeronautical engineer when she was at high school.

After completing a four-year Bachelor of Engineering degree at ADFA last year, she is now putting her new skills into practice on a graduate rotation program and has no doubt she made the right career choice.

“I chose aerospace engineering in the Air Force because I wanted constant challenges, not a typical day job, and because I’ve always wanted to do something very unconventional,” she said.

“Engineering is great because it makes you think outside the box, which I find fantastic. Plus I really love aviation – it’s not every day you get to be surrounded by amazing military aircraft.”

FLGOFF Vasile is currently surrounded by fast jets at RAAF Base Williamtown, where she is undertaking professional junior engineers’ development and training at 76SQN to gain exposure and hands-on experience in different engineering roles within Air Force.

She said her parents inspired her to do something different.

“Mum and Dad have always taught me to aim very high – they own a construction company which they run alongside each other, and seeing their successes and Mum’s fierce but feminine attitude in breaking her barriers and reaching the top has made her a huge inspiration in my life,” she said.

“Seeing how successful she is, and seeing how Dad is always encouraging her and me, makes me want to succeed more.”

She said she has not faced any obstacles working in engineering.

“Obviously you have good and bad days, but being a female engineer and knowing that you’re in a male-dominated profession actually makes me want to do it more, being one of a few,” she said.

“Air Force, as well as the tri-service environment, has always been very supportive. I have had great colleagues and made many friends and the various support services and groups for women are fantastic.”

She has loved the past five years in the Air Force and encourages other women to simply follow their interests when choosing a career path.

“My advice to other women is that you should never compartmentalise certain jobs in your head – don’t think of engineering as being a masculine profession.

“A female has a different input and perspective to contribute to aerospace engineering.

“Nothing is impossible, and despite what your friends may think, you do not change through doing certain professions, you are still you – just more developed and moving onto bigger and better things.”

ONE TEAM: Aircraft captain FLTLT Marija Jovanivich and co-pilot FLGOFF Lauren Armstrong led their AP-3C crew on a search and rescue mission to help locate a missing vessel off Ashmore Reef.

Photo: CPL Casey Smith
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TODAY TOMORROW BEYOND

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Paul Lineham

GPCAPT John Ward may have just clocked 50 years in the Air Force, but he has no plans of winding back just yet.

Owing to an administration glitch, the milestone was marked on March 14 instead of January 22 – the day GPCAPT Ward joined 50 years ago but that didn’t stop friends and colleagues celebrating the anniversary on the rightful day at the RAAF Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre.

Arriving in Australia from the UK on a working holiday with the intention of returning home to join the RAE, GPCAPT Ward decided that as Australians were friendly and the sun shining, “why go home?”

So only three months after arriving as a “10-pound pom”, he signed up.

Growing up, an Air Force career had always been on his radar.

“There were three things I had wanted to do,” he said. “I wanted to be a fighter pilot, I wanted to travel the world and I wanted to sail single-handed around the world.”

I wanted to travel the world and I wanted to do,” he said.

Ward, I’ve had enough of you talking about wanting to fly Mirages.”

When they got back he was called into the CO’s office, where he remembers the CO saying “Ward, I’ve had enough of you talking about wanting to fly Mirages.”

At this stage he thought he was in deep trouble but the CO went on to say “they’ve therefore seen it fit to post you into the CO’s office, where he remembers the CO saying “Ward, I’ve had enough of you talking about wanting to fly Mirages.”

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After his Mirage conversion he disbanded the big three.

Finally, seven days before his six-year enlistment expired, GPCAPT Ward got the chance to fulfil another of his “big three”.

Then FLTLTs Ward and Houston (later to become CDF) were both sent to Singapore in 1976 to instruct pilots of the Republic of Singapore Air Force.

However, his brief flirtation with fighters came to an end in 1978 when he was sent home, to RAAF Base Amberley, for conversion training onto F-111s.

GPCAPT Ward’s career largely revolved around his beloved Pig, with postings between 1 and 6SQN, culminating as CO 6SQN.

Out-of-cockpit postings included instructing at the Joint Warfare Centre at Williamtown, Headquarters Strike Reconnaissance Group, Headquarters Air Command and then to IADS in Butterworth.

