IN THE DARK OF NIGHT

Aircrew fly into Iraq in blackness to safely drop troops and supplies  Pages 8-9

 Caf farewells personnel  P3
 Orion crew finds lost fishermen  P6
 Sniffing out trouble during explosive exercise  P12-13
FLGOFF Nat Giles

THE ADF’s Service Warrant Officers took to the skies recently. The familiarisation flights were conducted as part of a continuing campaign by the Service Warrant Officers to better understand the roles in the three services to improve the way the Services work together, and to understand the differing experiences of each Service.

Aircrew from No. 77 Squadron at RAAF Base Williamtown took RSM-A WO David Ashley, WO-N Martin Holzberger and WOFF-AF Mark Pentreath on the flight of their lives in an F/A-18A Hornet on May 25.

The Service Warrant Officers spent the day attending No. 2 Expeditionary Health Squadron for their pre-flight medical, before heading to Aircraft Life Support for their fitting. They attended mission briefings for around an hour before a 12.30pm take off. WOFF-AF Pentreath said he felt a bit apprehensive about the flight, but was excited to put Air Force on show to his counterparts.

“I am nervous, but excited about the flight, and I am especially proud to be showing the other Service Warrant Officers how the Air Force works as a team, how a squadron operates together and how the many areas contribute to deliver Air Power,” he said.

All three Service Warrant Officers refused to eat before the flight, even though they were assured it was better to eat something. They all made it through the flight with stomachs intact – which is quite uncommon – especially as they were thrown around a fair bit and faced up to 7G.

While being briefed on the possibility of blacking out during the flight, WO Ashley said “I wouldn’t mind a little kip as I don’t get much sleep in my job!”

“I’m really excited about this flight. It really is a once in a lifetime opportunity,” he said.

All three warrant officers were amazed at the amount of effort it takes just for one mission to go ahead.

“I was really surprised by the technical requirement just to get dressed, it takes a lot of time and has many complex aspects to it,” WO Holzberger said.

A FULL tax exemption now also applies to military personnel serving on non-warlike Operations Manitou, Accordian, Okra (Zone B) and Augury in the Middle East Region.

Following the government’s approval earlier this year, ADF members serving in these locations have been formally granted a full tax exemption under section 23AD of the Income Tax Assessment Act.

Previously, the full tax exemption only applied to those serving on Operation Highroad in Afghanistan and Operation Okra in Iraq.

IMPORTANTLY, the tax exemption will be back-dated to the start of each operation and will help to standardise tax treatment for all ADF personnel deployed in the Middle East Region.

The tax exemption will also apply to personnel who previously served on Operations Manitou, Accordian, Okra (Zone B) or Augury, but have since ceased serving on those operations.

About 5500 ADF members will be affected by these changes, which will begin to be applied from July 2. There is no change to the existing tax exemption status for ADF personnel serving on Operations Aslan, Marukka, Palate II or Paladin.
CAF AIRMSHL Geoff Brown has expressed his thanks to all Air Force staff for their contribution to Air Force ahead of his hand over of command on July 3. He said that whether staff were permanent, reserve, APS, contractors or an industry partner they all represent the very best of Air Force values.

“I can not leave without expressing my heartfelt thanks to every one of you for your support over the past 35 years,” he said.

Reflecting on Air Force achievements, AIRMSHL Brown said he was proud of all that Air Force had achieved recently.

“We have been operating at a very high tempo from strike, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and air-to-air refuelling operations in Iraq; to a diverse range of border protection, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and recovery missions; as well as leading a multinational search and rescue effort to locate the missing Malaysian Airlines Flight MH370.”

“We have never been a more balanced and more capable force. It makes me incredibly proud of all of the major choices we have made in procurement, force structure, doctrine and training, over the past decade.

“Very few Air Forces in the world could have achieved what we did, as quickly as we did. Our Air Force is one of the most capable in the world.”

CAF said it had taken many years of major capability planning, transition and training to set RAAF on the path to become a fifth generation Air Force.

On July 3, the command of Air Force will transfer to AIRMSHL Leo Davies.

“I leave Air Force knowing that we are on an exciting path for the future, and Air Force is in the capable hands of AIRMSHL Davies who will continue Plan Jericho,” AIRMSHL Brown said.

To win in such a challenging environment, we need to transform Air Force into an integrated, networked force, that provides advanced air power effects to the joint force.

The aims of Jericho will not be achieved by Air Force in isolation. As we progress along this journey we will engage with government, Navy, Army, other defence groups, industry and our international allies and partners.

Plan Jericho will provide an overarching framework for Air Force transformation, and detailed implementation plans for the subordinate projects and tasks required to achieve our goal of fighting and winning in the information age.

CAF AIRMSHL Geoff Brown addresses troops from Combat Support Unit 11, part of Joint Task Force 633, at Al Minhad Airbase during a brief visit. Photo: SGT Mick Davis

I leave Air Force & I am very proud to be part of a fighting force which has demonstrated in every way that we are the most effective and capable Air Force in the world.

I can not leave without expressing my heartfelt thanks to every one of you for your support over the past 35 years.”

