CPL Sarah relocates aircraft spare parts at the Air Task Groups logistics supply store in the Middle East Region. Aircraft spare parts are stored in reusable metal containers packed with foam to ensure they are not damaged during transport. Photo: SGT Guy Young

ALL THE RIGHT MOVES

Keeping stocks loaded as Operation Okra expends the most munitions since the Vietnam War

CAF visits bases to reveal Air Force’s future

Spartan airdrop training starts in Australia
FLGOFF Carl Curtain

FUTURE aircraft purchases, integrating civilian contractors and maintaining workloads in the face of increased deployment were some of the issues raised by members from two RAAF bases during Q&A-style forums with the Chief of Air Force. AIRMSHL Leo Davies held sessions in October with staff at RAAF Base Richmond and RAAF Base East Sale to discuss his intent for his four-year tenure.

During his initial address, AIRMSHL Davies spoke of the “three themes” articulated in his recently published Commander’s Intent - People, Joint Effects and Plan Jericho. While the objectives were clear, he emphasised that broad support, from at least within Air Force, would be needed to achieve them.

He explained the importance of attaining work place flexibility and seeking professional development opportunities.

“A flexible work environment means different things to different people,” AIRMSHL Davies said.

“These are opportunities to help Air Force understand what best practice is and what flexible workplaces look like.

“It does not mean all bases and all units have the same answer at the same time.”

He encouraged members to be more active in problem-solving. “We need to move away from grating civilian contractors and FUTURE aircraft purchases, into practical, “It does not mean all bases and all units have the same answer at the same time.”

He encouraged members to be more active in problem-solving.

“We need to move away from grating civilian contractors and FUTURE aircraft purchases, into practical acquisition and redevelop-ment.”

AIRMSHL Davies gave the example of the gymnasium at Richmond, which is a demountable building, as opposed to the new multi-million dollar gymnasium at East Sale.

While the new C-27J Spartan will initially be based at Richmond, the aircraft will eventually be moved to RAAF Base Amberley. East Sale however, will soon be home to 22 new Pilatus PC-21s and such longer-term facilities are required to support personnel for pilot training.

He reinforced his intention to continue Plan Jericho, which will transform the service into a fifth-generation Air Force.

“Plan Jericho’s ideas for the workplace need to be tactical and practical,” AIRMSHL Davies said.

“I encourage you to find something that doesn’t work, explore why, find out what is needed to fix it and explore why not."

He discussed the benefits of Air Force staff working closely with Army and Navy. “We have to have the Army and Navy with us on our path to fifth-generation transformation – and to allow them to help us as well,” he said.

AIRMSHL Davies will hold similar forums as he visits other bases. He reinforced his intention to continue Plan Jericho, which will transform the service into a fifth-generation Air Force.

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News

Rescue fuels a first

KC-30A comes to the rescue of a US Hornet pilot having engine trouble

FLT Michael McGinn

IN AN Australian first, a RAAF KC-30A Multi Role Tanker Transport has refuelled a United States Marine Corps (USMC) F/A-18C Hornet that was having engine trouble over Iraq.

The USMC Hornet was flying a combat mission against Daesh over Northern Iraq when it was forced to shut down one of its two engines due to a mechanical issue. Short on fuel, the Hornet requested air-to-air refuelling support from the RAAF KC-30A.

A challenging feat at the best of times, air-to-air refuelling with an engine-out Hornet had only ever been conducted in flight training scenarios and never before from the RAAF aircraft over a war-zone.

KC-30A captain SQNLDR Jamie said the situation demanded some brainstorming and clever flying.

“The hardest part was that the Hornet couldn’t maintain the required altitude or speed that we normally refuel at due to the hostile environment over Iraq,” SQNLDR Jamie said.

The first option was to accept refuelling at a reduced speed, lower than normally required, and refuelling at that speed had never been done by me or my crew.

“The other option was to do what we call toobogganing, where we refuel while descending to allow the Hornet to gather more speed. This option would have brought us below a safe altitude, so we went with the first option.”

SQNLDR Jamie said the USMC pilot demonstrated incredible skill and the RAAF KC-30A and USMC Hornet were able to conduct the complicated manoeuvre in order to enable the jet to refuel, fly out of Iraq and land safely.

“The Hornet had dropped bombs from one of its wings, making his aircraft less stable, which when combined with the loss of an engine, makes refuelling in mid-air a real challenge.

“He did a great job in the end and it was a good feeling to help him out. If we hadn’t been able to assist, he would certainly have had to make a less than ideal landing in Iraq.”

The Australian Air Task Group comprises six F/A-18A Hornet aircraft, a KC-30A Multi-Role Tanker Transport and an E-7A Wedgetail airborne early warning and control aircraft.

As part of Operation Okra they participate in close air support operations, air-to-air refuelling and airborne command and control in Iraq and Syria as part of the international coalition formed to disrupt and degrade the Daesh threat.

In a scenario similar to the mid-air refuelling of the US Hornet, an Air Refuelling Operator on a KC-30A Multi Role Tanker Transport conducts the first air-to-air refuelling of a RAAF E-7A Wedgetail (the view from which is shown below), on coalition operations above Iraq.

Photo: GPSM Ben Dearnley

New badge of honour

MAJ Cameron Jamieson

AIR Force’s enduring presence in the Middle East has been assigned a new name and a Task Group badge, reflecting the dynamic nature of their essential task.

Formally Air Component Coordination Element – Middle East Region, the C-130J Hercules aircraft intra-theatre transport group is now called the Air Mobility Task Group (AMTG). The new title allows the AMTG to stand alongside other tasks groups assigned to the region, such as Task Group Afghanistan, Task Group Taj and the Air Task Group.

While the AMTG is C-130J-focused, other aircraft such as the C-17 Globemaster III strategic transport aircraft are assigned to the task group when need arises.

AMTG Commander WOCDR Scott Wardle said the new name reflects the change in scope for the organisation.

“The task group has been in theatre for over a decade, however with the departure of the AP-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft and the Heron unmanned aerial vehicles to Australia our focus is now on air mobility,” he said.

The new name also highlights the increased operational tempo for the transport aircraft following the assignment to operations in Iraq of the Air Task Group, Task Group Taj and the Special Operations Task Group.

Support to these groups must be conducted while keeping the flow of personnel and supplies into Afghanistan and other countries in the region to support troops.

“With the commencement of Operation Okra last year we are primarily operating into two countries with distinct differences in terrain and threats to the aircraft,” WOCDR Wardle said.

Personnel were presented their patches at a parade where WOCDR Wardle said the badge was designed by former unit member Sgt Xavier Sherriff.

“The patch depicts a Golden Eagle, which is indigenous to the Middle East region,” WOCDR Wardle said. “The Eagle stands proud above a globe, overlaid with the Southern Cross centred on the Middle East.

