Driving test: A Mercedes-Benz G-Wagon is put through its paces. The ADF has ordered 1200 of the vehicles, which will come in six variants.

Photo by John Kutop
**NEWS**

**$350m wagon deal**

By Steve Ridgway

THE ADF has ordered 1200 Mercedes-Benz G-Wagons under a $350 million contract to replace the ADF’s Land Rover fleet. The signing ceremony for the contract took place on October 29 during the Land Warfare Conference in Brisbane.

The two-tonne all-terrain G-Wagons will meet the lightweight/ light capability segment of Land 121 Project Overlander, the Army’s largest-ever project.

WO2 Perry has been test-driving the 4 x 4 and 6 x 6 variants as part of the Army’s technical evaluation – and he’s impressed with the vehicles.

“Either way, the current aim is to build a strong relationship with suppliers. Some of our current trailers are 50 years old, so whatever we get now could be around for a very long time,” he said.

“Because of my logistics background I wanted to get the best kit, but also the best deal in long-term life-support.

“We also need to build a strong relationship with suppliers. Some of our current trailers are 50 years old, so whatever we get now could be around for a very long time,” he said. WO2 Perry said that the contract to supply the vehicles was an important milestone for the $4.6 billion Land 121 Project Overlander.

The system will automatically record key records of each vehicle’s service, engine, transmission, modifications, its level of electronic countermeasures and so on.

“Actually we have had first pass approval to be part of a US JLTV development program,” WO2 Perry said.

“The Americans will be replacing their Hummers with JLTVs, but it could be our in-theatre Land Rover replacement,” WO2 Perry said.

“To me the G-Wagon is a quantum leap ahead of the Army’s old Land Rovers,” WO2 Perry said.

“All the variants have power steering, automatic transmissions and air conditioning. They also have diff-locks – which means every wheel gets the maximum output, but if one wheel starts slipping the others will pull you out. No Australian Army light vehicle has ever been fitted with this before.”

“Several criteria, like the time to repair and the level of maintainability, have all been factored into the support contract, along with likely turnaround time for spares.”

“Should mean that CSSBs see less of the vehicles. High operational availability is now part of the package.”

**Armed forces**

**By Steve Ridgway**

**New life for old warhorse**

By Steve Ridgway

THE M113A1 has been in service since 1964 but, like Home and Away, it keeps getting a new lease of life.

Defence Minister Joel Fitzgibbon announced at the Land Warfare Conference that another 81 M113s will get a $220 million upgrade. It will take the vehicles and hulls back to a “zero kilometres” and “zero hours” condition.

This is on top of the 350 M113s already being upgraded with improved armour protection, mobility, firepower and habitability under Project Land 106.

The project provides a new armoured turret, adds armour protection, relocates fuel tanks to outside the vehicle and modernises the drive train and automatic systems. It is also “stretching” 329 of the 431 vehicles, adding an additional wheel station to increase space and weight limitations of the present vehicles.

Director General Land Movement Systems Brig Mike Phelps said, “Crew members will get the benefits of applique armour, spall curtains, enhanced mine protection and a new improved turret. There will also be better stowage and heat mitigation.”

Further options for enhanced survivability are being considered. DMO is ready to adapt new technology and training measures if they are required.

To accelerate production, General Colin Scown of the British Aerospace Systems unit in Australia—Defence is preparing sites in Williamstown, Victoria, and Wingfield, South Australia, additional to their main M113 facility at Bandalinga.

As the drive and brake systems make up the majority of the technical effort in the upgrade and are common across all seven variants, the testing that has already been conducted for the first three variants will not need to be repeated for the remaining four.

**Geared up for quantum leap**

By Steve Ridgway

The ADF has ordered 1200 Mercedes-Benz G-Wagons under a $350 million contract to replace the ADF’s Land Rover fleet. The signing ceremony for the contract took place on October 29 during the Land Warfare Conference in Brisbane.

**Start your engines:** WO2 Shannon Dorothy (left) and WO2 Chris Letton, Training Operations—Overlander, with the new Seaus all-terrain Mercedes Benz G-Wagons.

By Steve Ridgway

WO2 Andrew Perry has been test-driving the 4 x 4 and 6 x 6 variants as part of the Army’s technical evaluation — and he’s impressed with the vehicles.

“The Americans will be replacing their Hummers with JLTVs, but it could be our in-theatre Land Rover replacement,” WO2 Perry said.

“All the variants have power steering, automatic transmissions and air conditioning. They also have diff-locks — which means every wheel gets the maximum output, but if one wheel starts slipping the others will pull you out. No Australian Army light vehicle has ever been fitted with this before.”

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“Should mean that CSSBs see less of the vehicles. High operational availability is now part of the package.”
Armour’s combat testing

By Cpl Andrew Hetherington

Soldiers from Mentoring Reconstruction Task Force 1 (MRTF 1) are the first to benefit from the protection offered by new body armour.

The $80 million Modular Combat Body Armour System (MCBAS) project began delivery in July and the first of the ordered 14,000 units will receive combat testing in protecting MRTF 1 soldiers in Afghanistan.

Capt Luke Langelaan, project leader for survivability in Project Land 125, said MRTF 1 members would not be the only soldiers to be issued the latest generation of personal protection this year.

“Once the system was explained to them and they received the training in the use of it they became positive. Soldiers thought the positive aspects of the new system were its comfortable fit, the usability of the gear and the quick release mechanism, which they felt were improvements on the old body armour.”

Army HQ intends to continue the issue of MCBAS to formed body force elements during their force preparation with the intent that all personnel on operations will eventually be wearing MCBAS. The final delivery of the units to the Army will be in July 2009.

The MCBAS train-the-trainer course covers:
- Operator training, assembly, fitting, donning, care and cleaning, non-technical inspections and storage.
- Storeman receive training in the care and cleaning of MCBAS, and conducting non-technical inspections.
- Commanders receive training in the protection levels provided by each of the components, assisting them to make informed decisions on what soldiers should be wearing when deployed.

During the training soldiers gave positive feedback on the new system to the Project Land 125 team.

“At first they seemed daunted when they saw all the components laid out in front of them,” Capt Langelaan said.

“Once the system was explained to them and they received the training in the use of it they became positive. Soldiers thought the positive aspects of the new system were its comfortable fit, the usability of the gear and the quick release mechanism, which they felt were improvements on the old body armour.”

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Professional engineers wishing to take part in the LEPDP should complete an application form, which can be downloaded from the HQTC-A website and fax or mail the application to the contact address below for approval.

HQTCA-LEPDP intranet address:

For further information on the Land Engineer Professional Development Program contact:
Phillip Nelson
LEPDP Manager
HQTCA
Victoria Barracks
Paddington NSW 2021
Tel: 02 9339 2446; Fax: 02 9339 2462
Mobile: 0416 030 844
Email: philip.nelson@defence.gov.au
Reaching the end

By Cpl Jane Ashby-Cliffe

The ADF has completed its mission of support to the NT Emergency Response, helping protect Aboriginal children from abuse and build the basis for a better future.

Operation Outreach involved more than 600 ADF personnel, including 400 soldiers from Norforce who played a vital role in providing logistical support to the child health check teams, delivery and installation of 18 NT police stations and delivery of new safe houses among other support activities.

JTF 641 wrapped up Op Outreach when the Haasts Bluff Police Station was opened on October 21. The station was one of 18 established in five remote communities throughout the NT in support of the whole-of-government intervention that began in June 2007.

JTF 641 and CO Norforce Lt-Col Mick Rozzoli said it was impressive to see so many corners of society working together for a common good.

“Regardless of where the personnel came from or what their expertise, everyone was working to one vision, one goal,” he said.

“The operation finished ahead of time and on budget and that is to the credit of all the men and women of the ADF.”

Norforce was the largest element of JTF 641 and was supported by Joint Movements Group, 2 Div personnel, 1 Bde, 17 Bde, 19 CE Wks, the Pilbara Regt, RAN landing craft crews, individuals and elements of the Navy and Air Force’s movements and Caribou crews.

Lt-Col Rozzoli thanked all ADF members for their hard work and dedication and for maintaining a sense of humour through a unique operation.

“There was a tremendous response from the members of Norforce with over 420 of the 549 soldiers supporting the intervention, but we could not have done it without the support of the Navy and Air Force and the expertise they provided,” he said.

“Everybody had an important role to play and our goals wouldn’t have been achieved without everybody working together.”

Weather, terrain, geographical remoteness and limited or non-existent infrastructure all contributed to the obstacles faced throughout the operation.

“The challenge of continuing with the distribution and construction throughout the wet season was a huge logistical challenge but one we overcame,” he said.

“The people of the communities are now living better lives with more law and order, more accountability and the kids are back in school.

“To have made such tangible improvements in other Australians’ lives is something I’ll never forget and I feel extremely proud to have been a part of it.”

Defence Science and Personnel Minister Warren Snowdon said the ADF members involved in Op Outreach had made a valuable contribution to the emergency response, providing much-needed support.

“The role of the indigenous soldiers of Norforce in the implementation of the operation was critical to its success,” Mr Snowdon said.

ABC to stay open, says Minister

DEFENCE Science and Personnel Minister Warren Snowdon has reassured Defence families ABC Learning Centres will remain open despite the appointment of administrators to the group.

Defence has a contract with ABC Corporate Care for the management of 18 Defence owned child-care centres. The government has introduced a wet season hotline on 1800 2003 and website at www.mychild.gov.au.

Defence organisations can also access information from the DCO and National Welfare Coordination Centre.
Waller’s winning war wall

By Maj James Baker

A FASTER and safer method of erecting protective perimeter walls on operations has won this year’s 1 Div Good Ideas Expo in Brisbane – and earned its designer $1000 in the division’s best and brightest to exhibit ways Army can improve the way it does business.