His last posting before entering reserve service was to Tindal as OC, dealing with the 1998 Katherine floods, for which he was awarded a CSC.

In recognition of his 50 years’ service, GPCAPT Ward was offered a ride in a 6SQN Super Hornet, but politely declined, saying, “let a troop go for a ride instead”.

He still harboured the dream of being a fighter pilot and took advantage of his extended posting to Butterworth to study and obtain his Australian commercial pilot’s licence, before applying for aircrew.

He was accepted for pilot training but was back in Butterworth because of a shortage of electricians familiar with the Sabre.

Finally, seven days before his six-year enlistment expired, GPCAPT Ward got the chance to fulfil another of his “big three”.

When he got his wings, however, finishing second in his class, there were no vacancies in fast-jets and he was posted to 10SQN to fly Neptunes.

GPCAPT Ward said he still wanted to fly fighters and it was on one exercise in Butterworth as part of the CO’s crew – where he spent the entire time telling anyone who wanted to listen, and those who didn’t, how good the Mirages were – that brought things to a head.

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**Rocking the bowl**

SGT Ben van den Akker

THE Air Force Band may be used to performing in front of large crowds, but a concert at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl in Melbourne took it to a whole new level.

This was the first time the band had performed as part of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra’s popular free summer concert series and it drew crowds usually only seen at international rock shows.

Air Force Band CO Sqn Ldr Mathew Shelley was proud of his operations team, who were instrumental in securing the performance on February 23.

“Performing at a large family event like this allows us to promote the Air Force’s values and culture to the Australian public,” Sqn Ldr Shelley said.

The concert coincided with the first anniversary of the Air Force Band’s community engagement strategy, and was a good measure of what the band has achieved in 12 months.

“We’ve come a long way in a short time, and I can’t think of a better way to launch our 2013 concert series,” Sqn Ldr Shelley said.

“We’ll soon have our concert information brochures promoting the Air Force’s values in venues and tourism information centres around the country.”

The band’s one-hour performance included classic military band works, with Australia’s own composer, Percy Grainger, taking his rightful place in the program. The concert also featured spots by the Air Force Drum Corps and singer CPL Roxanne Moxham, both warmly received by the audience.

Drummer CPL Lee Gray said it was “quite an experience to have several thousand people focus on what you are doing on stage.”

Sqn Ldr Shelley introduced the final work of the concert by inviting the audience to imagine the experience of flying with the Air Force Roulettes, and to enjoy a musical Short Ride in a Fast Machine by American composer John Adams.

“Not everyone gets the opportunity to fly in a fast aircraft. This piece of music is the next best thing,” Sqn Ldr Shelley said.

**HIGH PERFORMERS:** Above, CPL Duncan Rae perched behind the Timpani drums during the Air Force Band’s concert at Melbourne’s Sidney Myer Music Bowl. Left, singer CPL Roxanne Moxham serenades the crowd, and right, Band CO Sqn Ldr Matthew Shelley introduces the final work of the concert.

Photos: CPL Cam Scott
CPL Max Bree

AIR FORCE personnel got up close with the South Australian community, showing off their gear at the Clipsal 500 V8 race in Adelaide on March 3. An F/A-18A Hornet from the Aircraft Research and Development Unit wowed the crowds and the Roulettes put on their trademark display, while other Defence personnel on the ground showed off all manner of Air Force equipment.

The Aircraft Stores Compatibility Engineering Squadron from Aerospace Operational Support Group (AOSG) spruiked their arsenal of aircraft munitions, EOD suit, robot and a bomb loader, while the 92WG Australian Air Force Cadets had a flight simulator and field gear for kids to try.

Airfield Defence Guards from 1 Airfield Defence Squadron displayed their small-arms and individual combat equipment, as well as a new G-Wagon.

The Aerospace Systems Engineering Squadron from AOSG demonstrated its role in telemetry gathering and engineering solutions for aircraft test and development, while 1 Radar Surveillance Unit explained their key role in the defence of Australia’s northern approaches.

Joint Electronic Warfare Operational Support Unit personnel demonstrated the need for electronic warfare against all manner of threats and Woomera Test Range staff showed a variety of rockets, drones and motors even let the public test a few munitions.