Thanks for your service Chief
Solid progress for F-35

Kyri Peck

THERE has been more exciting progress for the Joint Strike Fighter Program as it records multiple new achievements.

An Australian F-35A flew its 100th sortie in June, and in May six US Marine Corps F-35B aircraft completed shipboard operational testing on board USS Wasp.

A35-002, one of the two Australian F-35As operating out of Luke Air Force Base, in Phoenix, Arizona, flew its 100th sortie at the hands of US pilot MAJ Matt Olson and achieved its 100th sortie at the hands of US pilots.

The jets completed 108 sorties and 108 flights, and are part of the pool of F-35As at the F-35 International Pilot Centre at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona,” he said.

The program as a whole is firming up and gaining new momentum, he said.

LTGEN Bogdan said.

Initial Operational Capability for US Marine Corps’ F-35B variant is scheduled for this month.

Director Logistics and Sustainment from the F-35 US Joint Program Office Todd Mellon visited Australia in May and said the entire F-35 program was progressing well.

"On the whole, the F-35 Program is in good shape. From now until 2020 we are going to increase production from around 35 aircraft to 160 aircraft per year - which is almost one aircraft per working day, demonstrating how the F-35 Program is maturing," Mr Mellon said.

Right now we are looking closely at how we are going to shape the global sustainment of the entire JSF fleet and how the F-35 partners are going to fit into that model so we can provide the most affordable and available supply chain," he said.

The F-35s are being produced under an operational test and evaluation model.

AVM Deeb said under this process the aircraft were tested and assessed for their design, performance and supportability in realistic operational conditions.

“This model reduces risk over such a large acquisition program, such as JSF, where there will be more than 3000 aircraft produced. By using this model it also means that issues are identified, addressed and resolved along the way,” AVM Deeb said.

“Now the program is increasing rates of production and development is getting further along, there is more stability in the program. We are seeing some important milestones being achieved,” he said.

The first two Australian aircraft are due to arrive in Australia in 2018.

Anjali Skandaraja

EVERY night about 100,000 Australians sleep on the streets.

To help raise money and awareness to ease some of the suffering of the thousands of Australians who suffer cold nights in the open, the CEO Sleepout event will see Commandant ADFA AIRCDRE Alan Clements, DCA MAJGEN Rick Burr and Commandant Australian Defence College MAJGEN Simone Wilkie participated in the St Vincent de Paul Society CEO Sleepout.

ADFA hosted the event on June 18 and AIRCDRE Clements was honoured to take part.

What I gained from the CEO Sleepout last year had such an impact on me that I did not hesitate to participate again this year,” he said. “I believe it is important to reflect on what life may have been like if it had taken a different turn, and to help those in need as well as we can.”

OCDT Zachary Hacker, a third year Army trainee at ADFA, organised a Sleepout for cadets and midshipmen at ADFA, aiming to raise funds and awareness for the issue of homelessness.

“I volunteered to run the ADFA Sleepout as I wanted to get the ADFA community involved in an event that illustrates the positive contribution we make to the community,” he said.

The link to make a donation in support of this cause is www.ceosleepout.org.au/ceosleepout/act-ceos/alan-clements-australian-defence-force-royal-austr/
Eamon Hamilton

THE air-to-air refuelling (AAR) test program has been completed between the E-7A Wedgetail and a KC-30A Multi Role Tanker Transport.

Conducted by the Aircraft Research and Development Unit (ARDU), the program involved seven sorts being flown off the coast of northern NSW from June 1-11.

The KC-30A’s boom made 118 ‘dry’ and six ‘wet’ contacts with the Wedgetail, and transferred 20 tonnes of fuel.

CO No. 2 Squadron WGCDR Christian Martin said air-to-air refuelling was a force multiplier for the Wedgetail fleet.

“Air-to-air refuelling considerably increases the Wedgetail’s range and endurance, allowing us to provide combat and control, and air defences management over longer periods,” WGCDR Martin said.

“This has been demonstrated in the Middle East Region under Operation Okra, where RAAF Wedgetails have used foreign air force tankers to fly extended sorties.”

During one Operation Okra sortie, a RAAF Wedgetail received fuel from an American tanker, flying continuously for 16 hours.

“Once the test program results are assessed an initial clearance is expected to be given to Wedgetail crews to begin refuelling training flights with the KC-30A,” WGCDR Martin said.

This test program built on the first AAR flights flown by No. 33 Squadron between two KC-30A’s in May.

Clearing the Wedgetail as a receiver increases the number of aircraft with whom 33SQN can conduct boom training.

“Any aircraft damage as an outcome of, or an excessively lengthy test campaign, could otherwise disproportionately affect overall Air Force capability,” SQNLDR Bowes said.

“Success was achieved through detailed planning and thoroughly considered risk management.”

In the past, RAAF Wedgetails have refuelled from American and Singaporean tankers, while RAAF KC-30A’s crews used their boom on other KC-30A’s in May.

“The objective of the campaign was to validate that the KC-30A and E-7A were functionally compatible,” SQNLDR Bowes said.

“We also assessed the handling qualities of the two aircraft in proximity to ensure they were sufficiently adequate throughout the envelope.