The “No Sweat Hesco Lifter” reduces the time to build a 9m section of protective wall from 40-50 minutes to around 20 minutes. “For the entire perimeter wall, that cuts days off the construction time,” LCpl Waller said.

“Until that wall is erected, your force is pretty exposed, so it’s important to get it built as quickly as possible.”

LCpl Waller said the idea came to him as he and Reconstruction Task Force 3 soldiers started constructing Patrol Base Worsley at the foot of the Baluchi Pass near Tarin Kowt, Afghanistan. It was the biggest patrol base constructed during RTF 3’s tour.

“It was getting pretty hot by that stage of the operation, and the work-to-rest ratios meant soldiers needed a lot of rest between work periods,” he said.

“I didn’t see us being able to do it in the required timeframe – doing it by hand in the old style – so I had the idea of getting a machine to do it instead of the troops.”

Runner-up at the expo was a custom-made ammunition box designed to dramatically cut the time needed to access ammunition inside an ASLAV. It means soldiers don’t waste time or become unnecessarily exposed by getting out of armoured protection, unpacking and then stowing ammunition.

Presenting the prizes to winners, Commander 1 Div Maj-Gen Richard Wilson said the ideas represented the best spirit of Anzac innovation.

“Since the Army was created Australian soldiers have shown their great creativity in the barracks and on the battlefield,” Maj-Gen Wilson said.

“Today’s soldiers, drawn from all ranks, show the same ability to adapt to the situation that diggers at Gallipoli showed with periscope rifles and delayed firing systems.”

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RAR riders mark 60 years of service

TWELVE serving and former RAR members are cycling from Brisbane to Sydney to mark the 60th anniversary of the RAR. Riders will arrive at Randwick Barracks, Sydney, on November 21 having left the RAR National Memorial Walk at Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera on November 9. Maj Tex Howarth (retd) said while the ride was not a fundraising activity, any donations would be gratefully received for the National Memorial Walk.

“The riders will cover about 100km a day and we encourage all to join in the party atmosphere as we pass through,” he said.

Official 60th anniversary celebrations will begin in Sydney on November 21 with a regimental dinner at Darling Harbour, Sydney. A memorial service will be held at the RAR Memorial in Sydney’s Regemental Square on November 22 and a parade of the Queens and Regimental Colours at Victoria Barracks, Sydney, on November 23.

For more information on the 60th anniversary visit www.rar.org.au or email RARCommittee60@gmail.com. To find out more about the ride or to make a donation contact Tex Howarth on 0411 204 206 or email hitex02@bigpond.net.au.

Army shopping easier online

By Steve Ridgway

THE ArmyShop is now online to make it easier to order Army-branded and customised clothing and merchandise. The variety is immense – from badges to belt buckles, clothing to coldie-holders, and jewellery to golf balls.

The online shop is the brainchild of former Chief of Army Lt-Gen Peter Leahy and profits will go to the Army Relief Trust Fund (ARTF) for the benefit of serving personnel.

Deputy Chief of the Army Maj-Gen David Morrison formally opened the online shop on November 3.

“The Rising Sun is an iconic badge it is recognised throughout the world,” Maj-Gen Morrison said.

“Young that badge, the Army sells itself throughout Australia to instill public trust and to encourage pride even in the newest recruit.”

“I thoroughly encourage every soldier to get behind this initiative. The ARTF provides support to Army members in their time of need and, if this scheme works, it will move the ARTF into a whole new world.”

Frontline Defence Services Chairman Ted Moore agreed. “Lt-Gen Leahy wanted to increase the visibility of the Army, and to direct profits to help the ARTF. But the profits depend on individual soldiers giving it their support,” he said.

While Frontline Defence Services will be responsible for the online shop, the day-to-day management and product development fall to Brandnet’s Stephen and Lindsey Davie.

Lindsey Davie said online customers could brand their own caps or T-shirts and get an instant quote.

The ArmyShop’s website is at www.armyshop.com.au. The shop is located in Canberra at 65 Kembla Street, Fyshwick.

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**Guns return home**

**Welcome home: Gnr Brodie Basterfield gives his mother Vicki Silcock a hug after returning from Afghanistan.**

By Lt Bill Heck

THERE was a heroes’ welcome waiting at the Darwin airport for the gunners returning from Operation Herrick on October 24.

As each member of the 16-man artillery troop, the first group of gunners to deploy since the Vietnam War, passed through Customs they were rushed by waiting family and friends.

The gunners served overseas for 12 months with the British 7th Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery, fighting the Taliban on the frontline of Helmand province in Afghanistan.

Vicki Silcock travelled from Tasmania to see her son, Gnr Brodie Basterfield, arrive home safe and sound.

“When you are a parent it’s very worrying,” she said.

“It is an enormous relief that he is now home.”

The deployment was conducted under a bilateral arrangement to enhance the training and experience of the Royal Australian Artillery as part of the wider Task Force Helmand organisation.

Lt-Col Craig Furini, CO 8/12 Mdm Regt, was on hand to welcome the soldiers home and said he was very proud of their professionalism, resilience and toughness.

“They fired over 2500 rounds of ammunition in 153 missions and earned the respect of the British soldiers they worked beside,” he said.

“They have done an excellent job in very tiring and austere conditions, reinforcing the excellent relationship we have with the British.”

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**Celebrate the season carefully**

THE end-of-year party season, while a great opportunity for social get togethers, also holds the potential for unacceptable behaviour hazards for ADF members.

Personnel are reminded that breaches of Defence’s unacceptable behaviour policy still attract workplace sanctions even if they occur off site.

“All ADF members remain responsible for their actions. Alcohol consumption, a relaxed social setting or general high spirits are never an excuse for unacceptable behaviour,” a Defence spokesman said.


**Units with views in Coogee**

A CLEAR blue ocean view will meet guests who stay in the newly opened Army Amenities Fund (AAF) Company apartments in Coogee, Sydney. Deputy Chief of Army Maj-Gen David Morrison officially opened the two new apartments at a ceremony on October 13.

Maj-Gen Morrison said he was impressed “at how tastefully decorated and welcoming the units feel.”

What a fantastic place for soldiers to relax and enjoy some rest time.

The AAF Company, chaired by Brig Gerard Fogarty, invited a soldier and his family to stay in one of the units before the opening.

Cpl Brendon Begbie, 17 CSS Bde, stayed over the weekend with his fiancée. “I would really recommend these units to every soldier and their family. The barbecue facilities were great and we ended up using this for breakfast, lunch and dinner,” he said.

Cpl Begbie also said it was an ideal place for a weekend away or a longer stay as the units were walking distance to the beach and near public transport.

Both units are located in the same complex. One is targeted towards families as it has bunk beds and fold-out couches, and the other is suitable for two couples.

The apartments will be available for stays of up to seven nights. Phone the property manager on (02) 9315 7777. Soldiers interested in staying at any AAF Company properties should visit the AAF website at www.armyholidays.com.au for rates and availability.

**Sabre sharp on land care**

THOUSANDS of soldiers using the same training area every two years ought to create a landscape resembling the Somme in WW1, but at Shoalwater Bay the opposite is happening.

Colin Trinder, Director of Environmental Impact Management, said the quality of the natural environment in the Shoalwater Bay Training Area “is now actually better than in many national parks.”

“Military activities have been happening for a long time, so clearly military training and conservation are compatible,” Mr Trinder said.

“It’s because we are set up to deal quickly with erosion, weeds and feral animals and, unlike the national parks, we do not have to manage the effects of some irresponsible campers, their fires, 4WD vehicles, waste, pets and trail bikes on our training areas.”

He said soldiers were smart operators in the field as they knew it was good field-craft to leave a place as they found it, which denied the enemy any intelligence.

This attention to detail benefited the environment.

“The biggest risk, as usual, will be the thousands of soldiers, including US soldiers, who haven’t yet exercised in the Shoalwater Bay area and don’t know about the environmental protocols.

“Everyone gets a detailed environmental awareness briefing when they arrive – not just common sense messages like don’t play with snakes, don’t shoot at wildlife, and the spiders do bite – but they also get told what we expect them to do with drained engine oil, used batteries or packaging, even their own human waste. And there will also be environmental management teams at each site to give additional supporting advice and to check on implementation,” he said.

“Defence has worked hard over the years to be a good neighbour, and I think we now have the confidence of the community – the majority generally believes Defence is doing a great job managing the environment and will continue to do its best. So whichever side is victorious in the exercise next year, both sides will be able to count on winning the battle for the local environment – and keeping the local community onside for 2011.”

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Tank mobility boosted

By Steve Ridgway

ARMOURGEO Corps members have always prided themselves on the firepower, protection and mobility they bring to the battlefield.

Now their strategic mobility has received an even bigger boost after one of their Abrams M1A1 tanks was successfully loaded aboard an Air Force C-17 Globemaster on October 28 at RAAF Base Darwin.

The practice loading of the Abrams onto a 36 Sqn C-17 is part of the ongoing and continual expansion of the air lift envelope of the RAAF’s C-17,” said 36 Sqn XO Sqn-Ldr David Jackson.

This exercise has provided considerable experience for 36 Sqn aircrew and Army personnel, and has proved that an Abrams can be loaded and carried on a RAAF C-17. AMTDU personnel have greatly assisted in making this exercise a success.”

Flt-Lt Dean Bolton, 36 Sqn, said it was known the Globemaster was “capable of moving five ASLVs or three Black Hawks, and today we have proved the concept that it can deliver a battle tank.”

Normally the C-17 is limited by the volume of its cargo rather than its weight, but an Abrams tank changed all that.