Kids were dressed up as aircrew by members of 92WG who told stories of their time in the MEAO, demonstrated how turboprop engines worked and wowed the crowds with the Star Safire surveillance camera.

An ambulance from 2 Expeditionary Health Squadron tried to compete with the noise from the V8s by hitting the sirens, and Nova Systems volunteers demonstrated air flow and basic aerodynamic concepts using a smoke stream tunnel on loan from the University of Adelaide.

24SQN kept everything secure and running smoothly with security and logistical support.

PLTAF Adam Miljenovic, of 92WG, said they organised Air Force’s involvement in just under six weeks.

“The biggest challenge was working with a limited budget and finding enough personnel to man the displays given the number of operations, exercises and air shows that RAAF Base Edinburgh was supporting concurrently,” he said.

He said Air Force personnel had a good time meeting the public.

“Whether the volunteers were motor-sport fans or not, the feedback from most of the personnel was that they enjoyed interacting with the public.

“Whether it be dressing up kids in flying gear, helping them find their inner pilot in the cadets’ flight simulator or teaching them about airflow with the smoke stream tunnel!”

92WG also ran a colouring competition during the race to design new nose-art to be painted onto an AP-3C. A large number of entries were submitted.

The winner will be invited to RAAF Base Edinburgh to view the painted Orion, tour an aircraft and fly in the AP-3C Advanced Flight Simulator.
PEOPLE POWER

A look at some of the Air Force members who helped make the 2013 Australian International Airshow a roaring success.
WELL ORGANISED: Above, 1AOSS plumber LAC Owen Maxwell prepares his tools in a portable work station at the 2013 Australian International Airshow at Avalon, and right, joins other members of his team, led by FLGOFF Nicole Sutton, at 1AOSS’s airshow display.

VITAL WORK: Advanced medical assistant AC Sean Boller, of 2EHS, compiles medical documents inside the deployed medical facility.

TIME TO REMEMBER: Above, Air Force Cadets CUO Ross Bresnahan, left, and LCDT Annabelle Thompson tour flightline displays; right, 33SQN crew attendant CPL Erin Wallace on the Avalon airfield.

ON SHOW: Above, pilot FLGOFF Jonathon Pearson, of 77SQN, at the F/A-18 Hornet static display. Right, FLTLT Courtney Gell and LAC Mitchell Cable, of 114MCRU, stand behind a TPS-77 Radar on display for the public.
**Focusing on airbase ops**

Steve Mallett

COMBAT Support Group (CSG), along with all other Force Element Groups (FEGs), must strive to be as efficient and effective as possible.

Responsible for the provision of flexible airbase operations, CSG is a key enabler of air power through the provision of airbase operations at the permanent airbases, three bare bases within Australia – Curtin, Learmonth and Scherger – and RMAF Base Butterworth.

While doing this, CSG is also required to provide airbase operations in the deployed environment in response to contingencies. Additionally, CSG provides support to non-airbase activities, including aeromedical evacuation and communications support.

Commander CSG AIRCDRE Tim Innes said as successful as CSG had been, there were opportunities for refinements and improvements that would make CSG even better, more efficient and more effective.

“Only once you have a thorough and complete understanding of the organisation’s roles and responsibilities can you then design the best organisational construct to achieve those outcomes,” he said.

“ Especially, in an environment that includes the Strategic Reform Program, budget pressures, and increasing stakeholder expectations.”

CSG is currently in the midst of a Combat Support Improvement Program (CSIP).

CSG Executive WOFF Kylie Willmot said the program was laying a solid organisational foundation.

“CSIP is conducting improvement activities, including value stream mapping elements of the organisation, airbase processes, business and strategic planning, and consulting with the other FEGs,” WOFF Willmot said.

“A major part of the current improvement program is a Workforce Analysis and Organisational Design (WAOD) project which looks at how CSG prepares for and conducts airbase operations, both currently and into the future.”

AIRCDRE Innes said the WAOD project built on the work done by the CSIP, and was a partnership between CSG, Headquarters Air Command staff, and KPMG, a strategic partner.