“The very nature of AAR requires two aircraft to fly precisely in very close proximity for an extended period to effect transfer of fuel.

“Inadequate handling qualities could easily translate to a mid-air collision in an operational scenario.”

SQNLDR Bowes had experience with flying the Wedgetail as a receiver behind four-engine KC-135, which is much smaller than the KC-30A.

“The Wedgetail handling behind a KC-30 is quite different to that behind a KC-135; some aspects are much better while there are other aspects are not as good,” he said.

Fortunately we were able to demonstrate that the pairing was compatible within the tested envelope.

“As leader of the test team and E-7A test pilot, my highest priorities for conduct of the campaign were to be safe and efficient in test, which is a common philosophy among test operators at ARDU.

“The AAR test program requires a ‘crawl-walk-run’ approach to bring both aircraft into contact.

“Much like formation flying, the receiver pilot will align visual cues inside their cockpit with features and markings on the tanker.

“The cues are entirely different as they are unique to each tanker,” SQNLDR Bowes said.

“The first flight was proximality only, and in the second flight we explored a single altitude air-speed combination into contact, and manoeuvring in contact.

“The next five flights we expanded the altitude and airspeed envelope while in contact, culminating in a full load on fuel of the last flight, and contacts during dusk and night.”

First wholly-Air Force KC-30A refuelling success

CONNECTED in flight at more than 500km per hour, an E-7A Wedgetail and a KC-30A have a combined weight of more than 250 tonnes.

Squadron Leader Paul Bowes, the E-7A test pilot for Aircraft Research and Development Unit (ARDU), had the responsibility of flying the majority of the test flights.

He flew 105 of the 124 contacts during dusk and night, with two qualified flying instructors from 2SQN flying the remaining contacts.

SQNLDR Bowes said the E-7A AAR test program involving the KC-30A boom system, and as such we collectively learnt a lot in planning and conducting these tests.

Both the KC-30A and E-7A are in high operational demand, meaning ARDU’s test program had to be as efficient as it was effective.

Talisman Sabre ready to kick off in Queensland

LS Jayson Tufrey

EXERCISE Talisman Sabre 15 (TS15), the largest combined biennial military exercise undertaken by the ADF, will run from July 5-21.

The exercise provides invaluable training opportunities for personnel from both countries and each branch of their military to train together and enhance their combined and joint warfighting skills.

A small number of personnel from the Japan Ground Self Defence Force will embed with US units and New Zealand Defence Force will exercise at part of the Australian contingent.

The scale and intensity of TS15 will be similar to previous activities in the series. This year, the focus of the exercise, particularly air and maritime operations, will be in the North Australian Range Complex, Timor and Arafura seas.

A number of land activities will continue to be carried out in training areas in the East Australian Range Complex.

A booming outcome

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ORION CREW SAVE THE DAY

Jamie Abbott

It was all in a day’s work for a No. 92 Wing crew, but in the eyes of three stranded mariners adrift in the Torres Strait they were heroes.

The AP-3C Orion aircraft detected the mariners in a 5m fishing boat in the Torres Strait on June 16. The boat had been displaying an orange “V” distress signal.

“The AP-3C Orion and the Edinburgh-based crew were tasked to support the search and rescue mission through the Australian Maritime Safety Authority,” CDR JTF 639 Air Component Coordination Element SQNLDR Troy Holmes said the Queensland Police were directed to the vessel’s location, about 35 nautical miles north-west of Moa Island.

“An hour into searching the area we had a possible sighting of a drifting fishing boat, which we then confirmed,” he said.

In the ocean below were three people waving their arms in excitement, after finally being discovered.

“The crew stayed on task for as long as it took to ensure those below were safe. It was a great job by all involved,” SQNLDR Holmes said.

OC 92WG GPCAPT Phil Champion said the AP-3C Orion continued to maintain a robust long-range search and rescue capability.

“We’ve been involved in many successful rescues in the past ranging from local maritime incidents to major national emergencies,” GPCAPT Champion said.

The AP-3C’s unique capabilities, particularly its sophisticated sensors, allowed the search zone to be swept quickly and accurately, and the located men’s condition to be relayed immediately to the Rescue Coordination Centre – Australia, leading to their safe recovery.

“The aircraft and crew were able to shift their focus from routine maritime surveillance sorties conducted on previous days to a rapidly tasked search and rescue mission involving multiple ships and aircraft from different agencies,” he said.

“The Queensland Police were able to rescue the crew and recover the vessel within a very short time after it was discovered by the Orion.

“It’s something we train for, but no doubt the crew will be very satisfied to see the rescue was brought to a swift and successful conclusion and three fishermen are home with their families.”

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You are expected to perform right away and it is mentally and physically tough but also rewarding.

– FLTLT John,
Combat Controller Team
course student

Pushing the limits

FLGOFF Nat Giles

FOURTEEN students are being put through their paces in one of the toughest courses of their careers as they take on the challenge of becoming a combat controller at No. 4 Squadron.

The course aims to graduate members who are capable of successfully completing commando selection, and is the starting point for other courses so participants can graduate as qualified Combat Controller Team (CCT) members.

CCT intake 10 runs from May 11 to July 10 and the course is designed to prepare personnel for commando selection in October.

