The recent government approval for Project Land 53 Phase 1 BR (L53-1BR) Night Fighting Equipment (NFE) Replacement has enabled the ADF to acquire the latest generation NFE technology.

The project went to tender in April 2014 and, after extensive evaluation and testing, was approved in late 2016. As a result, the ADF will continue to enhance the technological edge for its combatants.

Lt-Col Ben McLennan, of AHQ, said "This delivery will enable development and ranging device, head harness and helmet mount." He also stated that the equipment would be used to support enhanced 24-hour vision and augmented reality for future combat roles.

The NFE will be provided by L3 Systems with a separate contractor for maintenance support. The project went to tender in April 2014 and, after extensive deliberation, was approved in late 2016. As a result, the ADF will continue to enhance the technological edge for its combatants.

Lt-Col McLennan said, "The continual enhancement of NFE is coordinated via the Night Fighting Equipment Roadmap that continues to 2040. This is fully funded in the Defence Integrated Investment Plan, which includes a combat ensemble and 125-3C Combat Helmet, G24, with a separate LAID for the head harness and helmet mount. The acquisition will replace the legacy Night Vision Goggles (NVG), lasers, mounts and head harnesses with cutting-edge and market-leading equipment.

The NFE will integrate with the excellence delivered for the EF88 and selected ADF small arms under separate projects.

This delivery will replace the NFE for the ADF and the next delivery will shift to new technologies to maintain the night fighting overmatch," Lt-Col McLennan said.

The L3 Squad Range Finder is the LAIRD with visible laser, infra-red laser, infra-red illuminator and laser range finder. This range finder will be able to accurately provide range data to targets at distances exceeding 1km. This device offers both low power (Class 1) and high power (Class 3B) laser output to permit effective employment in training and operational environments.

The Wilcox G24 is the NVG mount that will supplement current stocks of G24 mounts, which have been employed effectively by the ADF both in Australia and on operations. A self head harness will integrate with the Wilcox G24 mount and NVG.

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The NVG is a binocular night vision device.

- The NVG is a binocular night vision device.
- The NVG (with mount) is 350gm (35 per cent lighter than the legacy dual NFE).
- The NVG provides significant detection increase under typical conditions.
- Introduction of a laser range finding capability integral to individual and crew served weapons.
- Both lasers provide both low and high power modes to optimise safe training and operational employment.
- The NVG has an integrated visible laser (LAIRD) for use in low light conditions.
- The NVG requires no specific NVG driven kits.
- The components employ specified interfaces for component upgrades with minimal impact on cost and acquisition timelines.

The point of contact for the Night Fighting Equipment Projects is Maj Cameron Fraser, at camer.frazer@defence.gov.au
Australian soldiers will be among the best equipped in the world thanks to new Night Fighting Equipment

VISION
DOMINANCE

Looking through the new PVS-31A NVG.
Employment for our veterans

The transition from Army to civvy street to get easier

A NEW program will make it easier for Defence and former ADF personnel and for industry to reap the benefits of their skills and professional achievements.

The Prime Minister’s Veterans’ Employment Program was launched on November 17 at Kirribilli House in Sydney, with Defence and business leaders joining with representatives from government and service organisations to make a renewed commitment to better recognise the value of our veterans after their ADF service has ended.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said getting a good job and launching a new career was essential to ensuring veterans made the most successful transition from the ADF.

“Our ADF personnel leave the military with unique skills and can make valuable contributions to business,” Mr Turnbull said.

“There is no investment interests to recognise the talents of our veterans and encourage the private sector to take advantage of that expertise.”

CDF ACM Mark Binskis said there were more than 250 employment opportunities for the ADF, ranging from plumbers to pilots, doctors to drivers, and logisticians to lawyers.

“Many cases, military personnel can transition directly into civilian roles with nationally accredited qualifications,” ACM Binskis said.

“Engineers, tradespeople, nurses and doctors are some of the most obvious. But ADF personnel at all ranks develop a suite of core skills highly prized in the corporate world.”

Mr Sardi was supported by Defence during the transition process and began a placement at Ironside Recruitment in September 2015.

He is now a Candidate Leathering Program participant and supporting other former ADF members to find civilian employment.

“Former servicemen and women are great potential employees for civilian employers,” he said.

“We come with a great set of values and skills. We are diligent, disciplined, respectful and professional.”

Former WO2 Renae Docherty is now an Integrated Logististics and Systems Support Manager with Northrop Grumman, a leading global security company, responsible for procurement, inventions, repairs and supply chain solutions.

“Employers receive an asset with so much training and experience,” she said.

“They get someone who is motivated and eager to do a great job.”

Defence Force Ombudsman’s new role

Current and former ADF members now have an additional avenue available to them to report incidents of abuse in Defence.

From December 1, the Defence Force Ombudsman will provide an independent mechanism for people who have suffered abuse in Defence to lodge a complaint.

“Defence Force Ombudsman can now take appropriate action to respond to individual complaints of abuse if, for whatever reason, people do not feel comfortable accessing Defence’s existing mechanisms for complaints, or the civilian police. CDF ACM Mark Binskis said people would have access to counselling and restoring engagement conferences to help address their complaints through the Defence Force Ombudsman.

“Defence is committed to ensuring there are mechanisms in place to enable serving and former Defence personnel to have their claims of misconduct or abuse managed appropriately and sensitively,” he said.

“We have invested significant time and effort to improve our complaint reporting mechanisms, with greater emphasis on the complainants’ needs and wishes.”

ADF members have a number of ways in which they can make a complaint regarding abuse, or to receive support. These include reporting the incident to your commanding officer, medical staff, a legal officer, chaplain, the ADF Investigative Service, Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office, and the Inspector General ADF.

The Defence Force Ombudsman’s complaint process and the existing mechanisms within Defence have dealt with both past and contemporary abuse for ADF personnel, as well as contractors and APS members who were deployed on operations at the time of the alleged abuse.

Ombudsman already has powers to investigate complaints about matters of administration in the ADF relating to, or arising from, present or past service.

If you have a complaint about a promotion, demotion, discharge, posting, housing, allowances, or other matters affecting your service, always try to talk to your superior or commander and use the redress of administrative process before contacting the Defence Force Ombudsman.

More information about complaint mechanisms within Defence can be found at www.defence.gov.au/ReportAbuse


The Veterans’ Employment Program features a number of initiatives that support business and government involvement:

• The Industry Advisory Committee
• Employment will develop and provide advice on practical measures to embed veterans’ employment strategies into the recruitment practices of Australian businesses. The committee will play a role in the broader promotion of the skills and professional attributes Defence veterans have to offer employers.

• The establishment of the Prime Minister’s Veterans’ Employment Annual Awards will recognise the achievements of small, medium and large companies in creating employment opportunities for veterans.

• Ex-service organisations have been invited to register their interest in partnering with industry on projects to promote employment opportunities for veterans. They will be able to access the database of veterans seeking a partner to assist in the creation of employment opportunities for veterans, including in regional and remote areas of the country.

• The launch of the Australian Public Service Commission’s (APS) APSJobs website in 2015 will include specific information for veterans seeking employment in the APS. The APS is also developing a toolkit including advice aligning ADF ranks to APS classifications and information for veterans about work in the APS.

• The Department of Employment will update its jobactive website. Planers will continue assessing an opining information page for veterans and creating an ‘optional Defence Force experience desirable’ flag. The department will also develop a stronger partnership to further enhance the Defence Career Transition Assistance Scheme for members separating from the ADF, including post-separation advice and labour market information.

• Defence and Veterans’ Affairs are working with civilian employers to align military qualifications with civilian qualifications. Other initiatives include improvements customer experience for separating ADF members to ensure all individuals leave Defence with appropriate separation documentation, such as their training records and an individual transition plan. There will also be tailored transition coaching services for all separating members and improved vocational rehabilitation for veterans with a service-related injury or illness.

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**Invictus coming to Sydney**

**Amanda Scott**

PRINCE Harry has named Sydney as host of the 2018 Invictus Games, an international sporting event for wounded, injured and ill serving and former serving military personnel.

Seventeen nations will compete in 11 different adaptive sports with events being held across Sydney, including at Sydney Olympic Park and on and around Sydney Harbour, in late October 2018.

Paralympic gold medallist Spr McGrath, who suffered devasting wounds when he stepped on an IED in Afghanistan in 2012, said the games helped unite injured veterans from around the world.

“We have all come from having fit and healthy young bodies to being wounded both physically and mentally,” he said.

“We have been through trauma but we can get together and support each other throughout the games. We are using the power of sport to help us get better.”

This year’s Australian Invictus Games team captain, former infantrymen Paul Warren, said people interested in being part of the games should start training as it was a great opportunity.

“There are some really special things that can be achieved when people get involved in sport,” he said.

The ADF and RSL have been involved with the Invictus Games since its inception, with teams competing in London in 2014 and Orlando earlier this year.

The ADF and RSL are also sending a team to Toronto for the games in September 2017.

Athletes will participate in individual and team sports including swimming, archery, cycling, track and field, sitting volleyball, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby, wheelchair tennis, powerlifting and indoor rowing.