“The eagle is a traditional symbol of air power and underlines our strength and our ability to remain aloft for extended periods of time.”
Smashing the stigma

Mental health and wellbeing go to the top of the action list

SENior Defence leaders joined with personnel in Canberra to mark ADF Mental Health Day on October 16. VADM Ray Griggs was joined by Commander Joint Health RADM Robyn Walker and representatives of the three services and Defence APS to mark the day over a morning tea at Russell Offices.

World Mental Health day falls on October 10 each year and since 2012 the ADF has conducted activities to coincide with the day, highlighting a particular aspect of mental health. The theme for 2015 was Take Action.

In a video message to Defence personnel, the senior leadership focused on three important goals:

- To encourage open and honest discussion about mental health issues;
- To promote awareness of the range of support services available to members and their families; and
- To encourage people to seek help early.

Speaking at the morning tea, VADM Griggs said taking action required physical and moral courage, resilience and compassion.

“It’s an individual responsibility and our collective duty, no matter our rank, our role, our position, or where we are,” he said.

Service in the ADF can pose significant pressures on its members and their physical and mental health. Frequent relocations, long separations from friends and family, demanding and sometimes dangerous working conditions, can all cause stress.

Defence continues to make significant investments in resilience training, early intervention, treatment and rehabilitation programs, and building on its understanding through research programs to ensure people are prepared and supported throughout their careers.

For more information about Defence’s mental health programs and where to get help, visit www.defence.gov.au/health/healthportal

Smashing the stigma

Mental health and wellbeing go to the top of the action list

PERSONNEL with mental health issues have a range of options available to help:

- Speak to your chain of command
- All-hours support line – 1800 628 036
- Defence family helpline – 1800 624 608
- Veterans and Veterans’ Families Counselling Service – 1800 011 046
- Lifeline – 13 11 14

GETTING HELP

MORE than 150 members turned out to the annual Mental Health Day Breakfast at RAAF Base Darwin’s Airman’s Mess on October 9. In welcoming guests and members to the breakfast, Senior ADF Officer RAAF Base Darwin WGCdr Wes Perrett said mental health was both an individual and collective responsibility.

“It is important that we all look after ourselves, assist others when we think something is wrong and to always promote a positive work culture.

“Let’s take the time to ask our colleagues and friends if they are OK,” WGCdr Perrett said.

The morning’s guest speaker was Acting Assistant Commissioner Brent Warren, from the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services.

The breakfast was followed by unit mental health forums as well as some fun fitness activities at the base’s gymnasium.

The Department of Veterans Affairs provided members at the breakfast with a care pack containing fishing lures, ice packs and other items promoting mental health.

WGCDR Wes Perrett addresses the Mental Health Day Breakfast at RAAF Base Darwin. Photo: Simona Di Toro-Bell

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Spartans dropping in

Container delivery systems fill the sky above western Sydney during airdrop training

Eamon Hamilton

AIR DROP training has been conducted by No. 35 Squadron (35SQN) Spartan crews for the first time in Australia.

From October 7 to 9, the Spartans delivered 16 Container Delivery Systems (CDSs) to the Londonderry Drop Zone near RAAF Base Richmond.

The airdrops used both C-27J Spartans that have been delivered to Australia, with the second aircraft having arrived only in September.

It marked one of the first steps towards realising one of the key roles for 35SQN according to CO Wg Cdr Bradley Clarke.

“This aircraft is intended to sustain personnel on the battlefield, and airdrop is a big part of how we do that,” he said.

“Other RAAF aircraft may carry bigger payloads, but the Spartan can operate from significantly more airfields and will, typically, be based much closer to the frontline.

“As they have in the past, the intent is for 35SQN to work in close proximity to Army, allowing us to be responsive and flexible in delivering cargo and personnel.”

The Spartan’s cargo bay can carry a total of 6 CDSs.

CDSs can be delivered day or night and the capability is a joint effort

Army units such as No. 176 Air Dispatch Squadron will typically prepare each CDS before it is loaded onto a transport aircraft.

Accurate delivery on to the target requires the C-27 to precisely manoeuvre the aircraft to the wind-adjusted drop point and set the aircraft at the correct altitude, speed and deck angle. Once released by the crew, the load moves under gravity along floor rollers until it exits via the rear-mounted cargo ramp.

A static-line inside the cargo bay will pull the parachute release cord as the CDS exits the ramp.

This allows the payload – as much as one tonne of supplies and ammunition – to descend to the ground.

The CDS is also used for humanitarian and disaster relief missions, having been used by No. 37 Squadron Hercules to deliver water, food and shelter to Iraqi citizens in 2014.

The importance of aerial delivery to several missions means it will be a fixture of 35SQN’s C-27J training.

“Through November, we’ll demonstrate our ability to deliver up to six CDSs in a single pass over a drop zone,” Wg Cdr Clarke said.

“We are working towards delivery of freefall paratroopers and static-line paratroops in the near future”

Supporting the masses

LEUT Andrew Ragless

ADF personnel in the largest Combat Support Unit deployed to the Middle East Region have returned home following a successful six-month rotation.

The 192 members of the Combat Support Unit Rotation 13 (CSU-13) provided support to ADF and coalition aviation operations, including the newly established Air Task Group in its fight against Daesh.

CO CSU-13 Wg Cdr Robert Graham said the unit rose to a significant challenge.

“The mission to provide combat support to the Air Task Group expanded during the last rotation,” he said.

“However, CSU-13 was the first rotation to mount, work up and deploy as a much larger formed body.

“We’ve moved a phenomenal amount of flexible, deployable and achieved all of our deployment targets in the last six months.”

CSU is a key provider in sustaining air operations throughout the Middle East, all the time maintaining support to other ADF units in the region.

Besides supplying material goods, CSU also provides services such as air load teams, aircraft security, airfield engineering, accommodation, medical, welfare and garrison support.

Commander JTF633 RADM Trevor Jones and outgoing CO CSU-13 Wg Cdr Robert Graham, right, watch as CO CSU-14 Wg Cdr Iain Carty signs the Transfer of Authority certificate.

Speaking at a parade to mark the Transfer of Authority from CSU-13 to CSU-14, Commander JTF 633, RADM Trevor Jones said the CSU’s functions are critical to enabling the delivery of air combat power.

“The CSU achieves many things across many areas of endeavour and their efforts are greatly appreciated,” he said.

For the duration of their six-month deployment, the CSU-13 Air Load Team handled 1400 pallets, more than 5000 passengers and nearly 6.5 million pounds of cargo including vehicles.

More than 88.5 million litres of aviation fuel was delivered to ADF and coalition aircraft and 26 airfield and 110 domestic fire response calls were handled by CSU aviation fire fighters.

There were 27 tactical aeromedical evacuations (AME) handled by CSU medical staff and more than 10,000 items of explosive ordnance were disposed of.

Incoming Commander CSU-14 Wg Cdr Iain Carty said CSU-13 had performed an outstanding job.