The CCT intake trains members in areas such as weapons, field skills, physical and strength conditioning, navigation, first aid, mission planning and close air support.

CO 4SQN WGCDR Harvey Reynolds said once students have successfully completed the CCT intake and associated courses to become qualified, they can expect to be employed across a range of positions such as training opportunities with US Air Force, special forces, overseas deployments and exercises.

“Although this course represents our 10th iteration of the course, the capability is still relatively new to Air Force and continues to grow and develop as we qualify more CCTs,” he said.

“There are some fantastic opportunities within 4SQN and I encourage anyone to come and be part of it.”

This intake comes from a range of musterings and specialisations, such as aircraft technicians, joint battlefield airspace controllers, engineers and airfield defence guards. There are also students from Army Infantry Corps taking part. FLTLT John said he mentally prepared for the rigours of this training continuum and also to meet the physical conditioning required for the course.

“So far, the intake training is exceeding my expectations,” he said.

“The training is fast paced and progressive and is easily achievable for anyone with the right preparation.”

“A typical day usually involves two 90-minute PT sessions followed by practical hands-on skills training.”

“You are expected to perform right away and it is mentally and physically tough, but also rewarding. The instructors are professional and give you all the help you need.”

LAC Alex said he completed the 14-week fitness program from the 4SQN website to prepare for the course and also honed his navigation and field skills.

“We do practical lessons in things like weapons, field skills, navigation and movement. Usually we will practice these again after dinner so we get both day and night training,” he said.

WGCDR Reynolds said members who want to give CCT a try don’t have to be super fit before they start the course.

“We provide PT sessions which ensure members are at the physical fitness standard to pass the selection,” he said.

“All students have dedicated six months of preparation before selection, which is rarely available to other members of the ADF!”

If you would like more information about CCT recruitment and selection please see the 4SQN website at http://intranet.defence.gov.au/raafweb/sites/4sqn or send an email to 4SQN at CombatControl@defence.gov.au

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CPL Max Bree

ABOUT 34 semi-trailer loads worth of cargo have been strapped and shipped around the Middle East Region after a new Air Load Team started work in April to support the establishment of the Task Group Taji training mission.

OC Air Load Team FLTLT Casey Rogan said the team moved about 680 tonnes, enough to fill close to 34 three-axle semi-trailers, in their first six weeks of operation.

Up-armoured Protected Mobility Vehicles, Unimog cargo trucks, ground stores, water and TVs were among the stores sent into Iraq.

“We’re setting up a whole new camp so we’re sending in everything they need to make that happen,” FLTLT Rogan said.

“We still had to support Kandahar, Kabul and other places; there were simultaneous operations going on, but the priority was Taji.”

Before anything could be moved into the country, all the paperwork had to be correct.

The team also needed to respond quickly when other things weren’t going to plan.

“Sometimes we’ll do a load then find there’s a problem with the aircraft,” he said.

“That means unloading that aircraft and re-loading into another.”

After starting with nine air loaders, the team was boosted to support the push into Taji.

FLTLT Casey said the team knew what they were in for before arriving in the Middle East to start work.

“Since receiving extra people we now average 12-hour days on two shifts so there’s 24-hour support.

“With a small team on a big operation, we know that if we don’t do the work, no one else will, so we manage fatigue as best we can.”

FLTLT Casey said the team knew what they were in for before arriving in the Middle East to start work.

“Morale is still high,” he said.

“The guys have worked well beyond any reasonable expectations of them and they’ve achieved miracles over here.

“They’re very proud of the work they’ve done; they know the bigger picture and that without their work the flow-on effects won’t happen.”

LAC Benjamin Nginyo, left, and Ryan Fuller push a pallet into a No. 37 Squadron C-130J Hercules destined for Iraq.

We’re setting up a whole new camp so we’re sending in everything they need...

– FLTLT Casey Rogan, OC Air Load Team
AIRCREWS have been flying missions long into the night and early morning, using the cover of darkness to bring in supplies to Australian personnel.

One of those was pilot FLTLT Stephen, who said aircrew had their eyes peeled for threats such as small arms fire.

“We just have to be on top of our game and follow the least threatening route into and out of Baghdad,” FLTLT Stephen said.

One of the recent missions was for HQ JTF 633’s Middle East Region’s Air Component Coordination Element (ACCE-MER) to insert Task Group Taji to its new home north-west of Baghdad in Iraq.

ACCE-MER’s plans officer SQNLDR James said about 22 tonnes of cargo, equivalent to about five African elephants, was flown in by a RAAF C-130J Hercules and delivered to Taji.

Taji is the combined Australian-New Zealand Army training force contributing to the international Building Partner Capacity (BPC) training mission in Iraq, with the Anzac team based at the Taji Military Complex.

Local logistics were a factor for the aircraft missions flown in Iraq, which required many weeks of planning.

“A carefully considered and formulated plan was the key to make sure Task Group Taji’s insertion went smoothly,” SQNLDR James said.

C-130J loadmaster SGT Xavier said during his deployment he’d helped move in everything from ground stores to up-armoured SUVs and ammunition.

“A lot of sorties were at our maximum aircraft load capability – there wasn’t a lot of room to move,” he said.