Australia’s involvement is part of a broader adaptive sports program sponsored by the ADF and RSL, in which current and former wounded, injured and ill members participate in a variety of competitions.

The 2018 games will be held from October 18-29. More information can be found at www.defence.gov.au/events/invictusgames

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**Invictus Games**

ROYAL Australian legion (RSL) chief executive Officer Nick Clayton has said the games helped unite injured veterans from around the world.

Mr Clayton said the games would help people get involved in sport, which was “a great opportunity.”

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IN TYPICAL Top End style, it was a relaxed but meaningful farewell for members of Task Group Taji 4 (TGT-4) as family and friends gathered to watch the farewell parade at Robertson Bks on November 11.

The task group, which consists of about 400 Australian and New Zealand personnel, was poignantly farewelled on Remembrance Day by Defence Minister Marise Payne and CA Lt-Gen Angus Campbell.

Lt-Gen Campbell said it was moving to look upon the men and women of TGT-4, to see the red poppy on their breasts, and “remember that they march forward in a line of more than a century of service and sacrifice for the nation”.

“It is important to remember that Australian and New Zealand troops, who first worked together 101 years ago at Gallipoli, continue to do so,” he said.

“Our partnership has been enduring, effective and mutually supportive in war, peacetime, humanitarian assistance missions and training.”

CA said it had taken good, hard soldiering to get to this point and he believed the task group was ready to work alongside coalition partners, building the capacity of Iraqi Security Forces to disrupt, degrade and destroy Daesh.

He also sincerely thanked the families and friends of the deploying soldiers who had supported them on their journey.

“The road to deployment has been necessarily demanding,” Lt-Gen Campbell said.

“It has been a thorough and challenging process developing the skills required for success on an important mission.

– Lt-Gen Angus Campbell, Chief of Army

Operation Okra is the ADF’s contribution to the international effort to combat the Daesh terrorist threat in Iraq and Syria. Australia’s contribution is being closely coordinated with the Iraqi government, Gulf nations and a broad coalition of international partners.

TGT-4 replaces TGT-3, led by Col Andrew Lowe, which will return to Australia and New Zealand shortly.
Countering IED scourge

New training facility will help Iraqi soldiers tackle threat of IEDs as they fight Daesh

Capt James Hook

AUSTRALIA has contributed to a multinational effort to help Iraqi soldiers deal with improvised explosive devices (IEDs). A counter-IED training facility has been built at the Taji Military Complex north of Baghdad, where Australian and New Zealand personnel are supporting the Iraqi Army as it trains to defeat the Daesh terrorist group.

The facility was designed by the Australian Army, built by the US Army, and will be used by Australian, New Zealand and British instructors to support Iraqi Army training.

“An IED is simply a term for a form of booby trap,” said Col Andrew Lowe, commander of Task Group Taji 3, which includes 300 Australians and 100 New Zealanders.

“It has been the terrorists’ weapon of choice for decades, and its use has been prolific in Iraq. The Iraqi Army is having to clear IEDs as it breaches Daesh defences on the approaches to Mosul, and will continue to have to clear IEDs long after Daesh is defeated.”

The counter-IED facility is designed for a range of audiences, from infantry undergoing basic training to mounted units practising convoy drills.

It has elevated roads with culverts where IEDs may be hidden, and individual training lanes, each one being the width one person can search with or without equipment.

Task Group Taji soldiers provided force protection during the construction phase, while the US Army’s Task Force Linebacker built the facility on a flood-prone piece of land the size of four football fields.

They dug water retention ponds and graded the area so rainwater would run off into the ponds.

They also ensured the area was free of all metal scraps.

British Army engineer Capt “Alex” Zorzi said the sterile nature of the surface was crucial when training soldiers in the use of hand-held metal detectors.

“The soldiers can really get to know the detector’s reaction to an IED, a battery pack, or a pressure plate,” she said.

“They can pick up the signals without interruptions, and they get to know the device and understand the processes.

“Then we move them out into the urban training areas where they have to locate a dummy IED among all the clutter you get in normal life.”

UK engineers have taken the lead in delivering counter-IED training to the Iraqi Army at the Taji Military Complex.

They have worked closely with their Australian and New Zealand counterparts in Task Group Taji, and have integrated their courses with those delivered by their coalition partners.

“The IED is an ever-changing threat,” Col Lowe said. “They can be static or carried by people or vehicles. The range of their design is as big as the imagination of the terrorist.”

The Iraqi Army is having to clear IEDs as it breaches Daesh defences on the approach to Mosul...

– Col Andrew Lowe, Commander Task Group Taji 3

ADF to mentor Legacy youth

THE ADF will mentor 20 young Legacy members on a trek along the Kokoda Trail to mark the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Kokoda next year.

Ten ADF personnel will mentor the Legacy youth as they prepare for the 96km trek. They will walk the trail together as a leadership-building exercise.

Defence Personnel Minister Dan Tehan said Kokoda held special meaning for Australians.

“Next year marks the 75th anniversary of a battle where an outnumbered and out-gunned battalion of Australian militia and Papuan infantry fought a superior force intent on seizing Port Moresby and isolating Australia,” he said.

“The Legacy-Kokoda initiative is an opportunity for the Legacy youth to better understand the service and sacrifice of the Australians who experienced the Kokoda Trail and to gain leadership experience from their ADF mentors.”

From left, Junior Legatee Ronan Gotch, Legacy Australia Chairman Tony Ralph and Legacy Australia Ambassador Maj-Gen Stuart Smith at the opening of the new counter-IED training facility at the Taji Military Complex in Iraq.

Left: Commander Task Group Taji 3 Col Andrew Lowe speaks to a group of Iraqi, British and American officers at the opening of the training facility.

Photos by LS Jake Badior

Above: A British soldier demonstrates detection techniques to Iraqi, British, American and Australian officers at the opening of the new counter-IED training facility at the Taji Military Complex in Iraq.
Depression and death:

Lt-Col Mike Harris shares the story of his battle with cancer and the depression that followed his diagnosis.

The irrational anger and bad temper was replaced with a more even temperament. Instead of isolating the children, I was embracing them. There were tears – from me and my wife – as we both realised a corner may have been turned. The people I loved the most were not completely lost to me, but I was going to have to work hard to restore their trust. Meanwhile, the handbrake to beer drinking had been firmly applied. Maturity and common sense had prevailed at last.

- Lt-Col Mike Harris

I T TURNED out the back pain was not a sports injury but instead an impressive 11 cm x 7 cm tumour growing on the lower third of my liver. At times, the inflamed tissues were touching on nerves in the lower back and because of the increasing size of the tumour, the counter painkillers were no longer effective.

Following the initial round of medical imaging, the medical officer informed me that my condition was serious. It was actually terminal as the disease had likely metastasised and spread throughout the body through my blood circulatory system – from the bowel, to the liver, lungs and onwards. While not able to confirm the cancer was related to the original bowel cancer, it was highly probable that it was and not a secondary, different form of cancer.

The cancerous lesion required the immediate attention of specialists. My first appointment was with a bariatric (liver) surgeon, who referred me to an oncologist (cancer) and then a cardiothoracic (heart-lung) specialist. The imagery also found spots on my right lung. Because of the size of the liver cancer, it was assessed that I needed chemotherapy to reduce the size of the lesion and the overall volume of cancer being carried in my body – a cancer count of 366 confirmed I had a lot of cancer patient resident. Liver surgery would only be successful if the lesion could be reduced in size.

I was quickly booked in and had surgery to place a titanium and rubber port into my upper right chest called a ‘port-a-cath’. This allowed chemotherapy to be pumped directly into the vascular system without the need for catheters. For many patients using the public health system, this can be a costly exercise. For ADFA members, these ‘extras’ help. Across a two-week cycle, over 12 cycles, chemotherapy soon began with three drugs targeting both the cancer cells and blood vessels feeding the lesion.

The after-effects of chemotherapy are different for each person. For me, it caused nausea for the first few days, but after the pump was removed on the third day (I received a heavy dose on day one, then a micro-dose over 44 hours was infused using a battery-operated pump through the port-a-cath) I would progressively improve in health and temperament. Chemotherapy causes a range of side effects, including the loss of voice during the first few days, hyper-sensitivity to cold and sunlight, and loss of sensation to the extremities (toes and fingers) over time. Other wonderful features include ruptured gums, dry mouth, nosebleeds and increased vulnerability to infections.

But I was in shock. At 47 years of age, with a wife, two teenage children, a dog, mortgage and project car, my life was more or less preordained. The plan was to serve out my time in the ADF and retire to a life actually acquiring a real golf handicap, tending to a vegetable garden and watching the children grow older. My wife and I had never talked about death – just the life immediately in front of us. We had travel plans, a 20-year overdue honeymoon, and the need to set ourselves up for retirement. Instead, the chaos I faced meant I put up defensive walls – emotionally and physically – and shut myself off from the world.