“They have maintained a very high tempo and provided superior combat support to the Air Task Group and the coalition,” he said.

“We are hoping to sustain and improve on what they’ve been able to deliver”

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Flight sergeant records triple digits with her donations to the Red Cross Blood Service

CAF AIRMSHL Leo Davies congratulated FSGT Christine Williams on reaching the milestone of having made more than 100 donations to the Australian Red Cross Blood Service, as they both took a break from their official duties to make an early morning visit to the Canberra Donor Centre as part of the 2015 Defence Blood Challenge.

FSGT Williams has been donating blood for 15 years and plasma for 12 years. The Red Cross 100 Club is a select group of individuals who make the time in their busy schedules to donate blood year after year.

FSGT Williams said blood donation was something she took a lot of pride in, and didn’t see it as a chore.

“It’s a good thing to do. People always need blood and it makes such a difference to their lives,” she said.

“Overall it is a pretty easy thing to do when you are fit and healthy and it’s nice to take some time out to just sit and relax while giving your donation.”

She has been so vocal in advocating for people to donate that both her sons have also become donors.

“They are giving whole blood at this point, which means they can only give every three months,” she said.

“Hopefully in the future they get to a point where they can give plasma or platelets and donate more frequently.”

The reason FSGT Williams is so keen to champion plasma and platelet donations is because of the multiple uses and benefits these blood products offer. Although whole blood donations are important, plasma and platelets are often used to treat chronic and life-threatening conditions and can make a huge difference to the recipient.

While FSGT Williams donated blood outside of the Defence Blood Challenge she is also a strong advocate for participating and representing Air Force.

“The Defence Blood Challenge is great because it increases blood donations, encourages people who may be first timers and of course fuels the friendly rivalry between the services,” she said.

AIRMSHL Davies said that it was in FSGT Williams’ character to have achieved something so significant for a worthy cause.

“My impression of FSGT Williams has been that if she can do one more thing, she’d do that,” AIRMSHL Davies said.

“So one more donation, then another donation, quickly became 100, and I wouldn’t be surprised if she goes to 200. She’s that kind of person.”

AIRMSHL Davies also wasn’t surprised that Air Force consistently donates the most per capita out of the services during the Defence Blood Challenge.

“I really like that statistic. I think there’s something about Air Force that says: if we want to do the job, we’re going to get it done the best way we can,” he said.

“There’s even a bit of section, squadron, and base rivalry each year to see who can donate the most, and that’s really inspiring I think.”

“We inspire each other.”

The challenge runs from September 1 to December 8 and Red Cross donation vans will visit a range of Air Force bases throughout that period.

For more information visit www.donateblood.com.au/defence
Comedians and identical twins Chris and Justin Nelson entertain troops during a Forces Entertainment Tour in the MER.

Photo: CPL Mark Doran

A DUAL-duty Forces Entertainment Tour has reported for action in the Middle East Region (MER), providing home-grown Australian laughs and music.


The musical line-up included Queensland’s soulful duo Megan Samardin and Chris Graham; the country-rock/rockabilly sound of Lonesome Train, featuring Christian Power, Doug Dekroo and Rob Laurie; and Sydney band the Potbelleez, featuring Jonny Sonic and Dave Goode.

Comedians Adam Rozenbachs and the Nelson Brothers joined the high-energy Melbourne rock band Tequila Mockingbyrd, with Estelle Artois, Jess Riley and Josie O’Toole, for concerts at Camp Baird and other southern Afghanistan support bases.

At the end of the final show, Lonesome Train’s front man, Power, presented a guitar signed by the entertainers on behalf of Fender Musical Instruments Australia to Deputy Commander JTF633 BRIG Nagy Sorial for use by deployed troops.

Rozenbachs found more material for his routine in the MER. “I was wandering around the base and found clothes dryers in the laundry when it is 500 degrees outside,” he said.

“I also liked the colour charts for urine in the toilets. My joke is I took one of the charts home and took it to Bunnings so I could paint my house Severely Dehydrated.”

“I pick up on things that people who are living here take as the norm, but coming here from a civilian background, I just say ‘that’s not normal’.”

Rozenbachs said his first Forces Entertainment tour was to Afghanistan in 2014.

“During my first tour I had a picture in my head from growing up watching M*A*S*H, so to have that debunked was cool. But to see the processes and adapt to the lifestyle of the soldiers was a new experience,” he said.

“This tour was a bit more relaxed and I was able to help out the other entertainers with what to expect here – like not treating the mess as a hotel!”

Rozenbachs found the troops were happy to share their military experiences and talk about their role.

“They are also happy to answer our stupid questions and are extremely sharing about where they have been and what they have done,” he said.

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“They are also happy to answer our stupid questions and are extremely sharing about where they have been and what they have done,” he said.

“I guess that someone who does their job every day during their deployment may not get to share it with anyone.”

Tequila Mockingbyrd’s Artois said the band was intrigued by the concept of Forces Entertainment.

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The first Pacific Rim Junior Enlisted Leadership Forum was held in Canberra in September bringing together junior leaders from 12 nations in the spirit of camaraderie and friendship.

WOFF-AF Mark Pentreath described the event as the next step in nurturing and advancing international engagement with partner air forces across the Pacific.

While there continues to be strong international engagement at the warrant officer level we have done very little to professionally develop our airmen across the region,” he said.

“To continue to develop our corporal’s leadership skills and knowledge of air power is vital. It’s also important for junior leaders to gain a greater understanding of the cultural differences across the region and build friendships with their international peers.”

The Command Chief Master Sergeant of the United States Air Force Pacific Command, Chief Master Sergeant Harold Hutchison, said the Forum’s focus was to provide participants with the information and tools, with the emphasis being on leadership development to grow tomorrow’s senior enlisted leaders.

Fifteen junior leaders from as far as Mongolia and the Maldives took part beginning with a tour of Parliament House and the Australian War Memorial.

After some short ice-breaker activities the participants engaged with interactive presentations on air power and leadership case studies from a multitude of guest speakers.

CPL Laikin McCormick, of 3 Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, said she got a lot out of having open discussion with service chiefs.

“The biggest message I took from this was the importance of active listening,” she said.

“To be a strong leader you also need to be a strong follower and communication is key up and down the chain.”

LAC Bruce Foster, of 1 Squadron, said he was very impressed with the presentations.

“USAF CMSgt Timothy Horn was a well-read, articulate and had a very polished presentation on leadership values and styles,” he said.

“It was a lot to digest but I’ll certainly be taking this back to my unit.”

WOFF-AF Pentreath said the forum was an outstanding success.

“All the outcomes were achieved and the participants even put together a Facebook page. They can stay in touch, share ideas and continue the discussion,” he said.

“That alone speaks volumes and is a great step forward for the region.”