“The WAOD team considered the workforce required to achieve CSG’s directed outcomes in the expeditionary environment, and the workforce required to continually operate the permanent bases,” AIRCDRE Innes said.

“CSG’s expeditionary workforce was generated and sourced from its permanent base workforce, but when elements of that workforce deployed, the job at the permanent bases had to continue being done.

“Ultimately, this work led to a preferred organisational design, and a construct that was endorsed by the CAF Advisory Committee on February 22 this year.”

An Air Force Organisation Directive will be submitted for consideration in April to enable initial implementation of the new design construct from January next year.

A video describing the roles and responsibilities of the new CSG has been produced and can be found at the following link: http://intranet.defence.gov.au/rashwebtopics/CSG/images/csg.wmv

**Keeping Operations Running:** A major part of a current Combat Support Improvement Program is a project that looks at how CSG prepares and conducts airbase processes. Pictured is FLTLT Kim Phillips, of 381ECSS, RAAF Base Williamtown, assisting in the Operations Headquarters set-up at Benning airfield during an airbase support exercise.

Photo: CPL Glen McCarthy

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Help us to help those severely affected by recent conflicts.

The Australian Defence Force Assistance Trust (ADF Assistance Trust) has recently been established to help current and former members of the Australian Army, Navy and Air Force, and their families who may be experiencing financial challenges as a result of their service.

The ADF Assistance Trust can specifically help those who are permanently incapacitated, have a service related traumatic illness or are otherwise permanently disabled during service and the families of those who are killed or otherwise permanently incapacitated or disabled as a result of their service.

Priority will be given to service personnel and families affected by recent conflicts.

Some examples of the help available include financial assistance for:

- Essential living expenses
- Education or retraining for ADF members, veterans or dependents
- Psychological health treatment, including for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Medical treatment
- Special needs support
- Emergency support
- Carers assistance

Veterans, Defence members and their families sometimes struggle to deal with financial burdens which can arise when circumstances change and affect their earning capacity. If you, or someone you know, needs assistance then please contact the ADF Assistance Trust for further information or to establish eligibility for assistance.

Email the ADF Assistance Trust, Executive Officer on astephens@adfassistancetrust.org.au or call for further information on 0499 994 025.
THE School of Air Warfare (SAW) at RAAF Base East Sale has honoured the memory of FLTLT Shane Dryden by naming their bar after him. Boggy Dryden, as he was affectionately known, was tragically killed during the Christmas stand-down period in 2011 when returning from volunteering at a Gympie speedway meet.

His vehicle crashed on the Warrego Highway just five minutes from his parents Gatton home.

FLTLT Scott Breckenridge, OIC of the Mongoli Social Club at SAW, said FLTLT Dryden’s death was a tragedy that hit all of his workmates hard.

“He was a good man with a big heart,” FLTLT Breckenridge said.

“He enjoyed a beer too, so we thought it appropriate to name our bar the ‘Boggy Bar’ as a lasting sign of respect.”

FLTLT Dryden was originally a 92WG airborne electronics analyst who took up a commission as a senior employment manager, eventually becoming a qualified aviation instructor at SAW before being posted back to 92WG, RAAF Base Edinburgh.

FLTLT Breckenridge said the then XO of SAW came up with the idea of naming the bar in FLTLT Dryden’s honour last year, after which it was redecorated.

“We painted the bar in SAW’s colours - blue and orange,” FLTLT Breckenridge said. “It gets used quite a lot so we made it look like home. We open it every off-pay Thursday for a chance for the students to interact with the instructors and take a bit of pressure off.”

The bar and the surrounding room was also redecorated with lots of memorabilia.

“There are charts and photos from bombing runs carried out in various WWII campaigns. We also display all the academic and practical awards presented to past courses in the bar.”
REALISTIC training scenarios through the use of an advanced simulation program at the School of Air Warfare (SAW) are reaping benefits for Air Force and the wider ADF.

For more than a year, air combat officer (ACO) students at SAW have been using the Air Combat Officer Training System (ACOTS) program.

Created by Cirrus, it provides a level of realism in training scenarios not previously available to students and instructors.