Injury and compensation

TOOK advantage of medical leave to start to put in place my financial affairs. Following a meeting with Military Super and an uncomfortable discussion about the entitlement to access superannuation that is afforded to terminal patients, I was able to apply for an early payout. There are a series of provisions in order to access your MilSuper and you need to receive sound financial advice. I chose this path and was able to purchase a house, move the family and settle in before the worst was to come.

I also sought out the Defence Liaison
We need to talk

The editorial team hope this feature will encourage other members of the Army to share their own stories about serious physical and mental health issues. Contact the editor at armynews@defence.gov.au

HELP AT HAND

JOINT Health Command (JHC) is committed to providing holistic, member-centred healthcare which is tailored to meet each individual’s needs.

Garrison Health Operations within JHC is primarily responsible for the delivery and management of quality, safe and effective health care to ADF members.

The management of patients with cancer is a specialised area and Defence relies heavily on the expertise available in the civilian community.

The full range of civilian specialist services available are accessible by ADF members with the member’s ADF medical officer being the professional providing overall coordination of this care.

The following services are available:

- On-base health facilities provide a wide range of services that include general practitioners, pharmacy, physiotherapy, psychology, rehabilitation (both clinical and vocational) and dental. Access to specialist services is provided as determined by the treating medical team.

- Off-base services provide access to a full range of medical specialists and allied health, including inpatient and outpatient care, through a national network consisting of more than 4400 medical specialists, 885 allied health care providers and 260 hospitals.

- 1800 IMSICK (1800 467 425) is a national 24/7 call service providing health support for all ADF personnel within Australia when away from base or to access services after hours.

- All-hours Support Line (ASL) (1800 699 597) is an confidential mental health support service for ADF members and their families and is available 24/7. The ASL will help members access ADF or civilian mental health services more easily, including psychology, medical, social and occupational services. Callers will speak with a mental health professional who has a good understanding of the support and care services available.

- There are a range of other support services available. Further information can be accessed through the Joint Health Command ADF Health and Wellbeing Portal “Fighting Fit”. This is a resource for all current and former personnel and their families and can be accessed at https://joint-health.adf.defence.gov.au/ADFHealthWellbeingPages/ADF%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Portal.aspx

Officer for the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) and began the process of having my condition recognised by DVA. The department placed me on a White Card for both the colorectal cancer and depression, which is non-compensatory agreement by the Commonwealth to cover all future medical treatments, regardless of whether you remain a serving ADF member or are medically discharged.

I also started the lengthy, steep process of submitting compensation applications under the Military Compensation and Rehabilitation Act and Veterans’ Entitlement Act, using an advocate and completing the necessary, obligatory justification and paperwork.

This process is ongoing and it is never guaranteed. My sole aim is to ensure there is financial compensation for my family as my working life is about to be cut nearly 20 years short and, as the primary bread-winner, they are going to face many financial compensation for my rehabilitation.

I was medically discharged.

I was embracing them. There were tears and irrational anger and bad temper was the result. The medication had been firmly applied. Maturity – from me and my wife – as we both realised a corner may have been turned.

The path was sometimes narrow but I was confident I had removed the roadblocks for a few more months. I had our family on my mind, the ‘boys’ and my other half. Notwithstanding the support of a nutritionist and the Australian Medical Association, providing medical care cancer patients can receive.

Notwithstanding the support of a nutritionist (to help put weight back on), a social worker (for mental health), and a community care nurse (to change the dressings from the drainage), I have been supported by a wonderful array of caring specialists who have all worked harmoniously to ensure I can return to good health.

The road ahead is not clear. On returning to work I have rekindled relationships with my peers, supervisor and leadership team. The team has provided a focus for my efforts and their flexible approach to accommodating me back into their work routine has helped me find a place, albeit short-term and sporadic, where I feel I am needed.

At this point, I feel I have reached this milestone, and I will be well short of what I could earn in this time.

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Officer for the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) and began the process of having my condition recognised by DVA. The department placed me on a White Card for both the colorectal cancer and depression, which is non-compensatory agreement by the Commonwealth to cover all future medical treatments, regardless of whether you remain a serving ADF member or are medically discharged.

I also started the lengthy, steep process of submitting compensation applications under the Military Compensation and Rehabilitation Act and Veterans’ Entitlement Act, using an advocate and completing the necessary, obligatory justification and paperwork.

This process is ongoing and it is never guaranteed. My sole aim is to ensure there is financial compensation for my family as my working life is about to be cut nearly 20 years short and, as the primary bread-winner, they are going to face many financial compensations for my rehabilitation.

I was medically discharged.

I was embracing them. There were tears and irrational anger and bad temper was the result. The medication had been firmly applied. Maturity – from me and my wife – as we both realised a corner may have been turned.

The path was sometimes narrow but I was confident I had removed the roadblocks for a few more months. I had our family on my mind, the ‘boys’ and my other half. Notwithstanding the support of a nutritionist and the Australian Medical Association, providing medical care cancer patients can receive.

Notwithstanding the support of a nutritionist (to help put weight back on), a social worker (for mental health), and a community care nurse (to change the dressings from the drainage), I have been supported by a wonderful array of caring specialists who have all worked harmoniously to ensure I can return to good health.

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MORE than 100 members of the ADF joined a French-flavoured multinational force for training in disaster response interoperability during Exercise Croix du Sud.

The exercise ran from November 9-18 in New Caledonia and is the largest humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercise in the South Pacific.

Led by the French Armed Forces of New Caledonia (FANC), Croix du Sud is held every two years as part of France’s engagement in the region.

Commander of the Australian contingent Lt-Col Paul Manoel said the exercise tackled the more difficult areas of disaster response.

“Croix Du Sud allows us to deal with the responses that may be required when the security situation is complex following a disaster,” he said.

“We are well experienced with supplying aid and disaster recovery forces to the region. This exercise allowed us to train as a multinational force dealing with non-combatant evacuation and security operations.”

Ile des Pins (Isle of Pines) was the backdrop for the tactical phase, which involved a non-combatant evacuation operation following a simulated cyclone. Adding complexity to the scenario, role players acted as disgruntled locals who grew more and more frustrated at the lack of food and water available to them.

2RAR troops, with soldiers from Tonga and New Zealand, worked alongside their French counterparts to move in and assist with security operations in the area. They established a collection point for the ‘refugees’ to get processed and searched before being moved to the airfield for an evacuation flight.

Exercise liaison officer Capt David Caligari, of 2RAR, said the training was vital to ensure a prepared force was equipped to react and provide assistance.

“Exercises like Croix du Sud are important to ensure that as a multinational force, we are ready to respond in the Pacific when required,” Capt Caligari said.

“These opportunities provide valuable training in an area where Australian troops can expect to be required to respond. Our region is prone to natural disasters like cyclones and the ADF is often called upon to respond and help.

“We assisted in Fiji earlier this year and it’s important to keep up our skills. Working with the other nations allows us to test our procedures and processes and to form professional relationships.”

Maj Ronald Jean, of FANC, welcomed the opportunity to work with the Australians.

“To me, this is the biggest exercise for the FANC and really important for us because we are part of the Pacific region and need to work together to offer help,” Maj Jean said.

“I would be very happy to work again with the Australians.”

Croix du Sud included troops from France (New Caledonia and French Polynesia), Australia, Canada, Chile, Fiji, Japan, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, UK, US and Vanuatu.

In addition to the company-minus team from 2RAR, the ADF contributed a C-130J Hercules, two KA350 King Airs, and headquarters and support personnel.

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Team-building success sets tone for tactical phase of Croix du Sud

Fit-Lt Lauretta Webster

TEAMWORK and communication were essential components for the success at a French-run training day in Noumea as part of Exercise Croix du Sud.

The 2RAR team, including members of the French Armed Forces New Caledonia (FANC), New Zealand Army and His Majesty’s Armed Forces (Tonga), joined for force integration training to tackle the rigorous tasks.

Training included building a raft made from bamboo and running it through tangled, muddy mangroves with a number of weighted stores, before completing a water obstacle course that comprised above and under water challenges.

Capt Roch Sardin, of FANC, said the purpose of the activities was to provide a challenging environment to encourage team building and unity.

“The physical training activities are designed to improve unit cohesion and allow personnel to share skills with other nationalities, to build up the force in preparation for the next phase of the exercise,” Capt Sardin said.

“The main purpose is to realise that people cannot rely on their own strength, and must rely on their team to get through the challenges.

“We are on an island here in New Caledonia, so it’s important we train with our regional partners so we can prepare to react to any real-time situations and share our knowledge.”

Lt David Bannister-Tyrrell, of 2RAR, described the training as innovative and memorable.

“It was surprisingly fun. I’m absolutely knackered, but that obstacle course was an entertaining mix of exhausting and exhilarating,” Lt Bannister-Tyrrell said.

“My team was made up of a combination of French and Australians and it was fantastic getting to work together. The language barrier was a bit of a challenge but we got through.

“It really was a test of communication and all about helping each other overcome the obstacles. It was difficult, but also a bit of fun.

“It was a pretty unique team-building exercise and that’s what exercise Croix du Sud is all about.”

Above: Pte Belinda Haslem, of 1 MP Bn, is shown an FR-F2 rifle by a FANC soldier during Exercise Croix du Sud at Plum Bks, New Caledonia.