Junior leaders show the way

Nurturing and advancing international engagement across Pacific air forces

CAF AIRMSHL Leo Davies gives a presentation to the Pacific Region Junior Enlisted Airmen and Airwoman at the Australian Defence College.

Inset, junior leaders take part in a leadership challenge.

Photos: SGT William Guthrie

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Drifting change

SGT Dave Morley

THE technical skills of a RAAF Base Williamtown warrant officer were recognised at a dinner held in Canberra on October 13, by CAF AMC SHL Les Davies.

Warrant officer technical standard WOFF Stanley Davis received the prestigious Rolls-Royce Eagle Trophy for 2015. He said the award was a career highlight that would take some time to be beaten.

“ar flat, I was a little shocked when I got the phone call from GPCAPT Daniel Reid two weeks ago,” he said.

“I think my words in response to the phone call were ‘what for?’”

“I feel truly honoured to be chosen for the Rolls-Royce Eagle Trophy and the CAF Commendation that came with it, but for me I feel as if I have just been doing my job.”

According to WOFF Davis, his past five years in the Air Force have probably been the most exciting.

“Certainly being part of the team introducing Super Hornet was a career highlight,” he said.

“Now as part of the HQ Air Combat Group (ACG) engineering team, I have loved the opportunity to drive and implement change within our technical workforce to support and improve the way we do business and support our future workforce requirements.

“I have thoroughly enjoyed the challenges and, most importantly, the successes we have had introducing the Electronic Record of Training and Employment (eRTE), stream-lining our technical authorisation process and helping develop the Air Force Technical Workforce Contextualised Leadership program.

“These are things that I know will improve life for our technicians in ACG.”

The CAF Commendation’s citation read, “You have displayed exceptional technical mastery and professionalism in overcoming problems associated with the transition of personnel workforce history and authorisation records into the electronic database within a tight timeframe.”

“You have applied yourself diligently to all tasks, ensuring the smooth and timely transition to the new Electronic Record of Training and Employment system.”

The Eagle Trophy is a silver replica of a Rolls-Royce Eagle VIII engine that powered the Air Force’s first aircraft, the Fairey III D at the formation of the RAAF on March 31, 1921.

Rolls-Royce presented the first Eagle Trophy at its 75th anniversary in 1996.

Call for vets to apply for forfeited awards

VETERANS or the families of deceased veterans who forfeited their medals have been urged to contact Defence.

Assistant Defence Minister Darren Chester made the call on October 7, as he announced the government had received the Report of the Inquiry into the Refusal to Issue Entitlements to, Withholding and Forfeiture of Defence Honours and Awards.

The Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal was directed to inquire into Defence decisions to withhold medals from serving personnel as far back as 1939.

“The vast majority of veterans who forfeited their medals served during WWII,” Mr Chester said.

“The government is considering the report and will later respond formally to the chair of the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal and the community.”

Meantime, Mr Chester called for veterans, or the families of deceased veterans, who forfeited their medals to contact Defence.

“There is no register of withheld or forfeited medals, so it is not known how many veterans forfeited their awards,” he said.

He said veterans and their families greatly valued service medals and this was evident from the submissions made to the inquiry.

Veterans or their families can contact Defence on 1800 333 362.


Call for vets to apply for forfeited awards

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Aslan thanked
Rotation 8 personnel recognised for their South Sudan service

The eighth rotation of the Australian contingent deployed to Operation Aslan has been farewelled and awarded medals as part of the UN Mission in South Sudan from March 18 to October 5.

The parade on September 19 was held at Australia House and was overseen by members of Rotation 9 that commenced their tour on September 18.

FLTLT Karl Woodward was awarded an Australian Defence Force Commendation for his outstanding duties as the Officer in Charge of the National Support Element that provides integral support to Australian Defence Personnel deployed to South Sudan.

“One of the highlights for me was being involved in a United Nations Police foot patrol within the Bor UN International Displaced Persons camp where I saw first hand the struggles and desperation of the local South Sudanese people, especially the children,” FLTLT Woodward said.

“I am proud to have represented the Australian people as part of our nation’s contribution to the United Nations mission and I hope the eighth Australian Contingent contribution assisted the peace making process and provided a stable and safe environment for the South Sudanese people, so they can continue to access water, food and education.

“Everyday brought about both professional and personal challenges that will shape my future career in the Air Force both in Australia and overseas on operations.”

Australian Contingent Commander COL Michael Bond addressed the parade and also issued a number of Rotation 8 personnel with their Australian Service Medal (with clasp South Sudan) and the United Nations Mission South Sudan Medal.

COL Bond took the opportunity to personally thank the members of Rotation 8 for their service and collective achievements and contributions to the UN Mission in South Sudan over the past six months.

BRONZE COMMENDATION

Your personal initiative in conducting a comprehensive review of the life-support arrangements for Australia House and the contracts for the sustainment of Operation Aslan are commendable. Not only did you negotiate significant savings for the Australian Defence Force, your engagement with the landlord of Australia House resulted in infrastructure improvements that have greatly increased the self-sufficiency of Australia House during periods of civil unrest and contingency situations...

— MAJGEN Shane Caughey, DCJOPS

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Backbone of air operations

Logistics personnel keep operations in the Middle East moving through a well-stocked and coordinated supply chain supporting members deployed on Operations Okra and Accordion, SGT Guy Young writes.

Airmen rely on a robust supply chain for its ability to support aircraft and personnel in order to conduct long-term effective air operations.

A combined logistics cell based in the Middle East Region, comprising Combat Support Unit (CSU) personnel deployed on Operation Okra, performs this vital function in supplying everything from stationery through to precision-guided munitions.

One of the ATG F/A-18A Hornet pilots, SQNLDR Jason, knows how critical the supply chain is.

In addition to aircraft parts, he relies on the regular supply of explosive ordnance. From defensive munitions such as chaff and flares, to offensive precision guided munitions.

“Operation Okra has seen the RAAF use the most munitions since the Vietnam War over four decades ago,” SQNLDR Jason said.

“Without the supply of these munitions we would not be able to fulfil our role as part of the coalition disrupting and degrading Daesh.”

The supply of these munitions relies heavily on logistics personnel working directly with the armament officer and pilots to understand the requirements and place the requisitions.

With three vastly different aircraft platforms and up to 350 personnel to support, the logistics cell comprises a number of different elements all working together to maintain a robust supply chain.

Operation Okra has seen the RAAF use the most munitions since the Vietnam War over four decades ago. Without the supply of these munitions we would not be able to fulfill our role as part of the coalition disrupting and degrading Daesh.

ATG has logisticians dedicated to supporting each aircraft platform: the F/A-18A Hornet fighter attack aircraft, KC-30A Multi Role Tanker Transport aircraft and the E-7A Airborne Early Warning and Control aircraft.

In the 12 months since the commencement of Operation Okra, ATG has placed more than 100 high-priority aircraft operationally grounded (AOG) demands.

The total supply chain time for AOGs is two weeks. However, the average total supply chain time is less than seven days.