FLTLT James Laurence, an instructor at SAW from the Royal New Zealand Air Force, said ACOTS provides realistic training using mission systems similar to those that students go on to use as either an AP-3C tactical officer or Super Hornet weapon systems officer or Wedgetail mission commander.

Students are introduced to synthetic data link, moving map tactical display, radar and optical sensors as well as threat indications.

ACOTS allows the instructors to insert air, sea and ground entities and make the ‘threat’ move around if needed. “Previously, if the scenario needed a threat attacking our aircraft then the instructor would say ‘you can see bullets flying past you’ or the student had to imagine a warning indicator showing up – now that threat is displayed on the console,” FLTLT Laurence said.

“It was tricky for the instructors to keep a realistic scenario working for the students and continually putting things into their imagination. Now, that imaginary situation is displayed with real pictures and displays.”

Currently, ACOTS uses Google Earth’s imagery as its overlay so that if a student in the back of a KA350 King Air looks out of their window or places a TV or infra-red sensor over a certain point it is accurately displayed via Google Earth on their screen.

“Everyone is for this concept,” FLTLT Laurence said.

“The older versions were a little fiddely and took a lot of input from the instructors but it is getting better. We are also operating a continual improvement process with ACOTS.”

FLTLT Laurence said SAW’s intent was to acquire another updated version of ACOTS if funding was available, and to introduce a tablet display into the front right hand seat of the King Air for air combat/combat air lift and Navy students.

“It’s a really good system for training and gives the students realism with what they are doing,” he said.

**CPL Aaron Curran**

**IN THE PICTURE:** OFFCDT Stuart Jones uses the ACOTS program, which helps provide a realistic picture in training scenarios on the ground and in the air aboard a King Air, pictured left. Photos: CPL Aaron Curran (main) and SGT Kriss Peacock

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- Defence Plaza
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- DSTO Fisherman’s Bend
  - 7.3km/13mins

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**Clearing a path at Wagga**

A new marching path has been constructed along the main road of RAAF Base Wagga so recruits from 1 Recruit Training Unit can safely march around the base safely. Previously, the recruits had to march on the road, which also caused delays and bottlenecks in traffic at various times of the day.

**SOMALI VETS REUNION**

THIS year is the 20th anniversary of the first ADF deployment to Somalia and a reunion is being held in Adelaide over the Anzac Day period to mark the occasion. Reunion activities will include a barbecue for veterans and their partners at Keswick Barracks on April 24 and participation in the Anzac Day marches. To register attendance, contact Gary Conquest by April 10 at conquestadvisoryservices@gmail.com. For full details on the reunion, visit www.conquestadvisoryservices.com.au
NUMBER 4 Squadron is taking their recruitment drive for combat controllers on the road to give as many people as possible a chance to learn about the role.

Squadron personnel planned to visit RAAF Base Amberley on March 27, followed by RAAF Base Richmond on April 3 and Canberra on April 4 to talk to personnel interested in joining the mustering.

CO 4SQN WGCDR Stuart Bellingham said as an emerging capability, the Combat Control Team role was not widely understood by the greater Air Force. “We have a strong profile within Air Combat Group, but we would like to raise awareness of combat controllers in other areas of Air Force,” he said.

“4SQN team members have decided to conduct an information-based recruitment drive at other bases to inform potential recruits about the program. “We want to provide an avenue for interested candidates to ask questions and talk to trained, experienced combat controllers about the role.”

WGCDR Bellingham said becoming a combat controller was demanding and required a high level of commitment. “To be a combat controller, members need to be young, fit and intelligent and have some life experience in order to handle the job that is exciting, challenging and requires a high level of responsibility,” he said.

“We want to find those people out there who are suited to the role.”

For further information about location of the sessions or the program, email 4SQN.combatcontrol@defence.gov.au or call (02) 4034 6586.

Looking for elite

COMBAT controllers are Air Force specialists in tactical air-to-surface integration. The Combat Control Team (CCT) delivers a wide range of capability, from conducting reconnaissance of remote landing zones for tactical airlift aircraft to terminal guidance of precision air-to-surface weapons. The team also provides a command and control link from ground units to aircraft and headquarters for the effective and efficient integration of air power effects on the battlefield.