FLTLT Stephen said pilots were heavily reliant on load masters like SGT Xavier for situational awareness, since most of the missions were flown with night vision goggles (NVGs).

“It reduces our situational awareness because NVGs take a lot of our peripheral vision away,” FLTLT Stephen said.

“It’s easy to become really focused – you need to think outside of what you’re seeing ahead of you.

“You do depend on the crew to feed you information about what’s going on around the aircraft.”

But SQNLDR James said while it took skill and planning, it was rewarding to be involved.

“Going in on NVGs onto a runway with no landing aids was pretty satisfying for the aircrew,” he said.

Despite the increased tempo required for setting up Taji, SGT Xavier was used to moving large amounts of equipment.

“We have these workloads spike up all the time,” he said.

“The humanitarian assistance missions we have previously done have been at a similar tempo.”

FLTLT Stephen said it was great to be piloting a Hercules anywhere in the world.

“I love being up in the air and just being in control of an aircraft that a lot of people don’t get the opportunity to travel in, let alone actually pilot,” he said.

“There’s a sense of achievement you get from doing work over here and continuing to support the Army and all the good work they’re doing as well.”

The Task Group Taji move required around 100 flying hours during the insertion.

Pilots get ready for a night flight in a C-130J Hercules from Baghdad International Airport in Iraq.

Loadmasters prepare to push out a cargo pallet at Al Asad Airbase in Iraq.

Loadmaster WOFF Ryan inspects cargo aboard a C-130J Hercules during a mission into Iraq.

Airfield engineers are keeping ops moving in the Middle East.

Construction work at Australia’s main operating base for the RAAF Air Task Group in the Middle East Region.

Photo: SGT Pete
Military working dogs and their handlers have been keeping Exercise Aces North in the air, by securing the No. 1 Squadron F/A-18F Super Hornets that have been streaking through the clouds in the Top End.

Personnel from No. 1 Security Forces Squadron (1SECFOR), at RAAF Base Williamtown, deployed to RAAF Base Darwin for May and June, working with Air Force Security (AFSEC) members.

Rifle Flight commander FLGOFF Mark Rankin said 1SECFOR is responsible for providing security detachments (SECDET) to Deployed Mission Planning Facilities (DMPF) in Australia and on operations.

“The SECDET are responsible for providing a layered security effect to these facilities and are critical to their certification and operations,” he said.

A combination of active and passive defence measures were used to secure the DMPF, such as Protected Mobility Vehicles and a Sniper Marksman Observer Group.

Air Defence Guards and AFSEC were working together to secure the facilities at Aces North, which allowed them to conduct force protection measures across a full spectrum of operations.

“We have really adopted a one-team approach here at Aces North, working closely with the AFSEC members as part of the SECFOR team,” FLGOFF Rankin said.

“Everyone is working together and integrating well and this has resulted in a balanced and well developed team.”

1SECFOR was the first security detachment to deploy on Operation Okra in support of the Super Hornet platform with 1SQN.

“1SECFOR has developed and continues to forge an excellent working relationship with 1SQN since our deployment to the Middle East with the squadron last year,” FLGOFF Rankin said.

1SECFOR members are armed during their training and on exercises such as Aces North so the squadrons are used to seeing security personnel around their aircraft with weapons.

“We utilise a train-as-you-fight mentality and this ensures that when we deploy with the squadrons on operations, nothing is new to anyone,” FLGOFF Rankin said.

“It also helps to demonstrate the wide range of force protection capabilities 1SECFOR can provide.”

LACW Jessica Holmes with military working dog Onyx, from No. 2 Security Force in Darwin, patrol aircraft during Exercise Aces North 15.

Inset, LAC Duncan Bailey and LACW Zoe Giles, of 1SECFOR, with military working dog Xanto, patrol the F/A-18F Super Hornet flight line.

Photos: SGT Rob Mitchell
Scrubbing up well

One of Air Force’s smallest teams look after one of our biggest fleets in a labor of love that spans the decades

ASED in a hangar at the southern end of Amberley is a small team of five dedicated reservists who provide technical support for one of our Air Force’s largest fleets.

The Static Display Aircraft Support Section (SDASS) have a great love for Air Force’s aging beauties and spend their days preserving every inch of the 50 aircraft located across the continent that have long since given up their flying roles and now stand as testament to Air Force’s proud heritage.

The SDASS members were deployed to RAAF Base Townsville in June to repair and recondition the paintwork on the Caribou gate guard.

FSGT Jeff Ryan, the OIC of “Team Caribou” says, they do their intricate and at time painstaking work to restore the RAAF heritage aircraft “because if we don’t, these magnifi-cent examples of flying machines will be lost and the general public and former RAAF members who maintained and flew them will be all the poorer for their passing.”

“The old aircraft give up their secrets slowly and present the main-tainers with a huge range of challenges that demand and bring out the best that we have to offer,” he said.

“We make them look as they were when they rolled out of the factory. The hand skills of older former PAF personnel come to the fore in this environment.”