This is a major achievement, considering that each item entails raising the demand, picking the item, preliminary movement within the National Support Base in Australia, movement of the item to the Middle East Region and the intra-theatre movement to the end-user.

Personnel from all agencies work together to ensure the efficient delivery of items, resulting in rapid aircraft maintenance and the ability of the ATG to undertake its mission.

Combat Support Unit Air Load Team member LAC Ryan Douglass helps to load a pallet onto a 60k tonner loader for movement to a waiting aircraft.

Air Task Group logistics officer FLTLT Shamas right inspects a KC-30A Multi Role Tanker Transport spare from within a 60k tonner loader carrying supplies flown in from Australia.

CSU supply specialists LAC Moly Mair and LAC Brad Bloomfield inspect a PLVRO shield at an Australian Army base outside the Middle East Region.
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Sky-high entertainment

Any Superbike fan worth his salt would be stoked to meet the man who fuelled his love of the sport over many years.

And so it was for Air Force Imagery Specialist SGT Rodney Welch when he met his idol, legendary Australian motorcycle racing chief mechanic Jeremy Burgess, at the 2015 Pramac Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix (MotoGP) at Phillip Island in October.

Mr Burgess, chief engineer to three MotoGP world champions, is one of the main reasons SGT Welch’s interest in the sport continued to grow over the years.

SGT Welch, of No 28 Squadron, now rides a motorcycle himself and is one of the “cool dads”, picking up his eight-year-old daughter from school on a bike in Adelaide.

SGT Welch became interested in the sport of motorcycle racing as a teenager in Gladstone, Queensland.

The name Burgess is synonymous with the sport and meeting him in person was “a real privilege”.

“He is very humble and approachable,” SGT Welch said.

“I have seen him before, but never had an opportunity to shake his hand and speak with him.”

Also among the many VIPs from the racing world at the event was this year’s 2015 Bathurst champion, Craig Lowndes.

Tens of thousands of racegoers took a break from the action on the track to enjoy a daily aerial display turned by the Roulettes.

The Roulettes team pulled out all the stops with formation flying at speeds of up to 550km/h and at heights as low as 80m. One of the popular aerobatic sequences was the “mirror” executed by Roulette Five FLTLT Lachie Hazeldine and Roulette Six FLTLT Jonathan Morgan.

Roulette Seven FLTLT Thomas Sawade provided real-time commentary of the display.

“Roulette team’s number one priority is safety, similar to all MotoGP teams, where the safety of their riders, is the most important aspect,” he told the crowds.

“There are many parallels in their commitment, concentration, precision and passion for what they do as well.”

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At RSL Queensland, we are here to look after the men, women and families of those who cared enough to risk their own lives. To lend a hand. To support and guide. To show respect. And to say thank you.

EXPLODING German shells shook trenches of New Zealand’s Otago Battalion near the French town of Armentieres on July 13, 1916, but rather than a concentrated barrage the enemy seemed to fire artillery ranging shots.

Among the Otagos was SGT James Bree, Gallipoli veteran and my great-great uncle, likely preparing to move forward and protect the flank of a trench-raiding party that evening.

Despite raised eyebrows about the earlier German shells, Otago trench-raiders soon waited in the darkness of no man’s land for their friendly artillery to lift before attacking.

A rumour about my great-grandfather, John Thomas Bree, being shot in the “arse” while “probably” running away from Turks at Gallipoli was the extent of my family’s WWI service until New Zealand’s war records were digitised.

Here our family found the most reliable information about my great-grandfather and the existence of his previously forgotten sibling, James Bree.

James joined the Otago Inf Bn’s 10th (North Otago) Coy on August 15, 1914, followed by John Thomas in the 8th (Southland) Coy seven days later. They left New Zealand as part of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force that October, arriving in Egypt about two months later. Here John Thomas missed a “tattoo roll call” in Zeitoun, Cairo, and was confined to barracks for seven days in March.

Both men likely landed at Gallipoli with the Otagos after 2.30pm on April 25, 1915, before heading into battle. A bullet smashed into John Thomas’ left hand, not his backside, in early May, possibly as his company advanced on Dead Man’s Ridge. He was evacuated to Egypt and declared “permanently unfit for service” before arriving back in New Zealand that September.

James fought on with the Otagos at Gallipoli, being promoted to corporal shortly before being evacuated with shrapnel wounds to his leg and dysentery. He arrived at hospital in Malta in mid-September, then transferred to hospital in England. He rejoined his battalion at Moascar, Egypt, in January 1916 after they had been evacuated from Gallipoli.

A promotion to sergeant followed, but on the eve of shipping out to France, James was severely reprimanded for neglect of duty in April 1916. Three months later, as the friendly artillery barrage ceased on the German trenches near Armentieres, James and his men started moving through no man’s land to protect a raiding party’s flank. But concentrated shrapnel and machine-gun fire cut the Otagos to pieces before they had taken a few steps – the enemy fire all focused between the New Zealand front and the German objective.

Only a handful of New Zealanders managed to stagger back to their lines and James most likely lay dead. It was suspected the Germans were forewarned of the raid and laid a trap. James’ records show him KIA on July 14, 1916. He was buried in an Armentieres war cemetery – the failed trench raid most likely killed him.

While memory of James was lost for nearly 100 years, my family preferred to forget my great-grandfather, John Thomas, described as a “ratbag” who abused his wife and children. Whether this was a result of his service we will never know.

John Thomas’ wife eventually left her abusive husband and took several children with her. No photos of the pair survive and war records offer only a small insight into the brothers – one lost to his family; another who lost his family.

Siblings FLTTL Lucy Bree and CPL Max Bree honour their family’s Anzac heritage at the Australia-New Zealand Memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra. Inset, their great-great uncle James Bree’s headstone at Armentieres.

Main photo: Lauren Larking

RCEAIR F

November 5, 2015

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CPL Max Bree delves into the past during the Anzac Centenary year to unravel a long-standing rumour in this Defence family’s history

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If you have operational or extenuating personal circumstances that require you to move on a particular date, you will need unit approval prior to submitting your AFR online. The form is available at www.tolltransitions.com/defence under the WORC subheading or contact Toll Transitions on 1800 819 167.

Once your AFR is submitted you will be assigned a Toll Transitions Case Manager who will be in contact with you to discuss your relocation and commence booking the specific services required.

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- Complete your AFR, attaching required documentation, as soon as possible
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- Difficulty completing your AFR? Contact Toll’s Customer Service Centre on 1800 819 167

Have you received a posting order but are yet to submit your AFR?

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Combating violence

Donations can help support victims, CPL Max Bree writes

As November 25 approaches, white ribbons are pinned to caps, cakes are ordered and units around Australia prepare for morning tea. Speeches will be made, personnel encouraged to never excuse or commit violence against women and many may sign written promises to that effect.