“Weigh-wise this is the heaviest single-point source we have loaded onto this plane,” Flt-Lt Bolton said. “Although there is heaps of space we are weight-limited with this load, though typically with this plane we bulk out well before we weight out.”

The successful loading means that 1 Bde’s heavy armour can be delivered further and a lot faster than ever before.

“We have previously moved the M1A1 by sea, rail and road and now we are confirming that we can move it by air,” said Maj Chris Gardiner, OC B Sqn, 1 Arm Regt.

“This exercise confirms the compatibility of the C-17 as a lift platform for the M1A1 Main Battle Tank.

“It is part of a larger picture and part of preparation for a Ready Tank Troop that is capable of being deployed if asked to go by the Government. We need to do this to confirm the configurations, know what preparations we require and what we require from the RAAF.”

By Steve Ridgway

THREE of the Air Force’s four giant C-17 transport aircraft will soon be able to conduct aeromedical evacuations (AME) – and at the same time if necessary.

“The C-17 fleet is an Air Force asset but it’s definitely good news for the Army and Navy too,” said Gp-Capt Karen Leshinskas, CO of the Amberley-based Health Services Wing.

“The C-17 is faster in the air and needs less refuelling so we can get anywhere who is injured back home significantly faster. The faster round trip means it’s not only easier on the aircrew, it’s a lot easier on the patients.

“The C-17 design took account of the AME role, so there are purpose-built litter stations, therapeutic oxygen and utility power.

“There’s also plenty of room on board for specialists as well as for several AME teams of general duties doctors, nurses and medical assistants. That’s important when patients need around-the-clock, long-term care in the air. Each AME team can look after the patients but also get some rest time.”

The aircraft can carry up to five high-dependency, critical-care patients supported by specialist biomedical equipment, plus an additional 18 stretcher-borne low-to-medium dependency patients – or can be configured to carry up to 36 stretcher-borne patients.

One C-17 has already carried its first patients when it flew three wounded and two ill soldiers from the MEAO on September 5. The flight to mainland Australia took 13 hours.

The AME team leader on that mission, Wg-Cmdr Sandra Riley, said the 18-strong AME team came from many parts of Australia – Adelaide, Amberley, Newcastle, Richmond, Melbourne and Toowoomba.

“It also included an anaesthetist who was due to leave Tarin Kowt after completing a tour there with the Medical Task Force. As he had been looking after the patients in TK, it made good sense for him to be a passenger on the flight,” Wg-Cmdr Riley said. “The patients required varying levels of care and all commented on how appreciative they were of the excellent attention they had received.”

Faster trip for patients

Repatriated: A soldier keeps up with local news while being flown to Australia aboard a C-17.

Heavy lift: An M1A1 Abrams is reversed onto a C-17’s ramp with ease while undergoing the trial run of a load/unload at RAAF Base Darwin.

Photo by AC Dan Pinhorn

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ALTHOUGH the Australian Government will reduce the size of the International Stabilisation Force (ISF) in East Timor from early next year, the tempo and mission for the recently arrived East Timor Battle Group 5 – Battle Group Tiger – will remain unchanged.

These were themes echoed by East Timor President Jose Ramos-Horta during a recent visit to Battle Group Tiger’s C Coy in Baucau. 120km east of Dili.

“Our people are very grateful, but your presence is still necessary; we cannot be complacent because we haven’t resolved everything,” the President said.

He took time out of a busy schedule to visit C Coy, which deployed to FOB Baucau in September.

C Coy resides in spartan barracks on the outskirts of the city of Baucau, about five minutes drive from the centre of town overlooking the sea of the Wetar Strait to the north and East Timor’s second highest mountain range to the west.

The town of Baucau is the second most populated area in East Timor and, like many communities, is still recovering from the instability of previous years.

Notwithstanding this period of recovery, C Coy’s tempo will remain active as operations are tailored to provide local communities with ongoing security to help develop prosperity.

Accompanied by ISF Commander Brig Mark Holmes and OC C Coy Maj Paul Greive, the President was given an overview of the FOB’s ongoing operations and a familiarisation of the working and sleeping accommodation.

In his brief to President Ramos-Horta, Maj Greive said foot and vehicle patrols would continue across a considerable part of the eastern area of East Timor. The soldiers would also maintain an emphasis on key leadership engagement and gaining community rapport.

“Our aim is to become part of the community,” Maj Greive said.

Arguably, their impression is already being felt in Baucau with C Coy providing English lessons to schools on a weekly basis and further engagement being initiated through sporting activities.

Notably, soccer has been one of the instant successes, according to WO2 Nathan Ahearn.

“When we started playing soccer with the locals, it’s not long before we draw an overwhelming crowd of youngsters, who generally outnumber us 10 to one,” WO2 Ahearn said.

As President Ramos-Horta’s visit to C Coy drew to an end, it was time for a quick photograph and some parting words.

“It is a great pleasure to meet you all, the Timorese people thank you for your friendship and support, support that you have given since 1999,” he said.

“Australian young men and women have done a superb job, and the ISF forces’ performance in Timor has been flawless.”

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DHA manages 17,000 residences across Australia. Twenty years ago, some Defence homes had no heating or insulation, and it was not uncommon for members to have to carry curtains, pieces of carpet and other fittings from one posting to the next ... but these days are long gone.

Today, DHA’s homes are modern, meet the standard of quality, amenity, and location required by the Department of Defence and most importantly, are of community standard – the same standard enjoyed by members’ friends and families. Houses now commonly have lounge, dining and family rooms, ensuites, double lock-up garages with internal access, and covered outdoor patio areas. DHA regularly upgrades housing stock each year and replaces some of the older homes with newly constructed ones. In the acquisition and development of property, we use local materials, suppliers and contractors wherever possible. DHA arranges approximately 25,000 relocations for ADF members and their families each year. DHA understands that with their loved ones away overseas this can be a particularly stressful time for Defence families. DHA will try to do everything it can to make sure things are hassle-free on the home front.

DHA does this by providing face-to-face service in the vicinity of most major military establishments around the country, and have more than 680 staff positioned in Housing Management Centres (HMCs) across Australia. Many DHA staff are Defence spouses and understand the pressures and issues faced by ADF members and their families. DHA has also improved its systems to make it easier for members to access information. In 1988, the Commodore 64 was the world’s favourite PC and the Internet was still the stuff of sci-fi movies. In 2008, members can communicate with their Relocation and Housing Consultants by email from many miles away, complete their relocation paperwork online and even search for their next home using DHA’s “HomeFind” online search tool.

The past 20 years has been a learning and growing journey for DHA and its people, and we look forward to continuing to provide the very highest levels of service to ADF members and their families.

Defence Housing Australia is 20 years old. From humble beginnings in 1988, we have become Australia’s foremost provider of quality housing to Australian Defence personnel, and offer unrivalled investment property conditions for investors. Defence Housing Australia, helping make houses a home, for you and your family.

www.dha.gov.au

Australia-wide services
DHA provides face-to-face service in the vicinity of most major military establishments around the country. DHA staff are always ready to help, and look forward to continuing to provide the highest levels of service to ADF members and their families. If you require support at any time during your tenancy or relocation, please contact one of our Hotlines:

- Relocation Hotline - 1800 626 698
- Maintenance Hotline - 1300 366 615
- Customer Service Hotline - 1800 249 711

Introducing DHA’s newest stakeholder

In consultation with Defence Families Australia and members of the Defence community, DHA has produced a children’s storybook and accompanying activity book for Defence children starring our hairy new four-legged star, Rex D. Dog.

Aimed at children aged four to eight, the storybook, titled ‘Let’s get moving’, is written from the perspective of the family pet and follows Rex and his family; Mum, Dad, Jenny, Mark and James, as they go through the relocation process.

With DHA managing 25,000 ADF relocations annually, it is essential that ADF families are receiving the solutions, services and support they need during this time. While many families cope well with moving to a new home, children are particularly susceptible to common doubts and anxieties during this time. Where will I live? Will I make new friends? Can Rex come with us?

The Rex storybook and activity book are free to all relocating Defence families with children between the ages of four and eight. Order a copy today by completing an order form, available at your local Housing Management Centre (HMC) or online at www.rex.dha.gov.au

Rex also loves fan mail and will reply to any children who write to him!

look to the future, value the past
Many highlights on deployment

By Wg-Cmdr John Martin
SIG Fiona Gallacher, 103 Sig Sqn, has been on top of the world recently, maintaining communications for Timor-Leste Battle Group 4.

Sig Gallacher spent many a day during her six-month deployment atop the mountain ranges of East Timor establishing vital networks.

“Communications between the different sections within the battle group is essential and ensuring that the mountainous ranges of East Timor don’t interfere with that requirement led to the hilltop climbs,” she said.

“Taking a Land Rover and team into the field for a week and camping on top of a mountain in East Timor has been great. Importantly, enabling communications between the HQ and FOBs is very rewarding.”

She was solely responsible for ensuring communications between Baucau and isolated FOBs.

“It’s very rewarding to know the job I have been trained to do enables me to provide the Army with the means to communicate in the field, particularly while I was deployed to East Timor,” she said.

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Blowing in the wind

Milling around: Spr Brett Corrigan, Trade Training School, and other soldiers from RTF 4 left their mark on Afghanistan by erecting an Australian windmill in Tarin Kowt just before RTF 4 finished its recent deployment. Photo by Cpl Neil Ruskin

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Sign of times: Sig Fiona Gallacher enjoys life at the top.
Photo by Cpl Rodney Welch
AFGHAN civilians who previously risked life and limb scavenging for scrap metal in minefields have a chance to enjoy a safer life and work in paid jobs, thanks to efforts led by an Australian soldier serving with the US military.