Left: Role players watch as a French Air Force Puma helicopter takes off from Ile des Pins airfield during Exercise Croix du Sud.

Photos by CPL David Said

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Gnr Joshua Lindley, of 4 Regt RAA, works with volunteer Clinton Lonnigan to unload pallets of food in Townsville.
Photo by Maj Al Green

Cpl Mark Doran

TOWNSVILLE soldiers are supporting the Mayor’s Christmas Tree Appeal for the fifth year in a row in what can only be described as a military operation.

Their mission is to help people in need in the Townsville region.

Soldiers from across 3 Bde are assisting with the donation and collection of food, packing of hampers or deliveries with Food Relief NQ.

The support to the appeal aims to assist non-profit organisations that look after the disadvantaged or homeless during a culturally and socially important part of the year.

Community Engagement Officer Maj Amanda Gibbs said volunteers included soldiers who were in the rehabilitation platoons across the brigade or the Soldier Recovery Centre.

“The soldiers are going out into the community and their support efforts are giving them opportunities for meaningful engagement as they do something worthwhile,” she said.

“They are enjoying helping the locals who are less fortunate than themselves.

“I guess a lot of them appreciate what they have and are only too happy to be given an opportunity to help other people.”

When prepared each hamper equals 16 main meals and 10 breakfasts along with sweet and dry biscuits and a variety of other items.

Food Relief NQ distributes to more than 76 welfare agencies in North Queensland, from Cairns to Mackay and out to Mt Isa.

Fitness on the move

Innovative exercise solution allows gunners to train anywhere

LIFTING heavy bombs and humping heavier packs makes fitness a priority at the School of Artillery, but there wasn’t always the right training facilities in place.

One solution appeared on Exercise Talisman Sabre last year when CO SOArty saw US Army soldiers training on a Conex gym set.

Sgt John Penhall, the school’s PTI, was tasked with putting together a similar apparatus and started consultation with an engineering firm.

“Plans were drawn and intellectual property rights purchased to ensure the SOArty had unlimited privileges concerning the designed plans,” he said.

“A Conex container was purchased that could fit onto a green or white fleet vehicle so it could be delivered to the field environment if required.”

It was fitted out with input from Maj Leo Lorenzo, WO2 Robert Menadue and Sgt John Penhall, regarding what exercises the ‘gym’ would likely be used for.

The three-metre Conex contains two storage boxes bolted to the floor with equipment required for a number of fitness regimes.

Six brackets are welded to three sides of the container, designed to accept three frame attachments. These frames are used in conjunction with free weights for squats, bench press, shoulder press and many other exercises.

“Of course the frames can be used by themselves for everyone’s favourite exercise, heaves,” Sgt Penhall said.

The Conex set allows the school to transport a ready-made gym with the capacity to train 50-60 soldiers to any location.

It also provides capacity for the training of soldiers when the main gym is being used.

“The robustness of the set permits soldiers to train on proper lifting techniques as they would in a fully set up gymnasium,” Sgt Penhall said.

“This compartmentalised device offers a means for individuals to increase their upper body strength and cardio fitness in one compact, easily deployable package.”

Guns train on the School of Artillery’s portable gym.

Feeding soldiers’ recovery in FNQ

Fitness on the move

Gnr Joshua Lindley, of 4 Regt RAA, works with volunteer Clinton Lonnigan to unload pallets of food in Townsville.
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CAPT Timothy Sydenham

SOLDIERS from 9 and 4 Bdes descended on Murray Bridge Training Area in South Australia as part of Exercise Jacka Ready. The exercise in late October was an opportunity for reserve soldiers from the supporting brigades in South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria to maintain their skills in the ready phase of the force generation cycle.

Commander 9 Bde Brig Mick Burgess saw the exercise as vital to ensure the soldiers maintained their skills following Exercise Hamel. “While Hamel may be seen as the pinnacle of training for Battle Group Jacka, it’s imperative we maintain the basic skills of our reserve soldiers,” Brig Burgess said.

“Through regular training opportunities, the soldiers maintain and develop their skills in a physically demanding environment focusing on team drills using live ammunition.”

More than 120 members of 9 and 4 Bdes carried out a comprehensive week of lead-up activities culminating in a live-fire defensive activity. The soldiers went through individual marksmanship training on the ranges before moving into the field-firing phase, conducting sneaker ranges individually, in pairs and in sections. Concurrent with the small arms training, officers and SNCOs prepared plans to occupy and defend a company position.

After orders were delivered and the defensive position was occupied pre-dawn, digging in, preparing weapon pits and aggressive patrolling was the order of the day. The activity ended with a live-fire defensive battle with static and moving targets, as well as vehicles targeted with 66mm and 84mm anti-armour weapons.

“The exercise was vital to ensure we maintained our readiness capability,” Brig Burgess said.

“By the end of the exercise, the soldiers clearly displayed the skills developed during Hamel and built further on their knowledge and expertise.”

Brigade Major 9 Bde Maj Scott Calvert was the director of practice and acknowledged the role of support staff to ensure the success of the exercise. “Bringing together soldiers from South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria is a challenge and this exercise demonstrates the commitment of both brigades to being ready to reinforce 1 Bde if and when required,” Maj Calvert said.

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Maj Kris Gardiner
CONTINUING its strong commitment to international engagement, 1 Div/DIBHQ has led an ADF, ADF and Australian Federal Police (AFP) contingency to support the latest in a series of regional planning exercises being conducted in Papua New Guinea.

Seventeen ADF and APS personnel deployed with 15 AFP representatives to Port Moresby for Exercise Longreach from October 26 to November 5 as part of planning ahead of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum to be held in the capital city in 2018.

Customised focus on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, the exercise concentrated on initial planning for the international event, which will see some of the world’s most powerful leaders visit the south-west Pacific nation.

Commander of the ADF contingent Lt-Col Travis Gordon said a key aspect of Australia’s involvement with Longreach was to support the PNG Joint Security Task Force to develop the command and control requirements for the safe and secure execution of APEC 2018.

“The level of complexity involved in hosting an international forum such as APEC requires detailed planning and agile command and control structures that have been tested thoroughly to identify likely contingencies,” Lt-Col Gordon said.

“Longreach also offers an opportunity to develop key relationships with our counterparts in PNG to support their planning and preparations to successfully host APEC.”

The exercise is the first of what will be a number of planning activities over the next 12 months, with the support of Defence and AFP providing PNG’s authorities with access to a wealth of knowledge generated from Australia’s hosting of APEC 2007 and the G20 Summit of 2014.

Lt-Col Gordon said Australia’s experience in planning major international engagement events offered a unique opportunity to share lessons with our regional partner.

“The hosting of major events like APEC and the G20 Summit and planning for the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games has developed considerable experience that has been extremely valuable, providing the opportunity to share contemporary experiences with the staff of the Joint Security Task Force,” he said.

ADFA events
ADFA will host two activities for past ADFA events on November 25. A number of events were held by ADF members across the country. See the next edition of Armynews for the full story.

IN BRIEF
White Ribbon Day
THE world’s largest male-led movement to end men’s violence against women, White Ribbon Day, was held on November 25. A number of events were held by ADF members across the country. See the next edition of Armynews for the full story.

ADF events
ADFA will host two activities for past graduates during the 2016 graduation week. A 30-year reunion for the graduating class of 1986 will be held on December 7 at 7pm, and all graduates are invited to the 2016 graduation parade on December 8 at 9.30am. RSVP to adfa30years@gmail.com by December 2.

Shoalwater Bay
DEFENCE Minister Marise Payne and Federal Member for Capricornia Michelle Landry met with local government and business leaders in Rockhampton on November 3. They discussed opportunities stemming from the new Singapore Military Training Agreement that will see the number of Singaporean forces training in Australia more than double.

Ms Payne said the Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Military Training and Training Area Development signed in October gave priority to local businesses around the Shoalwater Bay Training Area, in support of both phases of development and the ongoing training activities, boosting regional jobs and growth. “This is an important outcome of the Australia-Singapore Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, generating significant local economic activity over the next 25 years,” Ms Payne said. “The Memorandum of Understanding allows for up to 14,000 Singapore Armed Forces personnel to conduct unilateral training in Australia for up to 18 weeks per year, up from the current provision of up to 6,600 personnel over six weeks.” The initiative includes substantial upgrades to the Shoalwater Bay Training Area and Townsville Field Training Area.

End of year
THE final edition of Armynews for 2016 will be out on December 15. Email your submissions to the editor at armynews@defencenews.gov.au by December 2 for consideration.

Band on song for Legacy
Sgt Dave Morley
MORE than 250 people turned out to sing-a-long with the Australian Army Band – Tasmania (AAB-T), for a legacy fundraising concert at the Hobart City Hall on November 12.

AAB-T’s Horns and Strings music director Capt Mitch de Jonge said the band played a varied program. “This included traditional military band music like Colonel Bogey, big band swing, popular vocals from musicals and movies like West Side Story, Guys and Dolls, and Wicked, and pop songs like Bee Gees’ ‘Stayin’ Alive’, and Letters from War,” he said.