Those men prone to domestic violence are unlikely to suddenly realise the error of their ways, but others may be encouraged to step-in and apply some form of social pressure to the perpetrator. Unfortunately, it may take some time for friends to realise the abuse is happening and longer for the risk of the offender losing their friends to prompt a change in behaviour.

I’ve often wondered how women in violent relationships feel on White Ribbon Day. Perhaps they hope their partner will hear the message and change their ways. Maybe they wonder if their abusive partner’s mates understand her situation and how long it will be before he hears the brunt of a friend’s disgust.

As we hope to remedy the cause, many women can’t wait for cultural change and something to help the symptoms needs to be done in the meantime.

In conjunction with holding a morning tea this White Ribbon Day, units should take the opportunity to raise money that can help women in immediate need.

This could mean collecting donations for a local women’s refuge or organisations that provide crisis accommodation and domestic violence counselling services. Suitable refuges and organisations are easy to contact in cities and regional centres. Many will accept donations from the public, but a sizeable contribution from a FEG or squadron is a great way to show our desire to truly help abused women.

It’s great working towards a culture that never accepts violence against women, but at the same time we need to help victims leave abusive situations.

Men telling men violence against women is unacceptable is one way to send a message. A woman leaving an abusive man sends an even stronger message, but it often can’t happen without vital support services in place.

For every woman who escapes her abuser, there is potentially another victim inspired and a perpetrator given cause for reflection.

But that can’t happen without support, and that’s why we need to raise money for those vital services at this year’s White Ribbon Day morning teas.

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But that can’t happen without support, and that’s why we need to raise money for those vital services at this year’s White Ribbon Day morning teas.
Recently, Boeing presented the Royal Australian Air Force with its first EA-18G Growler. The world’s most advanced electronic attack aircraft, the EA-18G will provide Australia with a formidable information-age capability and play a central role in the RAAF’s ‘Plan Jericho’ for a networked airborne fleet. EA-18G will help realise the RAAF’s vision for greater situational awareness, survivability and mission effectiveness for the Australian Defence Force.

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Safe bet on new rules

Air worthiness system to align with global trends

The ADF is bringing Australian military aviation into step with a regulation suite for safety used by about 30 other nations.

Defence Aviation Safety Regulations (DASR) will be introduced from December 2016 to replace the Military, Operational and Technical Airworthiness Regulations.

This will align Australian military aviation with an emerging convention for aviation safety used extensively throughout Europe.

ADF aircraft have been kept safe for about 20 years thanks to a unique set of airworthiness regulations.

But, in changing times, the Directorate General Technical Airworthiness – ADF (DGTA-ADF) and the Airworthiness Co-ordination and Policy Agency have looked at options for aligning Australian military aviation with global conventions.

The result is an airworthiness suite including regulations that have already been militarised by the European Defence Agency.

An in-depth assessment process revealed many benefits, including enhanced interoperability, cost effectiveness, easier amendments and a stronger legal basis.

DASR is expected to be more user-friendly and to provide greater clarity in roles and responsibilities.

It will ensure efficiencies and allow for risks to be managed at the lowest appropriate level.

The ADF also operates a growing number of aircraft derived from civilian models.

Using a system familiar to industry will reduce support costs and give the operational commander more flexibility to deal with unscheduled events.

Greater traceability of ADF training standards to national and international levels will allow more opportunities for “blended maintenance workforce” solutions.

The future DASR will also benefit regulatory staff, allowing them to more easily keep regulations up to date.

WGCDR Jason Dean, from DGTA-ADF, said the change was timely.

“As a stand-alone set of regulations, our current system is embedded in a framework that has become difficult to maintain, update, contemporise and defend in a court of law.

“The European model meets our needs and offers great scope for interoperability and cost savings,” WGCDR Dean said.

Director General Technical Airworthiness AIRCDRE James Hood, the regulator for both ADF and civilian contractors who work on Defence aircraft, said it was important to be efficient and cutting edge in an increasingly complex aerospace world.

Avionics Technician LAC Malcolm Mittra finalises a safety inspection at RAAF Base Townsville. He and his ADF colleagues will soon be working to a new set of airworthiness regulations. Photo: CPL Craig Barratt
**Promise on progress**

Holly Brambley

THE Women in Defence - Our People and Capability conference on October 13-14 reinforced Defence’s commitment to improve gender diversity across the organisation. CDF ACM Mark Binskin and VCDR ADFM Ray Griggs opened the two-day event declaring a more diverse workforce would improve our capability, pushing for more women in key leadership roles.

More than 250 guests from across Defence, other government agencies, allied militaries and Defence industry attended the two-day conference.

SQNLDR Naomi Gill said that Defence had started talking more about issues surrounding cultural change, developing a stronger understanding of ways to move forward.

“The conference shed light on the issue of unconscious bias as something we need to be aware of,” SQNLDR Gill said.

“I agree with Liz Broderick, who moderated a panel with Service Chiefs and representatives from private industry, if we do not intentionally include women we unintentionally exclude them. We need to have the difficult conversations and work out ways to overcome these problems.”

The idea of unconscious bias was raised early and was a theme that continued to arise throughout the event – like SQNLDR Gill, many guests pledged to take the initiative to be more aware of assumptions they made based on gender.

The conference also shed light on the future of our ADF, with Service Chiefs participating in a frank and informative panel discussion pushing for a workforce that is representative of our 51 per cent female Australian population.

Day two was an intimate forum with leaders and diversity experts from across Defence given the opportunity to delve deeper into some of the ideas and topics explored on day one, while brainstorming ways in which these ideas could become a reality.

It was the second time Thomas Hoffman, of Defence People Group, had organised the conference.

“Working on a high profile event, with strong support from Defence senior leadership has been very rewarding,” Mr Hoffman said. “Feedback has been extremely positive as this is an important topic for Defence and I think the event showcased the commitment to progressing these issues.”

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**What attendees are saying:**

- “The training was very informative, very educative and was wealthy. I loved it.” - Kenny, Brisbane (September 2015)
- “Well presented covered many aspects of property investing in short period of time.” - William, Wagga Wagga (September 2015)
- “Very informative, learnt a lot, so impressed with the information presented.” - Kylie, Wagga Wagga (September 2015)
- “It was very informative for one who is new to the property market and will purchase soon.” - Geoffrey, Perth (October 2015)
Assess your options

New military super legislation offers more options to secure your retirement.

In just over six months, a new era of consumer choice starts in military superannuation. On July 1, 2016, the days of ADF members joining one compulsory superannuation fund (MSBS) will be over.

MSBS will continue unchanged for existing members who choose to continue in it, but will be closed to new entrants from that date.

Chairman of the ADF Financial Services Consumer Centre AIRCDRE Robert Brown said the current compulsory fund would be replaced by a new military superannuation scheme in which all MSBS members – not DFRDB members – would be offered the opportunity to direct all new employer contributions, at the rate of 16.4 per cent per annum, to any legally approved superannuation fund of their choice.