Combat engineer Maj Dave Bergman is the officer-in-charge of the Mine Action Centre, a detachment of mainly US military personnel which is focused on demining operations in and around the massive Bagram Air Field in northern Afghanistan.

Landmines continue to saturate the landscape and estimates suggest as many as 20 million antipersonnel and antitank mines were laid during the Soviet occupation and the later conflict between the Taliban and Northern Alliance.

Over the past six years, more than 200,000 landmines have been cleared in and around Bagram Air Base, but it is a slow, tedious, dirty and dangerous job.

Hundreds of Afghans are employed as deminers by government agencies and private contractors, but there are others so poor, unskilled or young who are prepared to risk everything in search of scrap metal.

Aware of the high rate of injuries caused by landmines being handled by non-qualified people, Maj Bergman decided to look for ways to get the scavengers off the minefields while still allowing them to make a living.

“I know of one man who has been blown up four times and now has a prosthetic leg in order to make enough money to feed his family,” Maj Bergman said.

The Mine Action Centre approached Hemayat Brothers International Demining (HDI), an Afghan-owned demining company, and developed a joint approach to address the unemployment issue resulting in a number of pilot programs over recent months.

“HDI has established a demilitarisation program which recycles munitions from the minefields in a safe and secure manner as well as a carpentry program that teaches new skills and provides products for the community,” Maj Bergman said.

“The demilitarisation program employs five people. Three qualified carpenters are employed in the carpentry program to teach up to 10 locals who all have a mine-related disability.

“It’s wonderful to see an Afghan-owned company empowered and successful enough to be taking the lead and finding solutions to help the citizens of this country in such a way,” he said.

Maj Bergman and the Mine Action Centre have also been at the forefront of negotiations to establish a medical outreach program and secure jobs on Bagram Air Base for the bread winners of poor families.

On average two civilians per week are injured by landmine explosions in the Bagram area. The significance of the new programs and the hope they bring for a better life is highlighted by the tragedy inflicted upon Romina, a 12-year-old Afghan mine victim.

“I was herding our cows in a field and they started straying,” he said through an interpreter.

“All I remember is swatting them and the next thing I know I am on the ground and my sister is lying a little way from me bleeding. I didn’t even realise my leg was gone until I looked over and saw it.”

Maj Bergman commands a team of seven American service men and women and oversees an Afghan-owned company employing seven Afghans to minefield clearance.

Are you STEPPING OUT?

Discharging from the ADF and stepping out into civilian life can be challenging.

The STEPPING OUT PROGRAM is about helping make your transition from the ADF to civilian life easier.

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Call 1800 011 046* for further information or to register for a program in your area.

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Hang in there:
Pte Trent Cox, 25/49RQR, on the rope held by his team mates (above). Pte Samuel Carr, 25/49RQR, in a first aid scenario being treated by a member from the 9RQR section (right).

Army November 13, 2008

TRAINING

14

By Maj Kate Ames

AFTER two days of intense competition in this year’s RQR Cup military skills competition, 9RQR were victorious with 31/42RQR finishing a very close second.

The RQR Cup, which was held in October, is the annual military skills competition between Queensland’s Reserve Battalions – 25/49RQR, 9RQR and 31/42RQR. This year it was held at Greenbank Training Area and Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera, and hosted by 25/49RQR.

It was the second year all battalions competed under the banner of the 11 Bde, and the first time 31/42RQR had competed as a combined battalion.

Events included a trailer push, navigation exercise, obstacle course, all-arms-call-for-fire, first aid, a watermanship activity, pack march and other live-fire activities.

OPSO 25/49RQR Maj Ian Dunn said the contest was close from the start.

“We didn’t debrief on the way through and didn’t tally scores, but we had a sense that it was close on day one. It seemed like it was horses for courses. Some did really well in some parts, and then not so well in others,” he said.

The winning section was led by section commander Cpl Andrew Morris, a trainee paramedic. Needless to say, the section excelled at the first aid stand.

“The section was hard to fault in first aid,” said assessing medic Cpl Ryan Brannock.

“When the section commander asked me about the state of the capillaries, I knew that there was some medical knowledge there. He was asking all the right questions, and remained very calm,” he said.

Capt Shane Sarlin, 11 Bde Operations Captain and an assessing officer for watermanship and all-arms-call-for-fire activities, has seen many competitions and said he was always impressed with the attitude of soldiers at these activities.

“The continued levels of motivation amaze me, especially when they get really tired,” he said.

Originally from Hawaii, and having worked with the US Army, British Ghurkas, Thai Infantry and Iraqi Army as an Australian Army officer, Capt Sarlin believes it’s a uniquely Australian trait.

“They start looking out for themselves and others the more tired they get, when you really expect the opposite,” he said.

He further said there was a need in this competition to focus on all-corps skills, such as call-for-fire and navigation.

“It was the things they don’t practise much at an individual level that they need to work on,” he said.

The soldiers were extremely enthusiastic about the experience despite the effort required.

“Aside from the Reserve pay and the sense of duty, it’s just a really good chance to compete and an opportunity to be with and workout with your mates,” said 9RQR’s Cpl Andrew Morris.

The winning section was presented with the coveted Passchendaele Shield by the new Governor of Queensland, Penelope Wensley, who attended her first event as Patron of the Royal Queensland Regiment.

While she said she had been familiar with the activities of the Defence Force through her role as a diplomat, she also said she had learnt a lot about the Army Reserve while observing aspects of the competition.

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DHA...building on our military heritage

One of the Navy’s best kept secrets lies close to Drummoyne, and 300 metres west of Cockatoo Island in the middle of Sydney Harbour. Spectacle Island is the oldest naval storage depot in Australia and has been used to store armaments and explosives since 1826.

In 1988, when Defence Housing Australia (DHA) took over care and maintenance of the property, it was found to be in a poor state of repair. As the building was listed with the Australian Heritage Commission and the National Trust, DHA undertook major restoration of the residence, completing the project in 1995.

Dominating the Harbour side of the island, the house was originally constructed in single storey in 1865 as the Commandant’s residence. During the 1890s, a second storey was added. The house has an enclosed two-storey verandah on the eastern elevation and a single storey verandah on the north. The building continues to be used as a residence, and currently houses a member of the Royal Australian Navy.

DHA has recently completed further restoration work at Spectacle Island works included significant structural repair to the sandstone walls of the Commander’s residence, a complete internal and external repainting, new carpet, repolished timber floors and other minor works to the residence.

The island is also home to some magnificent Georgian-style sandstone buildings built in the 1860s to provide facilities for the British Pacific Far East Fleet, then using Sydney as headquarters for its Australian Station. Massively built of solid sandstone, these specialised structures are good examples of built forms favoured by military engineers in the Victorian era.

Other structures on the island from the same era include the powder magazine, small arms store, office and guard room, petty officers’ quarters and a filling room, shell store, gun carriage shed and gun cotton, fireworks and torpedo stores, cable tanks, laboratory, boat shed, recreation room, bathing place and various other stores.

Today the storage area is largely taken over as a repository for the original marks and patterns of naval equipment and for the memorabilia of every former ship of the Navy. Those privileged to tour it are treated to a splendid display of Australian naval history.

DHA is proud to be the keepers of this significant historical property in the heart of Australia’s most beautiful harbour.

Restoration project ensures properties retain their charm

DHA manages more than 70 Defence properties that are either heritage listed or part of a heritage precinct. Together with Defence, DHA has implemented a Heritage Management Framework that enables it to care for these properties with due regard to their heritage value.

The ongoing management of heritage properties requires the preparation of conservation and heritage management plans to assist Defence and DHA to meet their obligations under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. The most significant projects undertaken in recent years include Spectacle Island, Angelsea Barracks, and the Royal Military College Duntroon.

ANGESELA BARRACKS

Established in the early 1800s, Angelsea Barracks is the oldest military establishment still occupied by the Australian Defence Force (ADF). The initial role of the Barracks was to provide military security for the convict settlement and the civilian population within the penal colony.

Major heritage upgrades were undertaken at Angelsea Barracks, Hobart. This involved the restoration of the Commander’s residence (the former hospital) and the original Married Quarters. The replacement of materials, such as pressed metal ceilings, brickwork and stairs, were closely matched to the original in order to retain the colonial style architecture.

THE ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE DUNTRROON

‘Shappere Lodge’ is one of several homes to have been restored by DHA as part of the heritage program at Duntroon in Canberra. The stone house was built in the 1860s and extended in 1913. The most recent work has seen the residence receive a linked extension of a master bedroom and ensuite. While the builders took great care to retain and restore the most original elements, other works were carried out to provide a more modern home and additional comfort for ADF families. These works included a new kitchen, an upgrade to the main bathroom, and an internal repaint. Work will continue at Duntroon until mid 2009, with a further three houses scheduled for restoration.
Soldiers vie for Thai gold on exercise

By Tpr Michael Franchi

SOLDIERS from 9 Bde have participated in a challenging exercise with the Royal Thai Army (RTA) in northern Thailand.

Unlike exercises conducted in Australia, the field phase of Exercise Chapel Gold 2008 was held in and around local villages, with people, schools and businesses continuing to go about their daily lives. This created the challenge for the soldiers in identifying the enemy and operating in a manner to ensure minimal disruption.

The exercise, held from August 30 to September 14, began with a week of cross training between the two armies to gain a better understanding of the tactics and procedures of each other.

The training included platoon attacks, ambushing, cordon and search, and the searching and detention of prisoners of war. The training was important and enabled soldiers from both countries to work effectively together during the field phase.

Pte Bradley Smith, 31/42RQR, said working alongside the RTA was sometimes a challenging experience.

"Interacting with them in such an extensive environment allowed us to utilise their training techniques to enhance our own skills," he said.