“For this concert, we combined with AAB-Melbourne (AAB-M), and musicians and staff from the Defence Force School of Music, so we had 52 musicians and four conductors.”

“We opened the concert with the drum corps doing a mini-display, marching through the audience up to the stage, and there was an Anzac tribute. Nightfall in Camp, with solo bugler Musn Billy Thomson, of AAB-T.

“Our vocalists were Musn Nic Courtou, of AAB-T, Ms Liz Cherry, of AAB-M, and AB Stephanie McRae, of the RAN Band – Tasmania.”

Capt de Jonge said the audience and performers connected with the traditional Christmas medley, played to remind everyone to buy Legacy Christmas puddings.

“Generally, Legacy audiences love songs like In the Mood, Colonel Bogey, Waltzing Matilda, and so on and if they don’t, they clap along with us,” he said.

Capt de Jonge said the concert ended a busy week for the band. “We performed at University of Ulster in north-west Tasmania to raise money for Legacy, carried out ceremonial duties at Government House for the Australian of the Year Awards, as well as the Remembrance Day service at Hobart Cenotaph,” he said.

AAB-T, which comprises three ARA and 27 reserve members, has supported Legacy for many years, and has traditionally performed one or two large concerts a year to raise funds and awareness of their great work.

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The high value of

Australian soldiers continue to serve with diligence in Afghanistan, passing on their skills to the ANA, Flt-Lt Jessica Aldred reports.

About 80 ADF personnel are providing assistance as mentors and support staff at Camp Qargha’s Afghan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA) west of Kabul.

And for them force protection is critical.

Mentoring Afghan officer cadets requires a mentor’s full attention so it’s the members of the Force Protection Element 6 detachment that provide for their security and any quick reaction force if incidents occur.

Cpl Brett Deacon-Shaw said force protection was integral to achieving the ADF’s work in Afghanistan.

“Since June this year we have been providing integral force protection, a quick reaction force and camp security to personnel operating at Camp Qargha,” Cpl Deacon-Shaw said.

“We also support mentoring missions at ANAOA and field exercises for the officer cadets at the Kabul Military Training Centre (KMT) and Darulaman Training Area.”

A recent field exercise at the KMT was an opportunity for the officer cadets to conduct section and platoon-level patrolling and ambushes.

LCpl Albert Graham said the work required constant threat assessments.

“We had to make quick assessments on external and internal threats as well as take into account movement, vehicle positioning and all other threats prevalent in the Afghan environment,” LCpl Graham said.

Sgt Justin Cowan plays another critical role at the ANAOA, mentoring Afghan SNCOs and junior officer platoon commanders to become effective leaders.

He said developing the relationship between the Afghan SNCOs (brimals) and junior officers (blook commanders) was important.

“As mentors, we work alongside the instructors passing on our experience and expertise to improve their fieldcraft skills, patrolling techniques and weapon handling drills,” Sgt Cowan said.

“This ensures that the level of training being delivered to the Afghan officer cadets is of the highest standard.

“More importantly, it allows us to promote the importance of the link between brimals and blook commanders.

“As mentors, we demonstrate instructional techniques and work together with junior officers to show how the relationship should be.”

Within ANAOA there are four Australian SNCO mentors and up to 11 coalition mentors from the UK, New Zealand and Denmark.

The senior Australian officer at ANAOA, Lt-Col Steve Jenkins, said SNCO mentors were essential to the success of mentoring for the ANA.

“The SNCOs at ANAOA lead by example, showing the value of their experience and knowledge, particularly for junior officers,” he said.

“The SNCOs lead in the mentoring of ANA instructors in field exercises. In barracks they reinforce the importance of the SNCO in the delivery of training, and setting and maintaining the standards expected of a professional military academy.

“For Australian SNCOs, a deployment as a mentor at ANAOA provides the opportunity to reinforce their strong instructional skills.

“It’s an opportunity to work with many coalition forces and to gain a strong sense of achievement in the development of the future leaders of the ANA.”

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Defence Attaché Afghanistan Col Craig Bickell presents a gift to ANAOA Commandant Brig-Gen Mohammad Sharif Sharifi.

Photo by Sgt Rob Hack

ANAOA instructors and officer cadets on parade at the graduation ceremony.

Photo by Flt-Lt Jessica Aldred

Flt-Lt Jessica Aldred

LEADERSHIP challenges lie ahead for the 342 officer cadets, including nine women, of 1 Kandak (battalion), who recently graduated from the Afghan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA) in Kabul.

ANAOA has now graduated about 2000 officer cadets since its establishment four years ago.

Winner of the Sandhurst Medal for best instructor, ANA 1Lt Rahmatullah Rasulzay, appreciated the mentors’ support.

“The Australians are working with us shoulder-to-shoulder in the field and the classroom,” he said.

“Working as an instructor and platoon commander for 1 Kandak, I am proud of my work sharing my knowledge with my students so they can fight the enemies of Afghanistan.”

The training focused on key leadership skills as well as basic soldiering, military planning techniques and counter-insurgency tactics.

Graduate 2Lt Jumard Shirjan is proud to serve his country.

“I graduated from the ANAOA with my brother,” he said.

“We have learnt the best way here with leadership and field training so we can teach our soldiers.”

Australian mentor Capt Ben Carbis, of 12/40RTR, said the experience was rewarding.

“As a tolay (company) mentor, I work with three platoon commanders who are instructors,” he said.

“Working as a tolay mentor has been really hard and are proud to be serving their country.”

The nine women graduating brings ANAOA’s total female officer graduates to almost 40.

Experience

Top training standards

Flt-Lt Jessica Aldred

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“As a tolay (company) mentor, I work with three platoon commanders who are instructors,” he said.

“I work with them on a daily basis assisting them with all their lessons, field training and administration.

“It’s rewarding to see the officer cadets graduate as they’ve been working really hard and are proud to be serving their country.”

The nine women graduating brings ANAOA’s total female officer graduates to almost 40.

Defence Attaché Afghanistan Col Craig Bickell presents a gift to ANAOA Commandant Brig-Gen Mohammad Sharif Sharifi.

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ANAOA instructors and officer cadets on parade at the graduation ceremony.

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IN THE tradition of RMC–D, the Australian Ambassador to Afghanistan Richard Feakes recently presented a Sword of Honour to the Afghan National Army Officer Academy’s (ANAOA) Commandant, Brig-Gen Mohammad Sharif Sharifi.

A similar Sword of Honour is presented on the ANAOA graduation day to the officer cadet who displays exemplary conduct and performance of duty throughout their time at ANAOA.

Mr Feakes said Australia’s work at ANAOA reflected our nation’s commitment to Afghanistan.

“Australia has a close friendship with Afghanistan, especially here at the ANAOA. The work at the academy is important in supporting a strong future for Afghanistan,” Mr Feakes said.

Brig-Gen Sharifi said he appreciated Australia’s support to ANAOA.

“In each and every graduation, we have the best officer cadets graduating for a strong ANA,” he said.

“We thank the Australian soldiers for their help with this and we look forward to working with you into the future.”

Further strengthening Australia’s relationship with the ANAOA, Defence Attaché Afghanistan Col Craig Bickell presented a collection of Australian Army Rising Sun badges to Brig-Gen Sharifi.

“I see this Rising Sun as relevant to the experiences of both the Australian Army and the ANA,” Col Bickell said.

“As with the start of the Australian Army, many militias formed a single, strong army. The Rising Sun is symbolic of the dawn of the Australian Army after Federation.

“I see parallels to the Afghan experience in that they are at the dawn of a new era in the history of the Army of Afghanistan, an army at the forefront of fighting terrorism and developing Afghanistan’s leaders of the future.”

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FIRST class staff cadets from RMC-D had their initial taste of operating in a real town during their final battle block series in St George, Queensland, in November.

The exercise tested the staff cadets’ ability to plan, make decisions and enact tactical plans in a stability operations environment, similar to previous missions in the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste.

First class senior instructor Maj Rob Barr said battle block was a challenging few weeks.

“Not only do the staff cadets have to interact with the local community, they also have to interact with the local emergency services, SES, police, ambulance and fire service as part of a joint inter-agency effort for certain scenarios,” Maj Barr said.

“They have to think very quickly on their feet and they have to apply the tactical techniques and procedures they’ve been taught in the classroom and produce a tactical outcome on the ground.”

Staff cadets had to work through numerous scenarios including car accidents, sieges and crowd control alerts in the streets and buildings of St George.

Some scenarios were even merged with actual events, like the local triathlon, with soldiers manning water stations and providing ‘protection’ to competitors.

Role players were also mouled with mock injuries to add another layer of complexity and realism.

“The first few days they get a bit of shock and awe operating in a real town environment and don’t know how to distinguish things,” Maj Barr said.

“But once they start to get a bit more comfortable and apply the basic tactics and techniques we’ve taught them, they get more comfortable in the environment and they’ve actually been performing quite well.”

SCdt Tyler Shewell said it had been a steep learning curve.

“Controlling a platoon on the ground in an urban environment is so much more complex than being out bush,” he said. “It’s really difficult, but a challenge and a good experience.”