The mission of the CCT is to integrate, synchronise and control the elements of air and space power for precision strike and military advance force operations. Training takes about two years and involves a series of demanding courses. These include preparatory ground skills training at 4SQN, infantry training at the Army’s Special Forces Training Centre, successful completion of Commando Selection and Training Course, Commando Reinforcement Cycle Training, Joint Terminal Attack Controller, Aviation Meteorology, Assault Zone Reconnaissance and Air Weapons delivery courses.

Applicants are required to undergo testing comprising a specialist PFT at the under-25 standard and the Air Force swim proficiency test. In addition, applicants will also need to be able to complete a 2.4km run in DPUC and runners with 7kg of webbing and a 3kg object representing the weight of a rifle, a 5km forced march in DPUC and boots with pack and webbing weighing a total of 40kg, a 400m swim; 60 push ups; 10 heaves and 100 sit ups on arrival at 4SQN if successful with the application process. More information on the mustering is available on the 4SQN intranet site.

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Calling former cadets to help connect and recruit

THE Cadet, Reserve and Employer Support Division (CRESO) wants to connect with Defence personnel who were Army, Navy or Air Force Cadets.

CRESO Deputy Head CDRE Bob Morrison said the division planned to establish a database of Australian Defence Organisation members who were cadets.

The aim is to prepare case studies to encourage support for and further understanding of Defence’s key youth development program.

“We know there are many Defence members, be they serving in the ADF or in the Public Service, who were once cadets,” CDRE Morrison said.

“My communication staff would like to connect with you and hear your stories of how being involved in the cadets helped you develop skills and experience that in turn has helped you in your career and life in general.

“We believe that such positive stories will lead young people to consider joining their local Navy, Army or Air Force cadet unit and may also attract people to become cadet staff.”

To join the database, email creso.communication@defence.gov.au

Name needed for new HR system

CPL Max Bree

ALL Defence personnel are invited to suggest a name for the new system to replace PMKeyS, ADFPay and other personnel management systems in a competition that opened on March 11.

The new system consolidates ADF and APS HR business requirements and stabilises and modernises Defence’s HR systems.

It will combine ADFPay into one system that allows managers of mixed workplaces to access pay reports for Defence personnel and Defence public servants.

Submissions need to be genuine, good-natured and represent a system that combines Defence’s human resource tools.

To qualify, entries must:

• be a single word, abbreviation or acronym of no more than three syllables; and

• include a brief description of why the word, abbreviation or acronym is proposed.

The First Assistant Secretary HR Development within the Chief Information Officer Group, Craig Pandy, said the development team needed an official name for the new system before it rolled out during the next three years.

“We’ve been referring to the project as JP 2080, it works well for the project and everyone knows what it is,” he said.

“But if you’ve got a Joint Strike Fighter and you’re still calling it Air 7000, it wouldn’t give an accurate picture of what was delivered.”

After coming up with several possible names for the new system within the development team, it was decided to open suggestions to the rest of Defence.

As the project is about Defence people, the team members felt all personnel should be involved in the naming process.

The best 10 entries will be displayed on the CIOG intranet site before being presented to the Human Resource Development Board in April to choose the winning name.

The winning entrant, subject to agreement, will be acknowledged in ADF News and other Defence publications.

The competition closes on April 12.

Entries for the new system name should be submitted to CIOGHRDP Communications@defence.gov.au

NAME NEEDED: A competition has been launched to find a name for the personnel administration system that will replace PMKeyS and ADFPay.

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Wendy-Joy "Wendy-Joy" was named in honour of Mrs Cassidy and pilot Mostyn Morgan’s wife Joy.

cockpit mock-up of Beaufighter "Wendy-Joy II", flown during the Battle of the Bismarck Sea.

HONOUR: WENDY-JOY was named in honour of Mrs Cassidy and pilot Mostyn Morgan’s wife Joy.

"Wendy-Joy" was named in honour of Mrs Cassidy and pilot Mostyn Morgan’s wife Joy.

The 70th anniversary of one of WWII’s most decisive engagements has reunited past and present Air Force members, reports Eamon Hamilton.