The field phase involved two scenarios. The first included conduct of counter insurgency operations. The second scenario was conventional warfare involving a battalion combined-arms attack on a prepared defensive position. The company was supported by tanks, armoured personnel carriers, engineers and artillery.

For many soldiers it was the first time they had conducted company-level and battalion-level operations with supporting arms. By the end of the exercise soldiers from both countries had developed a better understanding of how each military operates, as well as an appreciation of the cultural differences and similarities between the two nations.

Lt Robert Cussion, 3/9 Light Horse, said the exercise gave commanders an opportunity to observe the command structure, leadership of the RTA and a better understanding of their operational ability. "The soldiers in my troop found that there were many similarities between our armies that allowed us to operate in a battalion environment with the Thai Army effectively," he said.

Photos by Tpr Michael Franchi

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DMO offers the chance to broaden your horizons through a wide range of challenging and varied work. You may be employed in one of 215 major or 200 minor projects, across 50 locations in Australia.

A range of exciting opportunities are now available (both part-time and continuous full time service opportunities) for Army reservists. DMO is currently seeking reservists from within the following specialisations or trade groups:

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- Technical Trades
- Administration
- Aircrew

This is great chance to work in Australia’s leading project management and engineering services organisation, dealing with diverse multimillion dollar projects of national significance. It’s also an opportunity to receive exceptional working conditions, and the chance to balance work with your other interests.

WO1 Tony Minniti
Armament SPO
Victoria Barracks – Melbourne

Warrant Officer Minniti is employed to assist with the review and update of weapons related documentation including Integrated Logistic Support Instructions and Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Instructions.

“I have found DMO to be an excellent employer with a wide variety of work available”
TROOPS SWOOP

Swift Eagle 08 gave personnel valuable skills in a combined-arms environment, Capt Al Green reports.

The biggest Army exercise this year was held in Northern Queensland from October 31 to November 18 and involved more than 5,000 personnel from three services forming a cohesive army ready to go to battle. The exercise was a test of the new commander General John Caligari’s ability to command a three-service army to maintain fundamental military skills.

The exercise also provided units with an opportunity to work together closely before the start of the upcoming deployment to Iraq, in which a combined-arms force will be deployed.

With the emphasis on combined-arms training, the exercise provided a valuable opportunity to train in the types of environments that can be expected in Iraq.

According to Caligari, the exercise was an opportunity to build on the success of previous exercises and to prepare for the challenges of the current operational environment.

The exercise demonstrated the ability of the three services to work together effectively and to deliver a high level of performance.

The exercise also gave personnel the opportunity to refine their skills and to improve their understanding of the combined-arms approach.

In conclusion, the Swift Eagle 08 exercise was a significant milestone in the preparation of the Army for the upcoming deployment to Iraq. It was an opportunity to build on the success of previous exercises and to improve the ability of the three services to work together effectively in the combined-arms approach.
I HAVE had the unfortunate experience of having to “fight” for my own service award. The fight took four submissions to Honours and Awards because they had lost all three previous submissions due to Reserve awards not being tracked and processed automatically in the same way as ARA awards.

This lack of automatic tracking was the verbal reason given by Honours and Awards and, after having to fight for my own award, to receive it two-and-a-half years after I was entitled to it definitely leaves a bitter taste.

In the day and age of PMKeys, where we operate on one common IT platform as the central record for all personnel matters, it is a disgrace that members of the ADF with 15, 20, 25 or more years of service have to apply for their own medals and clasp. From my perspective the “I am an Australian Soldier” medalion issued in a wooden presentation box in recent times was a poor investment in the recognition of our personnel.

This information is not held on PMKeys. Other sources, such as personnel files, microfiche and Defpac records need to be checked.

For this reason, and other IT limitations, reservists need to apply for their awards automatically, but all should send in an application form when they believe their award is due.

Awards Newsletter last year regularly reminds reservists that they need to submit an application form.

Some reservists may receive their awards automatically, but all should send in an application form when they believe their award is due. DH&A regularly reminds reservists that they need to submit an application form. For example, an article on this topic was published in the Defence Honours and Awards Newsletter last year.

Some reservists may receive their awards automatically, but all should send in an application form when they believe their award is due.
Runners put to test

I HAVE been following the letters regarding the issue of running shoes in the Army news-paper with some interest lately. I have some experience in the area of personal clothing and equipment and would like to point out the following.

There is an alleged policy within the Army that one cannot use or wear personal clothing or equipment bought commercially. The reason is that said clothing and equipment has not been “trialed and tested” and deemed fit for purpose and, according to an Army article about four years ago, “may actually increase the chances of soldiers being injured”.

The ADF-issued running shoes have never been trialed or tested, yet we still wear them. In this one area, running shoes, the alleged issue-only policy is not enforced. Am I the only one seeing a disconnect?

However, those of you who would rather buy your own shoes will be pleased to discover that Army clothing stores will no longer be selling ADF runners. Their stocks will now be kept only for initial free issue. So now we are forced to buy COTS equipment, which we are not allowed to use, because of the alleged issue-only policy, even though there is now no longer an issue item available. Perhaps we can expect a new PT directive stating that all future PT is to be conducted in GP boots?

WO2 Kent Davies
School of Artillery
Parkes

Maj Russell Pryor, SO2 Clothing, responds:

THERE is no policy, alleged or otherwise, that stipulates you cannot wear commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) clothing or equipment.

However, even WO2 Davies might draw the ire of his RSM if he wears anything not covered in ASOD.

One of the major determinates used for the removal of gym shoes from the in-service runner was only 7.60 per cent of ADF personnel are actually buying the issued gym shoe using the cash sale option, with payment either through cash or by debit. These figures do not justify retaining the issued gym shoe as an item to continue to be sold through the clothing store.

Incidentally, those personnel who believe they can claim a tax deduction for buying the gym shoe may be shocked to find out no deduction is allowed.

Tax Ruling 97/12 and Tax Determination 1999/62, which are both available on the ATO.gov.au website, make it quite clear that the shoe is defined as non-compulsory uniform. Defence has no policy that strictly and consistently enforces that the issued gym shoe is the only gym shoe that is to be worn while engaging in PT sessions, hence no deduction is allowable. I suspect WO2 Davies would be in the extreme minority that would like to see the issued gym shoe made compulsory for PT.

WO2 Davies’ assertion that DMO testing before its introduction is incorrect. DMO subjected the issued gym shoe to stringent testing before its introduction into service against several well-known commercially available brand name runners. This was in addition to an assessment by a high-ly credentialled podiatrist. The testing confirmed that the in-service runner met the same standards of the other brands. If WO2 Davies would like to contact Clothing SPD at DMO they will be more than happy to show him the data which resulted from the testing.

However, WO2 Davies is correct in his assertion that no trials were conducted because the wearing of a runner is a very personal thing, so the data collated would have been too generic to have had any worthwhile value.

While I acknowledge WO2 Davies’ concerns about the possibility of being injured while wearing COTS clothing and equipment, personnel are exposed to the same degree of risk of suffering foot injuries as the wider community when engaging in PT while wearing a pair of COTS runners. So to allay WO2 Davies’ concerns, there will be no new PT directive anytime soon about the wearing of a prescribed range of running footwear, GP boots or otherwise.

Did you know your car loan can save you money on fees?

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They may have been a beaten force but the Germans could still kill Australians, Peter Burness writes.

By the end of October 1918, World War I was over for most Australians. Sadly, for those few still fighting, the war’s final days could still prove deadly.

With the Somme battlefields and the Hindenburg Line between them, the British Fourth Army continued to advance eastward, pressing hard on the heels of the retreating Germans. At this time there were about 100,000 Australians serving on the Western Front. Most of them were in the five divisions of the Australian Corps under Lt-Gen Sir John Monash. These divisions had fought their way to the Hindenburg Line and three of them had taken part in the breakthrough or in the attacks on the line’s reserve system a few days later. Their last action had been the capture of Montbrehain on October 5. Now they were resting, although much of their artillery continued to support the advancing American and British corps.

There was no rest for the likes of Cpl Albert Davey, a 34-year-old ex-miner from Ballarat. A married man, he had left Australia two years earlier as a member of the 1st Australian Tunnelling Company, received the news that No. 4 Section of his company would be attached to a field company of the Royal Engineers in support of an attack by the British 1st Division across the Sambre–Oise Canal. This was to be part of a major battle to be launched on a wide frontage in only a few days. The canal was a significant obstacle for the advancing infantry and the accompanying tanks and guns.

The Australians’ role was to unload and assemble heavy steel joists during the night and bring them and other material up to the canal. Once the infantry had established a bridgehead, they were to construct a heavy-duty bridge near a lock suitable for tanks to cross. It would all have to be done under enemy fire.

On the morning of November 3, a Sunday, as the tunnellers prepared to move up closer to the front line in preparation for the attack, Cpl Davey went to Woodward and said he was convinced he was about to die. Woodward regarded the man as one of his best NCOs and was surprised when he was asked to take care of Davey’s personal belongings and promise to send them to his wife if anything should happen to him. Davey must have seen that his wife if anything should happen to him. Davey went to Woodward and said he was convinced he was about to die. Woodward regarded the man as one of his best NCOs and was surprised when he was asked to take care of Davey’s personal belongings and promise to send them to his wife if anything should happen to him. Davey must have seen that his wife if anything should happen to him. Woodward later recalled that he was told not to be foolish. Woodward spoke to him firmly and told him not to be foolish. Woodward spoke to him firmly.

Woodward had been deadly accurate. Davey’s premonition proved correct. He had been killed in action. For the three tunnellers, it was their last day of the war. Many thousands of others during the war, yet their deaths seem all the more poignant because they died only a week before the war ended and when very few Australians were still in action. For the three tunnellers, they had been their misfortune to be used in the Fourth Army’s final battle.