RMC-D personnel also conducted numerous community engagement events with schools and aged care homes during their stay in St George.

“The local community has been positive – they’re very happy to have us here,” Maj Barr said.

The 138 staff cadets will graduate from RMC-D as lieutenants on December 13.

Staff cadets remove an injured ‘protester’ from danger as part of a training scenario. Inset: SCdt Malcolm Cloete watches for the ‘enemy’. Photos by CPL Steve Duncan

Staff cadets prepare to graduate as the Army’s newest officers, Capt Anna-Lise Rosendahl reports.
ADF health professionals from all three services recently had the opportunity to give their non-military counterparts an insight into life in the green, grey or blue. The Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society (ANZICS) and Australian College of Critical Care Nurses jointly held their 41st annual conference at the Convention and Exhibition Centre from October 20-22.

The experience I was able share at the meeting stems from being deployed eight times, including twice to both Afghanistan and Iraq,” he said. “I was the first Director of Clinical Services of the Role 2E hospital in Taji, Iraq. The experience was important the ADF was correctly perceived as a highly professional organisation.

The ADF has already been invited to the next meeting on the Gold Coast in October 2017. For more information, visit www.intensivecare2016.com.au
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Diverse workforce

Defence Administrative Assistance Program improves capability across the country

Siobhan Mitchell-Taverner

ARMY has embraced the Defence Administrative Assistance Program (DAAP), which allows people with disability to engage in meaningful work.

The official launch of the DAAP in Townsville was held close to International Day of People with Disability, which is celebrated annually on December 3. The flagship event was hosted by 3 Bde at Lavarack Bks on November 30 and included the launch of the Defence Accessibility Hub.

The employment program began at Gallipoli Bks, Enoggera, in 2014, with its success leading to national implementation across Defence establishments this year.

When DAAP began in Townsville in October, several 3 Bde units hosted the team to determine which element of the DAAP service they would access.

Commander 3 Bde Brng Chris Field said the program aimed to create environments that enabled people to reach their own personal and professional potential.

“DAAP enables potential for participants and hosts in collegiate, inter-service and productive workplaces,” he said. “We believe the program enhances capability for Defence in North Queensland and throughout Australia.”

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DAAP is a partnership with Australian Disability Enterprises and enhances Defence capability by providing administrative support to Defence bases across Australia.

DAAP teams are now based at Gallipoli Bks, Victoria Bks in Melbourne, Holsworthy Bks and Lavarack Bks. The program will expand to Robertson Bks next year.

In Brisbane, soldiers at 20 STA Regt have also welcomed the DAAP program.

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Maj Russell Hamsey, of 20 STA Regt, said the inclusion of [previous DAAP participant] Mariah Haffieki into the workplace had been smooth and she had quickly grasped her duties.

“The assistance of a disability employment support provider has assisted with Mariah’s quick integration into the workplace,” Maj Hamsey said.

“Mariah’s work involves the maintenance and amendment of aviation publications to support unmanned aerial system operations. This is important work and is painstaking in its detail. The margin for error is very low, therefore, it is a perfect job for someone who is good at detailed work.”

Ms Haffieki is a previous member of the DAAP team and was successful in winning her position – the first successful pathway from DAAP to the Inclusive Employment Program, which provides permanent employment in the APS.

“The most enjoyable part of my job is progressively taking on higher responsibilities and challenges,” Ms Haffieki said.

DAAP participants support ADF members and can assist with administrative tasks that take military personnel away from core activities.

Through the week beginning November 28, events were run across the country to celebrate International Day of People with Disability.
Cove of connection

Modemising professional development across Army

SOLDIERS seeking to stand out as professionally excellent are about to receive a helping hand in the form of the Cove, an innovative professional development network for Army.

The Cove is being developed by HQ Forcomd as one of the outcomes of the Ryan Review, a major examination of Army's future education, training and doctrine systems that took place this year.

Maj Tom McDermott, a member of the new HQ Forcomd Professional Military Education Cell, said the new network aimed to connect Army's experts with soldiers and officers at all stages of their careers, allowing them to sharpen their skills all the time, anywhere.

“The whole idea is based on an emerging educational theory called ‘connectivism’, a concept that has brought free tertiary study to millions of people worldwide in the past 10 years,” Maj McDermott said.

“The hub of the Cove network is an open-access website, based on the internet and accessible from any device.”

The website will create new connections between instructors, NCOs and young officers...

– Maj Tom McDermott, HQ Forcomd

The website is split into three major parts. The first section is called the ‘Professional Mastery Toolset’, and is a series of resources that aim to help soldiers and officers excel in day-to-day soldiering.

One section called ‘Soldiers’ Fives’ consists of short videos, produced by Army’s expert instructors, on how to conduct simple tactical tasks to the highest of standards. From ‘Staking a Gun’ to ‘Building a Mud Model’, these videos are ideal revision for courses or exercises.

Another section focuses on ‘Wargaming’, providing tactical decision exercises and online wargames you can play as individuals or groups.

The second major part is known as the ‘Journey to Professional Mastery’. This is designed as the heart of the network, and aims to create four connected professional groups of soldiers and officers from across Army. The Cove will launch with the first of these groups, known as the ‘Trenchline’, which focuses on Army’s junior leaders,” Maj McDermott said.

“The website will create new connections between instructors, NCOs and young officers, and will provide a wealth of resources to support professional development.”

These will include blog posts, videos, podcasts and articles, produced by Army’s experts and schools, and tailored to the audience.

Groups that focus on sub-unit command teams, unit command teams and senior soldiers and officers will follow. The final part is called the ‘Foundation’ and covers a series of common skills like communication and mentoring, which every soldier and officer needs to master for success. The Cove team has big ideas for the project, according to Maj McDermott.

“Over time, it is hoped the concept will underpin the All Corps Training Continuum, helping soldiers and officers prepare for major career milestones and smooth the often long gaps between residential courses,” he said.

“It is designed with a direct link to Army’s training and education providers. Each part of the Cove is cared for, or ‘curated’ as the Cove team call it, by Army’s schools and training institutions.”

“The website will create new connections between instructors, NCOs and young officers, and will provide a wealth of resources to support professional development.”

More information can be found by following @covetweet on Twitter, or by liking ‘The Soldier Cove’ page on Facebook. If you would like to get involved in the Cove, you can email soldiercove@gmail.com for more information.

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“To keep it on the straight and narrow, the whole project is underpinned by Army’s doctrine, now far more accessible and readable as a result of the Ryan Review.”

The Cove is designed for the modern generation, taking advantage of the growing ‘Bring Your Own Device’ culture.

“It is more rank-flat than normal, and deliberately breaks down some of Army’s traditional boundaries – working with social media and other communication tools that are widely used in day-to-day life,” Maj McDermott said.

The team behind the Cove recognises this is not without risk.

“It’s more about theory than practice,” Maj McDermott said.

“All users need to approach it with a mature and professional attitude. We’ve established the Cove Charter, based on Army’s values, to guide behaviour. If soldiers and officers respect this, the Cove has the potential to help every individual across Army to excel in their profession.”

The Cove is in the final stages of development and will be launched in early December with an initial focus on junior leaders. In 2017 it will expand into the other stages.

More information can be found by follow-
**Customer satisfaction**

Ewa Dimond

FEEDBACK from customer satisfaction surveys is being used to help improve services in Defence.

People Services now have one single entry point, Defence Security and Vetting Services are processing more clearances, face-to-face ICT kiosks are making life easier and a new self-service tool brings together all the ICT services people need to use and manage their DRN account.

A/Assistant Secretary Vetting Alice Manchester said there had been a marked improvement in vetting services with the Australian Government Security and Vetting Agency (AGSVA) completing about 20 per cent more clearances in 2015-16 than in 2014-15.

“The average processing time for negative vetting 1 clearances has improved from 4.9 months in 2015-16 to 3.3 months for this year to date,” Ms Manchester said.

“Over the same period, the average processing time for negative vetting 2 clearances has improved from 7.1 months to six months, and the average processing time for baseline clearances has improved from 30 days to 23 days.”

“AGSVA is also undertaking a positive vetting remediation program that continues to improve the outlook for the positive vetting backlog.”

Customers also asked for advice on security intelligence, threat and risk, and greater general security awareness across Australia’s rewarding Defence Security and Vetting Services publishing a new Defence Security Threat Assessment.

Assistant Secretary Security Operations Karen Connell said they were now getting to look this information out to the regions.

“This new assessment is significantly enhanced and provides greater information, analysis and case studies,” Ms Connell said.

Chief Information Officer Group also responded to the survey results by introducing a Service Centre that provides Canberra-based personnel with the option to request ICT services face-to-face.

Head ICT Operations AVM Andrew Dowse said they had listened to customers and made changes based on feedback.

“These kiosks are proving to be a great hit with our customers and we have improved access to DREAMS tokens so more Defence members can work remotely,” AVM Dowse said.

He said another big improvement to ICT services was the introduction of ‘My Account Management Online’.

“This is a new self-service tool. It brings together all the ICT services people need to move and manage their DRN account into one place,” AVM Dowse said.