The SDASS team primarily consists of an aircraft surface finisher (ASURFIN), two aircraft technicians, an equipment specialist and a logistics officer. They travel the country to inspect the assets and perform needed refurbishments, using spare parts, publications and good old-fashioned technical know-how.

SGT Power is the ASURFIN and says the job is challenging. He and the team rely on base support and augmentation from seconded reserve personnel.

“We take everything we need with us on a Mack truck and trailer fitted with 20-foot containers,” he said.

“During our baseline inspection we develop a condition report, noting damage and any repairs required.”

“We take portable power and air as the aircraft are located at the entrance to bases or in open areas that do not offer normal maintenance services.”

SGT Power is most proud of is the Neptune at RAAF Base Townsville.

“We pulled it to pieces, took it to an ordnance loading area, put it together again, painted it, and towed it back to the front gate. Townsville had two damaged Neptunes and one was not economic to repair, so we made one out of two,” he said.

“The most challenging aircraft were the first ones we did at RAAF Base Wagga. We had never done anything like that before, but we learnt a lot of lessons there.”

Since 2011 the team has completed 10 refurbishments, and by the end of this year they will have completed 12.

To look after the structural integrity and appearance of this fleet, Director GPCAPT Dave Richardson started up the SDA refurbishment program four years ago under WGCDR Peter Phillips.

He said it’s not all painting, repairing and walking away. The repair teams must take note of the environ-ment each aircraft is in.

“Wagga has a wide temperature range so the water that pools in the gravel underneath evaporates and condenses on to the undersurfaces, which promotes corrosion,” GPCAPT Richardson said.

“Nearby hazards like water sprinklers, tall trees and ride-on mowers all cause problems, so we’ve developed specifications and standards on how and where the aircraft should be displayed.”

Headed by SQNLDR Steve Currie, the team focuses its efforts to keep the RAAF’s gate guards safe for public display. Keeping them looking good is vital for Air Force’s reputation, and central responsibility for these ageing airframes was passed to the Directorate of Air Force Heritage (DAFH) at the direction of the RAAF Heritage Advisory Council, chaired by DCAF.

WGCDR Phillips said many of the airframes have been left in situ for decades with very little attention.

The SDA condition reports together with the preferences of base execu-tives allow DAFH and the Heritage Advisory Council to prioritise the workload on the SDASS team.

“What the SDASS team achieves is all the more remarkable given the conditions under which they work, the age of the airframes and the limited resources available,” he said.

One deployment at Darwin involved refurbishing two ageing Bloodhound missiles, a Mirage jet and Mirage tail fin over a period of three-and-a-half months.

“It’s their dedication and enthu-siasm that makes this possible,” WGCDR Phillips said.

GPCAPT Richardson takes great pride in the DAFH team.

“I love what we do and I reckon this is the best job I’ve had in the RAAF,” he said.

“The rewarding part is making a difference to the way Air Force presents itself to the public – noth-ing says ‘Air Force’ like a smart and authentic-looking aircraft out the front of a base.”

As the only ASURFIN on the SDASS team, SGT Power feels the pressure.

“We try to get help from ASURFINS from other squadrons where we work, but when you are at a base that doesn’t have them, the paint-ing is all up to me,” he said.

DAFH is always on the lookout for technical members who are interested in joining the reserves and whose skill sets could be put to good use. Enquiries can be passed to AirForce.Heritage@defence.gov.au
The hunt is on to save lives by digging deep to find the hidden explosives before a big event in Canberra. This was the scenario explosive detection dogs and their handlers faced during Exercise Taipan Detector, LS Jayson Tufrey reports.

A WET nose diligently follows the odour that leads it to its deadly quarry, potentially saving thousands of lives – all in a day’s work for an explosives detection dog (EDD).

Air Force has just conducted its inaugural Exercise Taipan Detector, which certifies EDDs to perform their primary role of locating explosives, in Canberra from June 8, involving eight EDD teams who came from as far afield as RAAF Bases Williamtown, Edinburgh and Amberley, and covered a variety of scenarios.

The EDDs are exclusively trained to take in a range of odours associated with a variety of explosive materials and areas and locate a variety of explosives such as commercial and military grade, as well as home-made explosives that are being used by terror groups and insurgents alike.

CPL Patrick Yeates, of 1SECFOR, who was conducting assessments during the exercise, said there was a lot to take into account: “There’s a plan before going into an area and then there’s the conduct of the mission – there’s a lot of variables that can change how you run that mission, so you need to think on your feet,” he said.

“There is a lot of different areas searching a venue like this, lots of nooks and crannies, it’s very complex. You also have to remember where you have been and where you still have to search, in comparison to an open area where you can segment it and break it down and keep a better visual over the area.

“We’re also very fortunate to be in an environment that is extremely rewarding in the training value we attain. It’s good to get access to somewhere like this, it’s not something we get to do every day.”

Exercise organiser SGT David Steels, of 1SECFOR, said he hoped to see this annual exercise evolve to include Army and other government agencies.

“Today we have observers from Australian Customs and Border Protection, AFP and state police services such as New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania. It’s great to see this become a centralised certificated exercise so every agency can have an EDD team certificated on the same page, to the same standardised level,” he said.