The last Australian battle deaths on the Western Front may have occurred on November 4, 1918. However there were more deaths in the following days, including about 20 from illness and wounds on the last day of the war. Many thousands more would die of war-related causes in the decades to follow.

This is an excerpt from an article written by Peter Burness, a Senior Curator at the Australian War Memorial, for Wartime, the official magazine of the Australian War Memorial. The magazine is available from newsagents or www.awm.gov.au/shop.

Photo E03645 courtesy AWM

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Still in danger: An Australian artillery battery preparing to move in support of the Fourth Army’s advance in October 1918. Australian gunners supported the attack on the Sambre canal.
Two soldiers intent on living life to the fullest are taking adventure holidays to a whole new level, as Sharon Palmer discovers.

HURLING yourself off a cliff or bridge with no more than a BASE rig on your back is not everyone's idea of a good relaxing time.

For outdoor adventurers Capt Brett Adams and Capt Shane Lacey, CTC, it is a passion they both share and enjoy and both dread the "adrenaline junkie" and "extreme" labels that have somehow evolved with the sport over the years.

"We get labelled as suicidal idiots, but so much contingency planning and risk management goes into every jump, it's a lot more than in any other sport or leisure activity," Capt Adams said.

The BASE jumping duo recently holidayed in the US to do some jumping at many of the legal sites, including the 4660 Perrine Bridge in Twin Falls, Idaho, and a larger number of cliffs in Moab, Utah.

"It's such a different attitude in those towns," Capt Adams said.

BASE jumping is considered part of daily life and, in some cases, even part of the town's tourist attractions with pubs and hotels offering BASE jumper discounts.

While he acknowledged BASE jumping carried a number of inherent dangers and risks, he said detailed assessment and control measures were employed to manage the risk — much the same skills he sees in deploying units as a training analyst at the CTC.

"We conduct a lot of mission rehearsal exercises for units about to deploy to Iraq/Afghanistan where being able to function and command effectively under significant stress/physical danger are essential to the success of the mission and safety of the soldiers," Capt Adams said.

"Adventure training-style activities show people how they physically and mentally react when scared; whether they go into fight, flight, freeze or flow; so they recognise the signs early and, more importantly, they learn how to control them."

He applies the same philosophy to BASE jumping. "It's not a matter of rockping up and hurling yourself off a cliff as some people think."

He said there was more often than not a prior reconnaissace of the exit point and landing area; the packing techniques and equipment varied depending on specific object heights; winds were considered at the opening height and landing area; ground crew were often used to look after the safety of bystanders; jumpers used gear specifically designed for BASE; equipment was thoroughly checked and rechecked several times and jumpers talked through their plans, discussing options and identifying any glaring omissions in their planning.

Capt Lacey is a Unit Adventurous Training Leader and is used to operating in an environment where there is a high perception of risk. "BASE jumping is different to adventure training in that it has the potential to be a high actual risk activity," he said. "It all depends on the attitude of the jumper."

Capt Lacey said jumpers needed to exercise excellent decision making and while no activity could be made completely safe, measures could be taken to ensure all aspects of the activity had been planned. "BJ [Capt Adams] and I take a conservative approach to BASE jumping," he said.

"On one jump in the US, we spent more than two hours hiking up to the exit point. When we got there, conditions weren't quite right.

"Another jumper with us chose to jump, while we chose to spend another two hours hiking back down. The jump went well and the other guy was happy with his decision to jump, and we were happy with our choice not to."

Capt Lacey said he shared Capt Adams' disappointment at the sport being labelled as extreme and dangerous. "An analogy I like to proffer is one of driving a HSV V8 Commodore," he said. "If a BASE jumper operates in the manner of a drunken P-plater trying to impress a carload of teenage passengers, there is a very high chance it will end in tragedy."

"If, however, the HSV is taken out in a race track, and driven by an experienced, sensible driver, much enjoyment can be had in a safe environment."

"That said a person can religiously follow the road rules to the letter and still have an accident. Nearly all activities in life carry a risk, it’s how you manage that risk that is important."

For both jumpers, the appeal of the sport lies in a number of things. "We’re into the sport for the tight mateships, the amazing places it takes you to, the enormous sense of achievement and the mental rewards of managing the risks and challenging your perceived limits," Capt Adams said.
Taking that first step

SOLDIERS, as members of the ADF, might experience multiple deployments, long periods away from home, separation from loved ones and frequent moves to other places in Australia. This can be a unique experience, challenging and rewarding at the same time.

They are part of a community and a social network unlike any other in Australia. For some people stepping out of that environment and returning to civilian life can be difficult and stressful, however, the Stepping Out Program might be of assistance.

Civilian life and military life are two very different experiences in very different environments; the transition between the two requires adjustment. Separating from the military might impact upon people's personal life, their families and work situation.

Understanding the differences between military and civilian lifestyles helps to smooth and positive transition between the two and the Stepping Out Program has been designed to assist with this process. As one participant said: “Until I attended the Stepping Out Program, I didn’t fully realise the impact of transition out of the military.”

Developed by the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) the program is now available right across Australia following its successful pilot in Townsville. Running over two days the program is free to exiting or recently exited ADF members and their partners. It is endorsed by Defence and serving members are considered to be “on duty at another location” while participating.

The program gives participants information about what they can do to manage change in their lives. It will help people identify and use skills they already have and to learn about:

- the experience of change as part of life,
- the transition from the ADF to civilian life,
- skills for staying motivated and adaptable, and
- maintaining relationships and seeking support.

One participant said the program complemented the ADF Transition Seminars, “by dealing more with the emotions and thoughts associated with transition”. Another said that attending the program helped to deal with the stress of leaving the military.

While Stepping Out is a key element of VVCS support for younger veterans, peacekeepers and ADF personnel, soldiers might also be eligible to access a range of VVCS services including counselling, crisis support and group programs. VVCS offers help with anger management, heart health and education around a range of issues including stress management, anxiety, relationships and lifestyle.

Call VVCS on 1800 011 046 to reserve a place or to find out more about its services and support or visit www.dva.gov.au/health/vvcs.
The Parachute Rigger is a soldier who performs a wide range of technical functions on Aerial Delivery Equipment including personnel and cargo inspection, repack, repair, modification, malfunction analysis, sentencing, procurement and fleet management of Aerial Delivery Equipment.

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- Undertake recovery of Aerial Delivery Equipment from a Drop Zone.
- Repair and modify Aerial Delivery Equipment and ADE support equipment.

**Employment Training**

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**Parachute Rigger Basic Course**
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Parachute Riggers are employed in Parachute Maintenance Units, Airborne Units and Training Command Units throughout Army.

**Civil Accreditation**

Parachute Rigger courses meet the requirements for both civilian and military authorities and meet the eligibility for – Certificate II in transport and Distribution (Warehouse and Storage) and Certificate II in Government.

**Course Commencement Date**

2 FEB 09 – 27 JUN 09

Applications to be submitted via unit orderly room.

For Further Information:
Army Trade Transfer Team 02 6265 7795

Or contact the Regional Trade Transfer & Retention Warrant Officer:
Enoggera Barracks 07 3332 5165
Lavarack Barracks 07 4771 7819
Robertson Barracks 08 8935 2980

Or Internet: www.defence.gov.au/army/stayarmy/RIG_PRCHT.htm

Enquiries: army.tradetransferteam@defence.gov.au
Confirmation of details easier

By Carla Howden

FOR soldiers looking for a personal loan or rented accommodation, it is now much easier and quicker to confirm employment details to a third party.

“There is now a centralised process to allow third parties to inquire about a member’s employee’s employment,” said Michele Fanner, Assistant Director Military Personnel Admin, Directorate of Integrated People Solutions. “The change affects all personnel, both uniformed and civilian and will provide a consistent service.”

Soldiers will have to complete a Permission to Inquire form (AD124), then fax it to the Defence Service Centre on (02) 64551200 or drop the form into a Customer Service Centre. Their information can then be made available to third parties 24 hours after lodgement.

For more information see Defgram 591/2008, contact the Military Personnel Admin, Directorate of Integrated People Solutions.
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DFA’s New Website

www.dfa.org.au

DFA’s website provides you with a family focused portal on ADF information. It also provides DFA with the opportunity to inform and update you on our advocacy role in family related policy and entitlements.

For more information phone 1800 100 509

FREE Shopping Bag

DFA together with the ADF Financial Services Consumer Council are pleased to offer a free recyclable shopping bag to families who register on our new look website.

This Free Bag will be forwarded to you once your membership has been processed (please allow up to four weeks).
And the winner from October 16 is ... “Here comes the CO, quick let’s all play dead ...”
Sgt Janelle Burke
HQ 1 Div

We also liked ...
Tragedy strikes, Aviation group wiped out by rumours of no available five-star accommodation!
WO2 Eddie Brennan
Chief Clerk
“In Army Aviation, when we say fall out, we mean fall out.”
Cpl Chris Moore
1 Div

“Being in Aviation Corps was a lot more exciting when we were allowed to go to Indy!”
Ex WO2 Geoff Wise
HQ 1 Div

“Please don’t ask for the Down Under, she’s really not that interesting.”
WO2 Darryl Quick
Chief Scientist

“People think it’s a huge deal to have a helicopter’s top speed be 220 knots, but the bigger speed isn’t that much more.”
Capt Marie ‘Flom’ Flomin
HQ 2 Div

“Don’t worry about the kids, we’re away on a deployment!”
WO2 Lance ‘Lance’ Young
HTS

“Don’t worry about the kids, we’re away on a deployment!”
WO2 ‘Lance’ Young
HTS

“Don’t worry about the kids, we’re away on a deployment!”
WO2 ‘Lance’ Young
HTS

Bigger treat for Christmas
CIRCUS Royale will headline the Defence (Sydney Region) Christmas Treat 2008 at RAAF Base Richmond on November 28-29.
The event will also feature, for the first time, the ADF Car and Bike Show. Other attractions will be a Roulette aerobatics display, C-130 Hercules and helicopters, parachute jumping and model aircraft.
The Christmas Treat is open to all ADF personnel and their families.
The $12 tickets will raise money for the Defence Special Needs Support Group. The tickets include admission to the circus and unlimited rides.
The event will be held on November 28 from 3pm-9pm with the circus beginning at 6pm; and November 29 from 9am-9pm with circus shows at 10am, 2pm and 6pm. Tickets can be purchased through any NSW/ACT Defcredit branch.