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**Help DFR recruit new diggers**

DEFENCE Force Recruiting (DFR) needs serving soldiers to help recruit people into the Army.

Every year DFR recruits about 500 men and women into the Army. Some roles sell themselves – particularly those that have a civilian equivalent. Other roles have no civilian parallel and can be challenging to explain to Army recruitment candidates.

DFR is actively looking for ammunition suppliers, quartzmasters, information systems operators and artillery observers to help explain their roles to potential recruits.

If you know someone who may be interested in joining, tell them to ring 13 19 02 and ask them to press ‘4’ for ‘seek applications’. Tell your friend to let the operator know who referred them and the unit you come from, and DFR staff will do their best to progress your friend’s application in a timely and respectful manner.

DFR can only consider civilian candidates. Those in the reserves or another service are required to use the in-service transfer process.

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**Gender no barrier**

**Vending machines**

IN FINANCIAL year 2015-16 AAFCSANS vending machines gave back $325,769 to Defence welfare. More than 280 AAFCSANS vending machines are in operation across ADF bases to provide service members with popular convenience products and help earn big dollops in the area of base welfare funds. The vending machines have been a great hit with our customers and we have improved access to DREAMS tokens so more Defence members can work remotely.

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**Improving services**

ARMY and Air Force members posted to RAAF Base Edinburgh in South Australia recently attended workshops to generate ideas and improve the customer experience of local ICT, HR, security, finance and other services on the base. Members had the opportunity to vote on or make suggestions about existing ideas, or come up with their own ideas to improve service delivery at RAAF Base Edinburgh.

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**IN BRIEF**

Homelessness

THE universities of NSW and Adelaide will conduct research into homelessness in the veteran community. The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute was commissioned by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs to run a competitive tender process for the research, which will be delivered in August next year.

Homelessness services are listed on DVA’s website at www.dva.gov.au.
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Following in their footsteps

Remembrance Day on operations

Cpl Bill Solomou

COALITION camaraderie was on display at operational bases across the Middle East on Remembrance Day.

More than 150 people came together at Australia’s main operating base to pay their respects to military personnel who have paid the ultimate sacrifice during conflicts.

To the sound of bagpipes, coalition commanders laid wreaths on behalf of their services and paid tribute with two minutes’ silence.

Commander JTF633 AVM Tim Innes said Remembrance Day was not to glorify war, but to commemorate, remember, honour and give thanks to servicemen and women from the Commonwealth and other nations who gave their lives in the service of their country.

“To today we demonstrate how much we all appreciate life and how highly we appreciate those who were willing to lay down their lives for our nations, their people and our values,” AVM Innes said.

“The strong and spirited character of our countries rests firmly on the inheritance from each and every one of those lost.

“It is our privilege and duty to ensure their great sacrifice continues to be remembered and honoured.”

Above: A piper plays a lament for Remembrance Day on operations, as Australian soldiers Sgt Michael Cole, left, and Sgt Stuart Baines, second from left, stand among soldiers of coalition forces serving at Camp Qargha, Kabul, Afghanistan.

Photo by Sgt Robert Hack

Right: WO2 Peter Hallam, left, and Maj James Coltheart attend the Task Group Taji Remembrance Day service.

Photo by LS Jake Badior

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You can logon to the Toll MPL App using the same valid username and password you use to access Toll Transitions’ website www.tolltransitions.com.au/defence

Remember Toll’s Warranty Scheme changed March 2016

Toll’s Warranty Scheme changed for removals uplifts from March 2016, and now allows for new replacement cover to be applied to items which fall within predefined categories and age limits. In cases where more than minor damage to an item has occurred, members will be supplied with a new replacement item if Toll Transitions determines that repair of the old item is not economical and the item is eligible for replacement in accordance with a table of age-based item inclusions.

Like-for-like replacement or compensation cover will continue to apply to items which fall outside the specified age limits.

Not every item that sustains damage will be replaced with a new item or compensation paid at new value. In the first instance damaged items will be repaired where practicable and compensation paid for minor damage.

Digital choice for advice

ASIC chairman Greg Medcraft discusses the benefits and shortfalls of ‘robo-advice’.

ROBO-ADVICE (also known as digital advice) describes financial advice delivered online, via computer, tablet or smartphone.

Using algorithms and technology in place of a human financial adviser can offer convenient and potentially lower-cost financial advice.

Financial advice is generated by entering personal details, such as age, gender, income, assets, financial goals and risk tolerance, into a program.

Before you use robo-advice, you should make sure this style of advice will suit your needs.

Personal advice

When you register with a digital advice website, you will answer questions about your income and expenses, assets and liabilities, goals, objectives and risk tolerance.

This gives the robo-adviser information about your financial situation and aspirations.

The computer algorithm then considers this information when making recommendations. The robo-adviser will produce an automated statement of advice (SOA), which explains the recommendations and other important information for you.

General advice

A robo-adviser that only gives general advice will not take into account your personal circumstances or give an SOA.

You must be told upfront that you are only receiving general advice. With general advice, you’ll need to decide whether the recommendation is appropriate for you taking into account your goals, objectives and risk tolerance.

Robo-advice limitations

Digital advice software won’t clarify your goals and objectives and can’t account for changes in your circumstances, for example, if you have a break from work or increase your debt levels.

As your circumstances can change over time, you should check the advice still fits your needs.

Paying for robo-advice

Robo-advice may have lower fees than traditional financial advisers.

This may be an option for people who can’t afford full service advice, only have a small amount to invest, or have simple advice needs.

Advice may be charged on a fee-for-service basis, and/or a percentage fee of assets under management, if you choose to implement the recommendations. You may also be charged a subscription fee for ongoing services, including regular newsletters or updates.

Portfolio rebalancing

If the advice you receive allows the robo-adviser to automatically adjust the asset allocation of your portfolio, you should understand when and why the rebalancing will occur.

For example, will rebalancing occur quarterly or as soon as your portfolio strays more than five per cent from the original mix of assets?

You should also be clear about any costs or tax liabilities associated with rebalancing your portfolio.

Robo-advice can offer convenient and potentially lower-cost financial advice, but will exclude many important factors.

Financial decisions are important. If there’s anything you don’t understand, do your own research and seek further information to make an informed decision.

If needed, you should seek professional advice on the tax implications of negative and positive gearing, as the more you borrow, the more you will pay in interest.

For more on robo-advice visit ASIC’s MoneySmart website at moneysmart.gov.au/investing/financial-advice/robo-advice

A lot happens in the shadows...

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FURTHER DETAILS

Ears are an important organ and fortunately there are several things you can do to help keep them healthy.

**Ears are delicate and valuable organs.** Although they don’t need brushing or clipping, like teeth or nails, they do need to be looked after because once those little hair cells inside your ears are damaged, they can’t be fixed.

Head of Clinical Support at Australian Hearing Wendy Pearce suggests five tips for protecting our ears.

**Wear earplugs**
Ms Pearce said it was estimated more than a third of all Australians had experienced some form of noise damage to their ears.

“Youth damage from noise is entirely preventable,” she said.

“When you’re working with loud machinery, in a club, or anywhere where you’re exposed to loud noise for an extended period of time, wear earplugs or earmuffs and take 10 minute breaks from the noise every hour.

“This will allow your ear’s to rest and reduce the chance of damaging your hearing.”

**Turn it down**
Ms Pearce said loud music was a common culprit for noise damage, both attending concerts and listening to music particularly through headphones with the volume set high.

“Always be conscious to set music at a moderate level and try to avoid using headphones, or maybe earmuff-style headphones.”

**Have your hearing checked**
According to Ms Pearce, if you’ve had recent problems hearing conversations around you, or if you find yourself saying “pardon” a lot, get your hearing checked as soon as possible.

“Pain in the ear can be an infection in the outer ear canal as well, so it is important to seek advice if pain persists.”

Ms Pearce said another important factor in preventing hearing loss was to ensure your ears were kept clean.

“Ear wax is a normal part of your ear’s cleaning process but if you feel there is a blockage, always consult a health professional rather than trying to treat it yourself.”

**Clean your ears**
Ms Pearce said another important factor in preventing hearing loss was to ensure your ears were kept clean.

“Ears are mostly self-cleaning so will generally look after themselves, but you can avoid infections by not swimming in dirty water and by treating infections in other areas around the upper respiratory tract so they don’t spread to the ear,” she said.

“Never try to clean ears by poking anything into the canals.

“Ear wax is a normal part of your ear’s cleaning process but if you feel there is a blockage, always consult a health professional rather than trying to treat it yourself.”

**Painful ears? Ask your doctor**
Ms Pearce said ear infections could cause temporary hearing problems.

“Children under the age of seven are more prone to ear infections, so if your child or grandchild does not seem to hear you or if you see them tugging at, or poking, their ears, it may be worth visiting your GP to get their ears checked,” she said.

“Pain in the ear can be an infection in the outer ear canal as well, so it is important to seek advice if pain persists.”

**Have your hearing checked**
According to Ms Pearce, if you’ve had recent problems hearing conversations around you, or if you find yourself saying “pardon” a lot, get your hearing checked as soon as possible.