“The purposes of today’s exercise at GIO Stadium is to take the teams to search a large venue such as that they would find at G-20 or CHOGM – the varied areas we are searching during the week are vast, with everything from the Majura Training Area, to office complexes such as Russell and Brindabella Business Park.

“The biggest challenge from a planning perspective is timing issues and venue changes, but we in real life flexibility is key and the ability to adapt and overcome these issues to get the job done.”

Off the back of this first exercise, SGT Steels said there were lots of lessons to be learnt, but overall he was happy with the performance of the teams.

“Talk to the guys after these tasks is great as we have drawn a lot of things off them that they haven’t even been aware of themselves,” SGT Steels said.

Before Ex Taipan Detector the handlers were concentrating on dog work. For this exercise we had to train the handlers correct planning before conducting the searches. The handlers are given their mission brief the night before, they formulate a plan and then have to back them up the next day.

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A FORMER ‘10-pound Pom’ who arrived in Australia on a working holiday in October, 1962 and joined the Air Force in January, 1963, has retired after 52 years service.

GPCAPT John Ward has led a full Air Force career, he helped redevelop RAAF Base Amberley, has worked with Sabres, Neptunes, Mirages, Winjeels and Macchis and he recovered an F-111 from double engine failure one night which resulted in the existing check list personnel still use today.

GPCAPT Ward, latterly of RAAF Base Amberley, spent 35 of those years with the PAF and the remainder as a reservist, serving at many Air Force bases around Australia and south-east Asia.

In 2005 he took up the post of Amberley redevelopment officer, liaising with various agencies and contractors on the modernisation of Amberley. He held the position until his retirement on May 14, one day before his 71st birthday.

During his service, GPCAPT Ward has seen dozens of changes in Air Force. “I completed my recruit training with the 303 rile and since then the SLR has been and gone, and now we use the Store,” he said.

The A-Model Hercules was the main strategic transport aircraft and an A-model flew me from Butterworth to Vung Tau, South Vietnam, then a Caribou to our base at Phan Rang up country. “When boarding the Caribou I looked for a patched bullet hole in the airframe and sat in that seat.”

A DC-3 flew him back to Butterworth to recommence a posting with No. 77 Squadron Sabres from where he had left. GPCAPT Ward had many great experiences during his long career, but a few stood out more than others. “I was in Butterworth and Singapore with Sabre fighters during the Indonesian Confrontation and later in Ubon, Thailand, with No. 79 Squadron Sabres as fighter cover for the airfield while the USAF Phantoms bombed targets in North Vietnam,” he said.

His posting to No. 2 Squadron Canberras in South Vietnam was another experience and doing what he joined the Air Force to do, as his grandfather had done in WW1 and his father had done in WWII.

In 1964, GPCAPT Ward had tried to join No. 38 Squadron in Richmond to go to Vietnam with Caribous, but too many squadron members wanted to go.

Later training as a pilot, he flew Neptunes out of Townsville with No. 10 Squadron, Mirages out of Williamtown with No. 2 Operational Conversion Unit and 77SQN and Winjeels and Macchis out of Point Cook and Peace.

“I also had two years on loan to the Republic of Singapore Air Force at Changi as an instructor with No.130 Squadron flying Strikemasters,” he said.

After two years at Changi, FLTLT Ward was posted to No. 6 Squadron at Amberley to undergo F-111 conversion.

“I have just over 2500 hours flying the magnificent F-111,” he said.

“I brought an F-111 home after suffering double engine compressor stall while terrain-following at 4000ft at night with ejection a second or so away.”

GPCAPT Ward used his experience to recover engine thrust, resulting in the existing check list actions being changed after the investigation.

Many postings later as OC RAAF Base Tindal, GPCAPT Ward dealt with the 1998 Katherine floods, for which he received the CSC.

He said while aircraft and machines were important, it was the people who make the Air Force.

“Without trained, skilled and motivated people, the Air Force would not be what it is today,” he said.

GPCAPT Ward now intends to spend more time with Annie, his wife of 42 years.

“Life isn’t easy for a service wife and Annie deserves the long service gong and many bars for dedication to her husband and to the Air Force,” he said.
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Rare medallions join memorial

Brave actions in a secret WWII mission will be forever honoured at the Australian War Memorial, SGT Dave Morley writes

A NO. 10 Squadron pilot, killed while attempting to rescue the family of wartime French leader BRIGGEN Charles de Gaulle from occupied France in 1940, was remembered at the Australian War Memorial (AWM) on June 18.

FLTLT John Bell, from Farina in South Australia, joined the Air Force in 1933 and was killed when his Supermarine Walrus amphibious biplane crashed and burned during the top-secret mission on June 18, 1940.

Two commemorative medallions from mayors of French villages, near where he was killed, were presented to the AWM on behalf of his family, by Alan Hall, who has written a book about the incident.

Mr Hall said as a result of his research he was able to get family representatives of all four crew members to go to Brittany on June 18, 2014, for the unveiling of a monument at the crash site.

“The mayor of Ploudaniel had struck his town’s medal, a rare event, one for each of the four crew families, broadly equivalent in status to the keys of the city in importance,” he said.

“The mayor of Carantec, where de Gaulle’s lived, also presented medallions for each of the four families.”