DIKKO
By Bob Dikkenberg

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As good as any movie: The tragic story of Hell’s Highway is based on the experiences of the US 101st Airborne Division during Operation Market Garden.

Tale of mateship

Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway
Ubisoft
XBox 360/PS3/PC MA15+
★★★★✩

By Sean Roberts

The HE debut of the Brothers in Arms franchise on the next-gen consoles officially takes it into trilogy territory (if you ignore the PSP and Wii spin-offs).

Saying that it hasn’t changed much sounds like a complaint, but if you’re familiar with the formula, think of any world war first-person shooter crossed with the slant and replace it with a tactical approach. Now take out the one-man army slant and replace it with a tactical movement, clever use of cover, use of suppression fire and flanking manouevres a must.

Going ‘Rambo’ will get you killed. This makes careful and intensive planning a must. Knowing where your troops are on the battlefield, the story manages to ratchet up the intensity by focusing completely on the very personal tale of you and your men.

Brothers in Arms has always been the king of piling on the emotion and while it isn’t necessary to have played the previous games, those who have will find even more reason to invest in the tragedies of these characters.
FINANCE

Make a careful choice

Take into account a new initiative when saving for that first home, writes Australian Securities and Investments Commission Chairman Tony D’Aloiso.

S

AVING a deposit for your first home requires discipline and determination. For some, the challenge can seem overwhelming given the relative expense involved.

A new type of account called the First Home Saver Account is now available to help people save for their first home. These accounts have been developed as part of an Australian Government initiative, and became available on October 1.

There are a number of features that are particular to the First Home Saver Account, and it is important to be aware of them to help you decide if one will help you.

Are you eligible?

First, you need to know if you’re eligible to open the account. You will need to satisfy the following criteria:

- you need to be aged between 18 and 65 years;
- you must supply your Tax File Number;
- you can only open a First Home Saver Account once; and
- you can’t have ever owned a home in Australia that was your main residence.

The benefits

The main benefits are:

- your savings are matched by a 17 per cent Government contribution on amounts up to $5000 in each financial year. For example, if you contribute $5000 this financial year, the Government will top up your savings with $850; and
- low (15 per cent) tax on interest or earnings; and
- interest or earnings on your savings from your financial institution.

The four-year ‘rule’

You must put money into your First Home Saver Account for at least four financial years before you can withdraw your savings to buy or build your first home. (A normal financial year is July through to June.) And you need to save at least $1000 in each of four or more financial years. This works out around $20 a week.

This doesn’t need to be four years in a row and you don’t need to save every year.

First home grant

You can still get a $7000 First Home Owner Grant as well as having a First Home Saver Account. For more information on the grant, go to www.firsthome.gov.au.

Is it right for you?

A First Home Saver Account is unlike an ordinary savings account, because you can only use your savings to buy or build a home that you will live in. Deciding whether the account is right for you is a big decision to work out if you are eligible to open a First Home Saver Account, and then change your mind, your money will be put into your super fund – you can’t just take it back out again.

Do the calculations

You can use ASIC’s online First Home Saver Account calculator at www.fido.gov.au/firsthomesaver to get an even better understanding of how these accounts work and to model different ways to save for your first home.

The website also has a checklist to help you decide if the account is right for you. The checklist can help you:

- work out if you are eligible to open a First Home Saver Account;
- understand the rules that apply to accounts; and
- choose the right account for you.

For more information visit ASIC’s consumer website, FIDO at www.fido.gov.au or call 1300 300 630. Email ASIC with topics that interest you at ADFcolumn@asic.gov.au

TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY?

History has shown that when the share market suffers sharp or sustained falls, investors turn to residential property investment. (source: Australian Property Investor)

Increases in property of between 15 – 20% have occurred within two years of a number of these falls. The first was in 1987 with the world share price collapse, the second, in 2001, with the burst dotcom bubble and 9/11 fueling another share price adjustment. (source: Australian Property Investor)

So, Corp Bill considered history and with professional guidance from Spectrum on cash flows, lifestyle needs, loan structure and tax benefits decided on a long term strategy and bought his first property investment.

Falling interest rates, rising rents and low vacancy rates in rental properties were some of the positive conditions that influenced his decision.

The major surprise for Bill was that this was only going to cost him $500* per fortnight.

*the figure above is based on a number of assumptions and will vary on a case by case basis.

This case study is for illustrative purposes only and not to be construed as financial advice. You need to consider your own personal circumstances when making an investment decision.

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- Property Investments
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PTE WALL’S STORY

PTE Pat Wall lives on base and has $6000 in savings. He is trying to work out whether or not to open a First Home Saver Account and how much to put into it.

Pte Wall plans to save $250 a month ($3000 a year). Because a Government contribution is only available on the first $5000 saved each financial year, he decides to put $2000 in savings as the initial deposit and to add $500 a month for the rest of the year. He keeps the other $400 to top up the First Home Saver Account in the next financial year. By doing this he maximises the Government contribution.

Now single, Pte Wall hopes to start a family one day. He uses the calculator at www.fido.gov.au/firsthomesaver to see how long it would take to reach some savings goals. The calculator showed that after 12 years the account would have a balance of about $68,700.

When Pte Wall does start a family, both partners can access the money in their respective First Home Saver Accounts (assuming they both have one). Couples saving for their first home can each open a First Home Saver Account and get the Government contributions for both accounts. When the time comes to buy or build your first home, only one of you needs to meet the four-year ‘rule’ to access your funds.
Doing it step-by-step

Step machines provide a great leg workout and is a good form of low impact cardio exercise. Lt Rob Orr explains the common flaws in techniques and how to correct them.

**While** the basic concept of using a step machine is well understood, many forget that, just like training on any other form of equipment, there are specific exercise techniques that are needed to avoid injury.

**Locked elbows**

The first type is a “step down” orientated machine where the aim of the exercise is to literally push the step down. This step down action typically forces the opposing pedal up in a dependent action and these machines are therefore commonly known as dependent action machines.

The second type of step machine requires the exerciser to lift their foot from the step before the pedal reaches the bottom of its range. Due to the “lifting up” nature of these machines the pedals are independent and, as such, the action on one side will not influence the other. These machines are known as independent action step machines.

Several technique flaws can occur on step machines, however, many of these errors can be easily corrected once identified.

**Locked elbows**

Locking the elbows while holding the side rails can lead to stress on the wrist, elbow and shoulder joints. Furthermore, locked elbows may decrease the training value of the activity by decreasing energy expenditure and muscle load.

**Solution:** Keep the elbows slightly bent, resting the hands lightly on the guide rails.

**Leaning across the panel**

An excessive forward lean position places load across the lower back and, by locking the upper body in place, can cause a forced rotation across the lower back or hip junction.

**Solution:** Avoid pushing your hips backward and maintain an upright posture.

**Small range of motion**

Users perceive they are working harder due to the greater speeds they are able to accomplish, but as they are not using their legs through a full range of motion, less actual energy may be utilised.

More importantly, for independent action steppers in particular, the hip flexor muscle groups (which are often over-trained) can be placed under great stress in a very limited range of motion.

**Solution:** Utilise a mid to full range of motion. Step height should go from leg straight (slightly bent at the knee) to a knee bend on no more than around 60 degrees.

**Foot positioning**

Incorrect foot position includes the heels hanging over the end of the pedals, the heels raised so that the exerciser is on their toes, or the feet placed unevenly or crooked on the pedals.

Not only may this cause people to slow or cease training due to lower leg (calf) fatigue, but more importantly, the position may potentially lead to a joint injury and/or muscular imbalances.

**Solution:** Ensure your feet are an equal distance apart and entirely on the pedal.

**Heavy end range actions**

This incorrect technical action is more common on dependent action machines when working hard or fast and on the independent machines when fatigued. Generally, the user pushes down too hard or lifts up too slowly, and the pedal hits the breaking stopper or the floor at the bottom end of the pedal range. This in turn sends a jarring impact up the musculoskeletal chain and can cause trauma to the muscles and joints of the body.

**Solution:** Ensure your knees are slightly bent at end of range and aim to prevent the pedal from making contact with the bottom, or top, stoppers.

**Rocking**

As the exerciser becomes fatigued there is an increased tendency for the body to rock from side to side in an attempt to use body weight to remove the load on the legs.

**Solution:** Maintain an upright posture. Keep the centre of the body in line with the centre of the machine.

**Technique Checklist**

- Posture is upright with centre of the body in line with the centre of the machine.
- Hands are either resting lightly on the rails for balance, or if familiar with the machine, swinging freely in a natural arm swing.
- Range of motion is correct with no striking end of range stoppers.
- Rhythm is smooth and equal on each side.