On March 3, 1943, American and Australian squadrons sent a 90-aircraft strike package to destroy a Japanese troop ship convoy attempting to reinforce their numbers in New Guinea.

Bruce Robertson was a wireless radio operator with 308SQN Beaufighters, and from their base in Port Moresby he listened to American commentary of the battle.

"It was non-stop voices of Americans saying ‘those so-and-so Australians, look at that Beaufighter down there in among those bombs,’ Mr Robertson said.

"They had all sorts of expletives and they couldn’t stop their admiration for our Beaufighters."

Air Commander Australia AVM Mel Hupfeld said the coordination required between Allied squadrons in the battle was an incredible achievement.

"It’s through that coordination that the victory in New Guinea has contributed to the freedoms we enjoy today,” AVM Hupfeld said.

"Notably, the greatest foe of that day, the Japanese, now forms one of our closest partners in the changing strategic circumstances.

While we commemorate, we also consider the terrible tragedy of war, and want to ensure that it doesn’t happen again."

JAPANESE personnel sailing in the Bismarck Sea on March 3, 1943, had cause to be wary of Allied aircraft.

Since departing Rabaul on February 28, their convoy of eight merchant vessels and eight destroyers had been under persistent surveillance from Allied aircraft.

Fighter cover and poor weather had protected the convoy for much of its journey, but one transport had already been picked off by American B-17 bombers.

The convoy was less than a day’s sailing from its destination of Lae, where more than 6800 soldiers would disembark to join New Guinea’s brutal land campaign.

However, unbeknown to the Japanese, the Allies had known of the convoy weeks before it sailed, thanks to decrypted radio transmissions.

From Port Moresby, G/CAPT William Garing had planned practice missions for Australian and American strike aircraft.

On March 3, a three-tier package of 90 Allied aircraft executed one of the most brilliantly coordinated attacks of the war.

At 10am, Japanese lookouts spotted a formation of 8-17s at 7000 feet, escorted by P-38 Lightning fighters.

As the ships turned to evade the bombers, they faced a withering hail from Beaufighters of RAFF’s 308SQN, each aircraft carrying four 20mm cannons and six 7.7mm machine guns.

The ship’s bridges were destroyed, leaving the convoy to face attacks from American Mitchell and Boston aircraft flying at low level.

They used a combination of heavy machine guns and a method of ricocheting bombs along wave tops, slaming in to the ship’s sides.

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Coordinated attacks key to success

The Japanese had swept through South-East Asia, and it actually appeared possible that Australia might be invaded, with unthinkable consequences.

The convoy’s destination of Lae was not spared either, with RAFF’s 22SQN sending its Boston bombers to destroy the Japanese airfield there.

A controversial task remained for the Allies, to attack the convoy survivors in the water.

The previous year, many RAFF personnel had faced Japanese troops during the battles of Milne Bay and Kokoda, but a RAFF Beaufighter pilot later said that every enemy who did not make it ashore was one less for their Army colleagues to face.

Of the 8900 Japanese troops destined for Lae, only 1202 arrived, with Allied losses standing at six aircraft.

The battle was well documented. Australian war photographer Damien Parer, who won an Oscar the day after the battle for an earlier film about the Kokoda campaign, filmed the attack from over the shoulder of a 308SQN Beaufighter pilot.

GEN Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Allied Commander, South West Pacific Area, called the battle “the decisive aerial engagement of the war in the South West Pacific.”
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App tracks drink habits

A new smart phone app will help current and former members of the ADF track their drinking and assess its impact on their budget, wellbeing and fitness.

Launched by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs, the app, called On Track with the Right Mix, uses mobile technology to deliver the message about the impact of drinking on lifestyles and physical health.

On Track with the Right Mix was designed specifically for use by serving and former Defence Force personnel and can be individually personalised according to gender, height and weight.

Veterans’ Affairs Minister Warren Snowdon said a group of young Iraq and Afghanistan veterans tested the app to provide feedback on the concept.

“Young serving members told us they needed help to track their drinking and spending so they can make more informed choices to keep on track physically and financially,” Mr Snowdon said.

“The app allows a user to track their drinking habits, set a budget for a night out, learn about the affect alcohol has on wellbeing and fitness, and how much exercise is needed to burn off the alcohol calories.”