“Once you reach 60, have an annual check up just to make sure everything is working properly,” she said.

To take an online hearing test, visit www.hearinghelp.com.au or www.hearing.com.au to book a free hearing test at your nearest Australian Hearing Centre.

**Health is something many take for granted but taking care of your ears is important, Grace Gabriel, of Australian Hearing, reports.**

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Slick show of rugby

Cpl Mark Doran

Irons in the fire

Referees offer support

AUSTRALIAN Defence Force Football Federation (ADFFT) Referees donated their skills at the inaugural National Indigenous Football Championships in Nowra on November 11.

The championships were the first fully national event bringing together 24 Indigenous teams from across Australia to compete for the title of national football champions.

ADFFT Referees committed 10 referees to officiate in the 67 games and each referee supported an average of 12 games during the two-day competition.

Army referees for the championships were Maj Peter Southern, Capt Andrew Schaverien, WO2 Grant Sewell, Sgt Darren Flanagan, Cpl Ross Duckett and Pte Ashley Medway.

Referee coordinator Cpl Duckett said it was a privilege to support the championships.

“It was also a great opportunity to promote the ADF and demonstrate our commitment to Indigenous Australians,” he said.

ADFFT Referees is a triservice referees branch recognised by the Football Federation Australia and is the officiating arm of the ADFFT.

If you are interested in refereeing football, whether currently qualified or interested in becoming qualified, contact Cpl Duckett at ross.duckett@defence.gov.au.

Passion and fierce competition on show in Townsville on Remembrance Day

Eventually the Brolgas broke Army’s defence to win 33-0. Pte Brooke Moselen, of 1RAR, has just returned from a tour to the US with ADF Rugby Union and said the women’s match was a tough game.

“The girls put in a strong effort,” she said. “We put the team together in the last minute and we also had a few beginners on the team who did their best.”

The Old Boys did not disappoint in the pitch and gave the crowd a powerful display of classic rugby.

The mature age gentlemen from both teams displayed energy with some big hits in a game ending with a 12-all draw.

In the final clash, Army men were keen to even the 2016 series with the Brolgas, after losing a tantalisingly close game on Anzac Day. Early stages of the game were tense as both teams defended with passion, but neither was able to get the upper hand.

The first five points for the Brolgas came off a strong maul from the lineout. Army answered soon after with a try of their own.

As the game wore on and fatigue hit as direct buses to the College from most suburbs and neighbouring NSW centres.

To find out more about Merici College see our website at www.merici.act.edu.au or contact the Enrolment Officer Mr Nick Ryan on (02) 6243 4102 or by email: patricia.ryan@merici.act.edu.au

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When Lt Clare Lawton was growing up in country NSW, her brothers needed encouragement to kick a ball with their footy-mad sister. “They may not have agreed with my training style,” she said.

“I was always dragging my younger brother out because at least I could beat him up when I was little.”

Lt Lawton applied to be part of the AFL Women’s draft and was asked to play a trial game in September. “I didn’t think I’ve ever been so nervous,” she said. “I thought I did okay – usually if you think you did okay you did better than that.”

“There’s always that little bit of hope and I thought maybe not this year, maybe next year, but once my name was read out I felt shock and excitement.”

Lt Lawton’s recent drafting to Greater Western Sydney is a long way from her days in the Gaimain-Grong Grong-Matong under 12s side.

She only played with the side for a year before being made to wait to play in the women’s league. “Luckily I’m pretty tall so I managed to sneak in when I was 14,” she said. “I played a season in Wagga Wagga but had to drop it again for school and didn’t pick it up again until I joined the Army.”

After joining the military, Lt Lawton played for the Army and ADF sides. “The Navy girls always give us a hard run,” she said.

“But with the ADF side everyone comes together and when we play the Emergency Services in particular, it’s always a tough hit-out.”

Greater Western Sydney is a long way from the Greater Western Sydney Giants side. “They may not have agreed with my training style,” she said. “But with the ADF side everyone comes together and when we play the Emergency Services in particular, it’s always a tough hit-out.”

Pte Heather Anderson, drafted to the Adelaide Crows

PTE Heather Anderson had just spent 10 months recovering from a shoulder injury when she decided to attend an AFL Women’s talent search. The soldier, from 1CHB, was hoping to return to the field in 2018 but decided to try out anyway. “I broke the AFL Women’s beep test record – I got to level 14.5,” she said.

“The level of tenacity, physicality and fitness in ADF sides is on a whole different level to what I’ve seen before,” she said. “I joined at the end of the year so I didn’t miss much of the season, she said. “When I arrived at my unit I got straight back into footy again.”

She is now posted to 2/14 LHR (QMI), and Pte Kate Lutkins, drafted to the Brisbane Lions

THE journey of Pte Kate Lutkins into the AFL Women’s comp didn’t start with her kicking a Sherrin around the park in her home city of Brisbane.

“I played soccer with some mates and they said ‘come and play Aussie rules, it’s good fun’,” she said. “I loved it – it was higher intensity and more physical.”

At 21, Pte Lutkins first took the field for the Sherwood Magpies in 2008 and continued playing for Queensland sides until joining the Army two years ago.

“I joined the end of the year so I didn’t miss much of the season,” she said. “When I arrived at my unit I got straight back into footy again.”

From left, Lt Clare Lawton, of 4 Regt RAA, Pte Kate Lutkins, of 2/14 LHR (QMI), and Pte Heather Anderson, of 1CHB. The three soldiers will play in the AFL national women’s competition next year.
Rivalry heats up

Army dominates Air Force in rugby league at Amberley

Cpl Max Bree

SOLDIERS of RAAF Base Amberley were too tough for their Air Force brethren during a rugby league match-up on November 4.

A combined Army team beat the Air Force team 36-28 during a dry and hot game played in four 20-minute quarters on the base oval.

Air Force was two tries up in the first quarter and a see-sawing cavalcade of tries and conversions followed for the next two.

Army team captain Sgt Paul Devir, of 1 Bde, said his side ran out expecting to make short work of the Air Force.

“Tackles,” he said. “The humidity and heat was just extreme,” he said.

“We moved the ball a little bit better and cleaner going forward.”

1 Bde team captain Sig Daniel Russell said it was pretty emotional but the 1 Bde team just couldn’t get the result that they wanted.

“Under incredibly hot conditions of 34 degrees and about 95 per cent humidity, 7 Bde played an open brand of footy with lots of long kicks into the forward line, which probably saved their legs,” he said.

7 Bde team captain Lts Dale Chivas said it was a tight game but the team was able to work through the heat.

“The humidity and heat was just extreme,” he said.

“We tried to stick with winning the contest over the ball but they just banged it in long,” he said.

7 Bde team captain Lts Dale Chivas said it was a tough game but the team was able to work through the heat.

“We moved the ball a little bit better and cleaner going forward.”

Capt Dean Muller

UNDER scorching conditions, 7 Bde’s men’s Aussie rules team fought out a gutsy win over 1 Bde team in the inter-brigade sporting championships held at TIO Stadium in Darwin on November 10.

7 Bde defeated their rivals 10-9-69 to 8-4-52 in a tough and physical game, with both sides trading blows until 7 Bde managed to pull away in the closing moments of the last quarter.

Australian Army Football Association President Maj-Gen Gus McLachlan was impressed at the physicality and grit displayed by both teams in a game of contrasting styles.

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ADF cricketers take to the Sydney Cricket Ground on Remembrance Day

ADF cricket team captain Cpl Rachel Martin hits a cover drive during the Remembrance Day match at the Sydney Cricket Ground. Photo by AB Bonny Gassner

Cpl Sebastian Beurich

THE ADF men’s and women’s cricket teams realised a childhood dream when they stepped out onto the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) to play against the NSW Governor’s XI team on Remembrance Day.

Originally starting in the early 1990s, the annual match ceased in 1995. Earlier this year, NSW Governor Gen David Hurley (retd) invited the ADF to resume the tradition.

In keeping with Remembrance Day ceremony, the matches paused at 11am for a minute’s silence while a bugler played the Last Post and Reveille.

Captain of the ADF women’s team Cpl Rachel Martin, of 6 Avn Regt, said the match was a fantastic experience for everyone involved.

“Getting to play the game I love, not only with the ADF team but on Remembrance Day and at the SCG, was great,” she said.

“There are only three women’s cricket games being played at the SCG this year, and for one of those to be our game was pretty amazing.

“We did some training with ex-Australian players Michelle Goszko and Lisa Sthalekar the week before the game, so seeing them on the field – on the opposite team – meant there was a bit of good-hearted banter.

“It was fantastic to be playing up-and-coming state and Australian players. A few of the women on our team who have only been playing services cricket for a year or two got to experience the SCG and some solid competition.”

While neither ADF team managed to beat their opponents, Flt-Lt Jarrod Moxey said the game was about exposing some of the newer members, on both sides, to a high level of cricket.

“The Governor’s team was definitely a step up from what we are used to playing against, but we weren’t completely outclassed,” he said.

“For me, it was a boyhood dream to walk out and play on the SCG.”