---

**Get into step:** Step machines burn calories and work muscles in the lower body.

**Photo by Cpl Corinne Bor**

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*Price based on River Gum Option A house & land package by Barrington Homes on Lot 130. Prices correct as at October 2008.
IT WAS a case of the usual suspects from the NSW Golf Association versus a balance of old warhorses and youthful debuts from the ADF Golf Association when the two met recently at Murree Golf Club near RAAF Base Williamtown.

Though the ADF could not field its strongest side, WO1 Nick Gould, Lt James Pitt and Col Lewis Coyle returned to the representative fold, while Cpl Trent Fortescue, Pte Matt Creek and Flt-Lt Sam Harkiss all made their debuts for the ADF at this level.

A practice round on the Tuesday afternoon was followed by a fourball best ball match play on the Wednesday, which NSW won 5-1.

The foursomes match play on the Thursday was slightly closer, with NSWGA winning 4.5 matches to 1.5. ADFGA hit full stride in the afternoon singles match play to win 7-5.

Through the 4th hole of the four-ball event, ADFGA led in five of the six matches but by the 12th, the NSW players had fought back to even things up.

ADFGA team captain Flt-Lt Bell did some tweaking with the pairings before it could have gone either way. Finishing on the 17th or 18th, the result on the 18th. With three other matches with the only win for ADF going to Flt-Lt Steve Rotherham and ast winners Sgt Steve Rotherham and

Sgt Greg Fraser already entered. Darryl Whitehead, Capt Ben Magi and David Schwartz (ADF champion), Leut LTCO David Ferguson with his 79/66. The NSWGA winning 4.5 matches to 1.5.

TOURNAMENT director Wg-Cmdr Trevor Owens expects the 24th annual ADFGA tournament to be bigger than ever.

"For 2008, we have taken the maximum entries up to 208 players from the NSW Golf Association when the two met recently y

Bigger and better field

TREVOR OWENS expects the 24th annual ADF National Golf Championships at Canberra’s Federal Golf Club from December 8-12 to be bigger than ever.

TOURNAMENT director Wg-Cmdr Trevor Owens expects the 24th annual ADF National Golf Championships at Canberra’s Federal Golf Club from December 8-12 to be bigger than ever.

Bigger and better field

TREVOR OWENS expects the 24th annual ADF National Golf Championships at Canberra’s Federal Golf Club from December 8-12 to be bigger than ever.

A FIELD of 44 took to the fairways for the 2008 NSW ADF Golf Association Championships at Cumberland Golf Club on October 10 after the event looked in jeopardy because of a lack of numbers.

In the end, numbers were sufficient to conduct gross, net and A, B and C-grade gross and net trophies.

WO2 Tony Greenwood won the gross trophy when he carded a 74. The net trophy went to Capt Michael Ferguson with his 79/66. The bonus for Col Ferguson is his free entry to the ADF nationals at Federal Golf Club in Canberra in December.

WO2 Mark Byrne won the A-grade net trophy with a score of 80/69. Navy’s PO Mark Nowakowski won the A-grade gross with a 78.
Hooking in for a bumper season

By Barry Rollings

TALK rugby union to Lt Kate Porter, who played in two recent Tests for the Wallaroos against New Zealand, and her passion for the sport shines through.

Lt Porter, 176 AD Sqn, packed down in the second row for the Australian team against the Black Ferns in the October 14 and 18 Test matches at Canberra’s Viking Park.

After losing the first game 37-3, the Wallaroos proved more competitive in game two in losing 22-16.

She hopes to step out for the Wallaroos in the World Cup qualifier next year, and then the World Cup in England in 2010.

“This depends on work commitments though, and of course, selection into the team,” she said.

“I’ve been very lucky to have been able to play in both the World Cup in 2006 and the two Test matches just gone.

“After 2010 I’ll have a look at where life is going and what I want to do after that.”

Her love of the code dates back to her school days.

“I first played a couple of matches at Hawthorne Agricultural High School in 2000 and 2001. I took it up again in 2004 when the opportunity was presented at ADFA.

“I had a very steep learning curve when it came to learning how to play but was very fortunate to have a few dedicated people to help me out. I currently play club rugby in Sydney for Sydney University.

“The appeal of rugby union is the comradeship between the players, plus the enjoyment of scoring a try or making a try-saving tackle.

“It’s also about being in a team, working with other girls for a common goal and the sheer enjoyment of playing rugby.

“It’s addictive and rewarding.

“Anyone who plays will know what I’m talking about, and those that don’t played well shame on them,” she said unashamedly.

First selected for the national squad in 2005, she played for the Wallaroos the following year in Canada at the World Cup.

“A break back from rugby last year while I concentrated on completing my training at RMC and was picked up again in the national squad this year after playing at the Australian Services Rugby Union Championships in July,” she said.

“I love to play Services rugby. The Army, Navy and Air Force rugby rivalry is an opportunity to show off the talent the Services have to those who like to watch.”

Lt Porter described both Tests against the Black Ferns as physically and mentally demanding but very rewarding.

“It is tough playing at that level; after all it is an international level,” she said.

“There are a lot of moves and plays that the girls have to learn and be able to carry out instinctively. It’s not only about smashing into one another, there are a lot of different choices to make.”

Lt Porter said the scores in the first and second Tests reflected two different games.

“The first Test was an eye-opener for us,” she said.

“We played a trial game against the President’s 1st XV three days before the Test. It was an attacking game where we didn’t have a lot of opportunities to practise our defensive skills.

“We went into the second Test with the experience from the previous game. We knew what to expect and how to attack it. We knew that our scrum was a strength, so we used that to our advantage, and worked on our lineouts.

“The Kiwis were shocked by how strong we were and you could tell when they went for points for every penalty instead of attempting to score a try.”

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Chuting for ADF approval

THE Parachute Association hopes to have an answer before the end of the year on its application to the Australian Defence Sports Council (ADSC) to become an approved sport.

After successfully having the sport re-approved as an Army sport last year, a small group of avid skydivers, with Flt-Lt Barry Calver at the helm, formed to have sports parachuting approved as an ADF sport.

Australian Army Sports Parachute Association Treasurer WO1 Phil Thamm said there was a lot of interest in the outcome of the application.

“There are numerous active sports parachutists across the ADF and skydiving is their sport and passion,” he said.

Flt-Lt Calver said expressions of interest were sought from skydivers all over Defence and, in a short time, more than 100 responded to offer their support. Navy, Air Force and Army were all represented to offer their support. Navy, Air Force and Army were all represented to offer their support. Navy, Air Force and Army were all represented to offer their support.

“A constitution has been drafted, a meeting held and a committee elected with hope of becoming an approved sport under the ADSC,” he said.

“The application has been submitted to the ADSC and it is hoped that a positive response will be received by the end of the year.”

WO1 Thamm said ADPFA was not, “as some may perceive, a bunch of thrill-seekers pushing the limits and knocking on death’s door” and that ADF skydivers had a proud history of competing in local to elite international competition.

ADSC Secretary Robert Todkill said the application had been circulated to all council members and a decision was pending.

“Applications received by the ADSC must address a number of selection criteria,” he said.

He added that these applications were considered on an annual basis and details on applications and the selection criteria were available on the ADSC website.

Meanwhile, Army skydivers from all over Australia will be joined by other services at RAAF Base Richmond from December 8-19 for the Army Sports Parachute Championships.

More than 50 competitors are expected to take part in the championships with events being held in Formation Skydiving 4 Way, Canopy Formation Rotations, Canopy Accuracy and Speed Stars.

Information on the Masters can be found at www.armyweb/sites/AASParaA.

For information on Army parachuting competitions, contact WO1 Phil Thamm at philip.thamm@defence.gov.au or visit http://intranet.defence.gov.au/armyweb/sites/AASParaA.

For information on ADF parachuting competitions, contact Maj Fiona King, ALTC, at fiona.davis@defence.gov.au or telephone (03) 5735 6868 or email fiona.davis@defence.gov.au

Hockey players wanted

PLAYERS of any standard are invited to nominate for the Defence Hockey men’s and women’s teams for the Australian Masters Games in Geelong from February 20 to March 1 next year.

Personnel must be over 38 to participate. Information on the Masters can be found at www.australianmastersgames.com.

The Defence coordinator is Maj Fiona Davis, who can be contacted on (03) 5735 6868 or email fiona.davis@defence.gov.au

Dynamic duo excel

WO2 PAT Thomas and WO2 Pete Lee left their rivals with the “skinny end” of the glory when they finished first and second in their category at the Upper Murray Challenge on October 4.

WO2 Thomas, ALTCC, won the veterans’ category and was 12th overall in 7hr 9min and 45sec after the gruelling event near Corryong, contested after almost 12 hours of continuous rain.

WO2 Lee, School of Health, was second behind him and 15th overall in 7hr 16:22.

Maj Fiona King, ALTC, had made the trip back from Britain less than 24 hours before race start, but it did not prevent her taking second in the women’s veteran category in just over nine hours.

WO2 Lee said the pre-race rain meant the 36km mountain bike leg would be both challenging and technically difficult, not to mention the mud which quickly covered all competitors within minutes of the starter’s gun.

“The Upper Murray was up and running fast, so the 26km paddle – while long – was by far the easiest of the three disciplines,” WO2 Lee said.

“The 25km run was the final leg and it was an extremely demanding course which reduced even the more accomplished runners to walking at some stages.”

Organisers hope to have a separate ADF category in next year’s event to attract more ADF members to the race.

The next Upper Murray Challenge is scheduled for October 3, 2009.

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Hands up, Lt Fransisca Molnar takes a flying leap into fresh air.
Photo by Capt Brett Adams

From December 8-19, Army skydivers from all over Australia will be joined by other services at RAAF Base Richmond for the Army Sports Parachute Championships. The Parachuting Association also hopes to have an answer before the end of the year on its application to the Australian Defence Sports Council to become an approved sport.

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