Based on DVA’s The Right Mix alcohol management website – www.therightmix.gov.au – the app is designed to help users choose safer drinking habits and a healthier lifestyle.

“We know that binge drinking and drinking above low-risk levels is associated with a range of harms,” Mr Snowdon said.

“Some of these include alcohol-related violence and aggression and road trauma and falls, resulting in missing work, injury and even death.

“In the longer term, there is increased risk of cancer, heart disease, brain damage and deterioration in relationships and social functioning.”
Benwa brilliance at Trials

Wagga PTI returns home victorious with the ADF Wounded Warriors team

Michael Brooke

AIR FORCE athlete FSGT Tony Benfer has become the ADF’s most successful athlete at the US Marine Corps’ Paralympics Trials by winning four gold and one silver at the 2013 event at Camp Pendleton in the US from February 20 to March 8.

He returned to Australia on March 11 as part of the ADF Wounded Warriors team, which also included Air Force athletes FLTLT Bruce Lowth, of 278SQN, and FSGT Steve Hayes, of 5 Aviation Regiment, and eight Army soldiers.

The team was welcomed home by Defence Science and Personnel Minister Warren Snowdon, who praised the athletes for their performance and courage.

“These competitions are about overcoming adversity and the ADF teams have worked hard and shown great determination in many events,” Mr Snowdon said.

“The team members have faced a range of major challenges since sustaining their injuries, but Defence is committed to supporting our injured personnel and have a full range of programs in place for them and their families,” he said.

The ADF team competed against hundreds of coalition soldiers from nine countries at the Trials. It included amputees and members who have experienced traumatic brain injury and other service-related wounds.

FSGT Benfer, a PTI from RAAF Base Wagga, has now won a total of 10 gold medals and three silver medals during the past three years. "This is my biggest medal haul since the Wounded Warrior program kicked off two years ago," he said.

"Almost everything FSGT Benfer contested resulted in gold. He won gold in the wheelchair basketball, as well as the single amputee 50m and 100m freestyle swimming events, and the 50m backstroke.

He also won a silver medal with the Allies in the 4x50m relay. "The Trials is always a humbling experience," FSGT Benfer said.

"I love winning gold medals for Australia as much as the opportunity to compete alongside other wounded and injured service personnel." He also competed in the 30km open cycling event for the first time.

FSGT Benfer’s success added to the grand total of 12 gold and three silver medals won by the ADF team.

FLTLT Lowth and FSGT Hayes, who made their debut at the Trials, performed strongly in a range of events.

FLTLT Lowth contested seated volleyball and also competed in the warrior pentathlon, which consisted of track and field events, shooting and cycling. He finished strongly in the cycling – placing 5th in the 30km open event ahead of his ADF team mates.

"Being able to compete against wounded and injured coalition soldiers like myself was a great experience," FLTLT Lowth said.

FSGT Hayes also performed strongly in archery, air rifle and seated volleyball.

White Pointers ominous in rugby sevens victory

TORRENTIAL rain almost sunk the efforts of the Williamtown White Pointers rugby union team from staging the annual rugby sevens competition on March 2.

Organiser and White Pointers’ captain LAC Shaun Connolly said three teams out of the original five braved the weather, leaving the Medowie Marauders, Singleton Lions and hosts Williamtown White Pointers to compete for the title.

The day consisted of pool games where each team competed against each other twice to earn points to qualify for the final.

Medowie was strong on the day but could only come away with a draw in game one.

Singleton Lions were favourites from the start and went unbeaten in their pool games, while the White Pointers had a slow start but improved to make the final against the Lions.

The Lions took an early lead in the final before the White Pointers struck back just before half-time to go into the break one try a piece. The White Pointers came out firing in the second half and went out to a three try to one lead due to some individual brilliance and constant pressure.

The Lions scored a late consolation try, but it wasn’t enough to take the spoils from the hosts, who held aloft the trophy and prize money.

"I was really impressed by the courage and tenacity shown by the White Pointers in trying conditions and against quality opposition," LAC Connolly said.
Air Force Wounded Warriors return from the US Marine Corps’ Paralympic Trials after giving it their...