“Choices will include industry, retail, self-managed superannuation funds and a new default fund called ‘ADF Super Fund’, the trustee of which will be the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation – the current trustee of MSBS and DFRDB,” he said.

“In addition, there will be a new death and invalidity scheme called ‘ADF Cover’ for eligible members who choose to transfer to the new superannuation scheme.”

The level of death and invalidity cover in ADF Cover will be consistent with that provided by MSBS. “Of course, there’s more to it than this brief summary of key facts. Therefore, whatever you decide, you should do so in an informed manner, by your own risk or based on what well-intentioned, but ill-informed colleagues might tell you,” AIRCDRE Brown said.

To assist ADF members in making an informed decision, educational material is available in the ‘Guides’ section at www.adfconsumer.gov.au. This website also contains a film about choosing a financial adviser, which is recommended to all ADF members thinking about seeking financial advice before deciding on a preferred superannuation option.

The film is called Financial Advisers – The Facts and the Fiction and outlines key issues to consider and questions to ask before appointing an adviser.

The ADF Financial Services Consumer Centre has also established a list of licensed financial advisers who have undertaken to provide professional advice, including superannuation advice, on a genuine fee-for-service basis.

These advisers are members of the ADF Financial Advice Referral Program, developed as a result of members wanting access to trusted financial advice, but not knowing how to source it. The advisers listed in the program have given a written undertaking to Defence that they do not receive any form of conflicted remuneration, such as commissions, product bonuses and asset fees, that may cause their advice to be biased against ADF members’ best interests.

The list of advisers is at www.adfconsumer.gov.au.

“Before you settle on an adviser, make sure you understand the scope of the services on offer – limited or comprehensive – and the fees you are likely to be paying for that advice. Consider talking with a number of advisers before appointing one. “The important point is that excellent resources, both educational and professional, are available to assist you in your superannuation choices.”

He said these resources would be expanded as July 1 approached.

“ADF members are strongly encouraged, before making a decision, to read about and understand the new superannuation arrangements and to consider seeking professional advice,” he said.

“Having gone through that process, you should feel satisfied you’ve performed a comprehensive due diligence and have made a choice that is in your and your family’s best interests.”

AIRCDRE Brown is a chartered accountant, chairman of the ADF Financial Services Consumer Centre, and a member of the Financial Literacy Board and Australian Securities and Investments Commission’s Consumer Advisory Panel.
The Australian Services Rugby Union (ASRU)’s men’s team adopted the latest rugby-specific strength and conditioning (S&C) approach employed by the ACT Brumbies Rugby, to prepare for the International Defence Rugby Competition (IDRC) held last month in the UK.

ASRU’s experience with the 2011 IDRC identified the importance of an S&C program.

This year, Brumbies S&C coach Ben Necott came on board to assist ASRU coaching staff with implementing and monitoring a 14-week program.

ASRU S&C coach Army SGT Chris Wilkinson, of I Close Health Support Battalion, said the program was an ongoing development over the past four years.

“We changed the program when we came together back in June for a long weekend camp so we would be in peak condition for the IDRC,” he said.

“Physical training is complex and specific to the individual – you can’t give someone a generic program and expect the results to flow across the board. You need to tweak things to suit their style, playing position and psychological state.”

SGT Wilkinson advised the ASRU players on how to start the program at the beginning and work up to higher intensity training to avoid injury.

“It’s better to underemphasize strength, aerobic and anaerobic endurance as it will assist in developing the quality of fitness and more importantly reduce the risk of sustaining an injury,” he said.

“It is also important to listen to your body – if you feel tired or unmotivated, don’t train through it.”

SGT Wilkinson said good quality sleep, nutrition and hydration were key to performing well.

“You need to make sure you are not mentally fired up to train don’t rely on or waste your money on that stuff. Eat more, sleep more, train right. It’s quality not quantity.”

“Heart rate, blood pressure and body composition were taken at the beginning of the program and share tips. We conducted baseline testing in early June, then follow-up testing at four-week intervals across the 14-week program, concluding with final testing on the first day of the tour.

“We needed to ensure players were capable of giving 100 per cent for up to 80 minutes. Near enough would not be good enough,” he said.

“We engaged the Brumbies because they had a solid reputation of delivering superior results through a rugby-tailored S&C program.

“The same goes for pre-workouts, if you are not mentally fired up to train don’t rely on or waste your money on that stuff. Eat more, sleep more, train right. It’s quality not quantity.”

“We used Facebook as our forum to disseminate the training plan and instructional video clips, and to answer questions and share tips. We conducted baseline testing in early June, then follow-up testing at four-week intervals across the 14-week program, concluding with final testing on the first day of the tour.

“To compete alongside the best rugby teams in the world, tailored and robust S&C is critical.”

For more information on ASRU’s S&C program, contact SGT Chris Wilkinson on christopher.wilkinson1@defence.gov.au

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ADF WOMEN will be competing for the first time in the six-nation International Defence Cricket Challenge 2015 (IDCC15) to be held in Canberra from November 16-29.

Six service-level teams of the Australian Services Cricket Association (ASCA) will compete against the defence forces of Malaysia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Fiji and Pakistan to both renew and enhance their partnerships through cricket.

All men’s teams will compete in Twenty20 and one-day matches while the women’s teams will compete in T20 matches. ASCA head coach WO Gary Fuss said he was looking forward to seeing the women compete.

“After trying to get [women’s cricket] into Defence for many years, and working with ASCA Manager of Cricket Operations MAJ Darren Mattison, we achieved this. To see it feature in IDCC15 is fantastic and great that we are aligning with modern times,” he said.

“Having so many countries coming here to embrace the spirit of the game is also great. It is important to mix in this setting as we work with these countries to a professional level as well—it’s great to see the Fijian Army field a side for the first time too.”

During the past decade, the ASCA has conceived, developed and grown the IDCC concept to become the pre-eminent global defence cricket tournament. It aims to foster a spirit of goodwill and healthy competition within the international defence environment.

“A competition like this is not held anywhere—whether someone has a brain injury or not,” she said.

There are various physiotherapy techniques, such as dry-needle acupuncture, which can enhance performance.

“Witnessing the mechanism of injury is really valuable in helping manage that injury. People often think that to be concussed you have to hit your head on something but that is not the case. It can happen in a high-speed tackle and a player might say they don’t have a headache, but in fact they do have a concussion,” SQNLDR Ryan said.

“We can do an immediate assessment and get on top of it straight away and have better results than if there is a 24-36 hour delay.”

“Having the corporate knowledge about the team and personal knowledge about the players is invaluable when you are responsible for their health care both on and off the field,” LCDR Ryan said.

“It is especially important in dealing with concussion and head injuries. We can do an immediate assessment to then be able to return someone to play within days,” SQNLDR Ryan said.

Both LCDR Ryan and SQNLDR Lewis have worked and toured with ASRU men’s and women’s teams since 2010 so they both understand the requirements of individuals and the team as a whole. Although they don’t play rugby themselves, both get very involved in the excitement of the matches and take personal pride in the games.
Gallant till the end

A relentless Fiji brings Australia’s run to a halt in the International Defence Rugby Competition

And friendlies make it four

LTCOL Adam Boyd
and CPL Janine Fabre

AUSTRALIA’S International Defence Rugby Competition (IDRC) campaign came to an abrupt but gallant end in the quarter final at Portsmouth on October 19, when the team faced the top-ranked Republic of Fiji Military Forces team.

Fiji’s speed, agility and ball handling was impressive from start to finish. It was relentless in the tight contest in the forwards and its outside backs attacked with flair. Its 62-8 victory reinforced its favouritism to go all the way in this year’s IDRC.

The scoreboard might suggest a one-sided contest as the fleet-footed Fijians ran in a decent bagful of tries, but the Australian Services Rugby Union (ASRU) team had Fiji on the back foot, deep into the attacking zone, on many occasions.

ASRU’s ball retention was not at its best, however, and it crossed the line for only one try, scored by lock SBLT Josh Friend.

ASRU’s best player was flanker PTE Suka King, who was constantly in the thick of action and matched the Fijians for pace out wide, defending and attacking.

PTE King thrives on brutal, fast-paced contests and kept the ASRU doctor busy, adding another eight stitches to his IDRC war-wound tally.

Rugby journeyman LAC Shaun Connolly received his first ASRU cap. It was a long time coming for LAC Connolly, who has been striving for ASRU selection since 2011.

He received the coveted ASRU XV representative tie in the middle of the post-match ASRU and Fiji huddle.

LTCOL Connolly said the team was mentally prepared for a tough game against Fiji.

“We knew we were going to have to really put the pressure on to beat them,” he said.

“There were a couple of things in the game that didn’t go our way, a couple of bounces that went in Fiji’s favour, and really that is all they needed to get the upper hand and from that point we were playing catch-up rugby.

“Even when they were a couple of men down, it didn’t slow them down. They are a predominantly sevens rugby nation so I don’t think they really even noticed they were down one or two men.”

Before this match ASRU and Fiji had played only three times in ASRU’s 52-year history – in 1984, 1996 and 2006. The ledger was 2-1 in favour of Fiji. ASRU’s only win was in 1984 at the Sydney Cricket Ground, when the score was 18-14.

LTCOL Adam Boyd
and CPL Janine Fabre

DESPITE bowing out of the International Defence Rugby Competition (IDRC) in the quarter finals, the Australian Services Rugby Union (ASRU) team did the ADF proud by winning four out of their six games in the UK.

The only two teams ASRU lost to were the grand finalists, British Army and Republic of Fiji Military Forces.

After losing their quarter finals, Australia, South Africa and Tonga agreed to compete in a couple of friendly matches.

ASRU head coach WOFF Tony “Doc” Doherty said it was important for them to tour to South Africa and said the game was the highlight of his trip.

“For me that was an emotional game. I could actually understand the boys on the field and then got to have a chat with them and swap jumpers afterwards,” he said.

Australia played South Africa at RAF Halton on October 23, winning a close one, 35-31.

“Whether or not ASRU ever gets another opportunity to play South Africa, at least they’ll know that they were the first team to play, and win, that game,” WOFF Doherty said.

“It is always nice to have that in the history books. And it is a credit to the players they were able to overlook the quarter final loss and still come out and play good football.”

LAC Shaun Connolly grew up in South Africa and said the game was the highlight of his trip.

“For me that was an emotional game. I could actually understand the boys on the field and then got to have a chat with them and swap jumpers afterwards,” he said.

ASRU then played a friendly against Tonga at Maidenhead Rugby Union Club on October 27. As expected, it was a physical encounter but Australia still won 27-24.

ASRU’s backline showed plenty of attacking flair and pace, scoring three of ASRU’s four tries.

There has never been more than eight points between the teams, who have played seven times in 10 years, so WOFF Doherty was relieved to win.

“We won, but it wasn’t as convincing as we would have liked, noting that we dominated possession of the ball. Unfortunately, we just couldn’t hold on to the ball,” he said.

LAC Shaun Connolly said it was a very physical contest.

“The Tongans played quite a tight game that didn’t go our way, a couple of bounces that went in Fiji’s favour, and really that is all they needed to get the upper hand and from that point we were playing catch-up rugby.”

LTCOL Adam Boyd

Before this match ASRU and Fiji had played only three times in ASRU’s 52-year history – in 1984, 1996 and 2006. The ledger was 2-1 in favour of Fiji. ASRU’s only win was in 1984 at the Sydney Cricket Ground, when the score was 18-14.

LTCOL Adam Boyd in action in the friendly against the South African National Defence Force rugby team.

Photo: CPL Janine Fabre
BLOW BY BLOW

IDRC gig tops off a whistle-stop adventure for an Air Force ref

CPL Janine Fabre

THE CHANCE to referee rugby union on the world stage is something FLTLT James Hagan has been working towards for the past four years. A flight test systems specialist at the Aircraft Research and Development Unit in Edinburgh, South Australia, FLTLT Hagan was selected to referee in the International Defence Rugby Competition (IDRC) in the UK.

He said the highlight was being appointed to referee the semi-final at the Harlequins’ home ground, the Stoop in Twickenham. “I’ve been working hard to put myself in the best possible position for this trip,” he said.

“As well as a great capstone to the 2015 season, this has been a brilliant trip and a fantastic experience. It’s great to be involved with other allied nations in a competition such as this.”

FLTLT Hagan has been refereeing for the ADF since 2005, a role that has taken him to New Zealand, the US and Tonga. After a series of deployments and injuries forced him to cut back his rugby union playing time, he took up refereeing.

He relished this aspect of the game and found he even became a better player for it. “I enjoyed learning more about rugby and I found that my playing got better once I learnt more about the laws and how to apply them,” FLTLT Hagan said.

He said he was grateful for the opportunities the Australian Services Rugby Referees Association (ASRRA) had given him. “The units I have been posted to and the Air Force have all been very supportive,” he said.

About 80 referees from the three services referee on weekends and from there are selected for inter-service carnivals, intra-brigade competitions and the annual Australian Services Rugby Union Championships.

But the pinnacle is to be selected for international tours such as the IDRC. “ASRRA looks at all the referees that are of the appropriate standard for the level of competition and then they look at availability to be released from work,” FLTLT Hagan said.

“We are always looking for referees. By becoming a referee in my local association and then becoming a part of ASRRA has allowed me opportunities that I would never have been able to imagine or pursue.”

For more information about becoming a referee with ASRRA, email service.referees@defence.gov.au

For more information about becoming a referee with ASRRA, email service.referees@defence.gov.au