Former 10SQN CO GPCAPT David Hombsch, now Chief of Staff at Headquarters Surveillance and Response Group, said it was important to commemorate events such as this because of its significance to Air Force history.

GPCAPT Hombsch said it was fantastic to be able to attend the hand-over of the French medallions.

“One of the things I was particularly proud of when I was at 10SQN was that I was able to organise for some 10SQN representatives to go to France last year,” he said.

“We’ve now instilled a bit of a tradition with some 10SQN members this year being up at Farina in the Flinders Ranges where a memorial to John Bell is laid, doing some restoration work around the historic town to bring some life back to it.”

AWM Curator Dianne Rutherford said the medallions were something they were thrilled to have in the AWM’s collection.

“It’s particularly important to have items like these in our collection to educate people who weren’t there, especially because there are fewer and fewer people who have the memories or the experience of the objects,” she said.

The reduction-gear case from FLTLT Bell’s Walrus aircraft’s Bristol Pegasus Mk VI radial engine was donated to the AWM in the 1970s after being collected from a field at Ploudaniel by locals in 1940.

XO 10SQN SQNLDR Marcus Watson read FLTLT Bell’s story at the AWM’s Last Post Ceremony that afternoon.

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A RAAF pilot and observer were part of a daring mission to try to save the family of a French general during the Nazi occupation. They never returned. The Office of Air Force History reports:

The German invasion of France was reaching its climactic conclusion in 1940, a representative of the French Government visiting Britain, BRIGGEN Charles de Gaulle, made an impassioned plea via a radio broadcast encouraging France to continue to resist Nazi occupation. That broadcast on June 18, 1940, coincided with a British-led attempt to evacuate BRIGGEN de Gaulle’s wife and children from the French coastal town of Carantec.

Two RAAF members, FLTLT John Bell (pilot) and SGT Charles Harris (observer) were both central to the rescue attempt and to its tragic end. When British authorities became aware that Madame de Gaulle was isolated in Carantec, an area about to be overrun by German forces, they directed the RAF’s Coastal Command to assist in a rescue mission. The plan called for a British agent to be flown into the area by an RAF Walrus aircraft and once there, to escort Madame de Gaulle and the children back to Britain. Both FLTLT Bell and SGT Harris were selected to be part of the crew flying the mission. To date no records can be found indicating why these men were chosen.

The haste in the planning and organisational mission was apparent from the first. While FLTLT Bell and SGT Harris were highly proficient in Walrus operations, both having flown a similar type in Australian service, they had since been posted to the RAAF No. 10 Squadron, flying Sunderland Flying Boats out of Mount Batten, UK. In addition the Walrus aircraft was unarmed and required the fitting of a Vickers gun borrowed from another aircraft, while the RAF radio operator allocated to the mission, CPL Bernard Nowell, was not proficient in the operation of the Walrus’ radio and had never fired the Vickers gun he was supposed to man during the mission.

So secret was the mission, that even the CO of 10SQN was given only the briefest of details.

At 2.55am, June 18, 1940, the Walrus departed Mount Batten. On board was FLTLT Bell, SGT Harris, CPL Nowell and a British agent, later identified as CAPT Norman Hope, a British Army Intelligence officer. This was the last time anyone saw the crew alive. At about 4am, the Walrus was heard near Ploudaniel in France. It circled the area several times in a thick fog. From the ground the only clear evidence of the aircraft was its engine noise. Some eyewitnesses claimed that the aircraft’s engine was on fire. However, the aircraft took off at Mount Batten, it was noted by the ground crew that the exhaust ports illuminated the radial engine with a fiery glow, as there were no flame suppressors fitted to the exhaust pipes.

Other witnesses claimed that the aircraft had been attacked on route. To this day it is still uncertain if the Walrus had been engaged or was on fire. What is certain is that at just after 4am, Bell attempted a landing in a small field near the village of Keranou, however, they struck a small embankment and crashed.

The impact broke the aircraft apart, set the ground on fire and killed the crew. At the graves plot at the Church of Ploudaniel, a monument to a brave attempt to rescue a family at grave risk of capture was opened. While some 42 RAAF members had already died of various causes since the outbreak of WWII, FLTLT Bell’s and SGT Harris’ deaths on June 18, 1940, are significant as they were the first RAAF members to be killed in action.
Trailing off into the distance

Cadets push through water, mud and gruelling hills as they take on the Bicentennial National Trail, SGT Dave Morley writes

POSITIVE attitudes and sheer determination have helped 30 Australian Air Force Cadets and staff from No. 207 Squadron (Nambour) and No. 223 Squadron (Caloundra) conquer a 42km trek along the Bicentennial National Trail.

CWOFF (AAFC) Jakeb Thorgood said the first three hours of the first day were judged to be the most arduous of the gruelling march during Exercise Isurava Dawn.

“We seemed to have crawled with our fully-loaded packs and webbing up a never-ending incline,” he said.

“The initial climb was only our first battle and we knew there would be so many more to come.”

CWOFF (AAFC) Thorgood said the aim of the exercise was to teach the cadets key skills, such as perseverance, teamwork, leadership, navigation and determination.

“We knew this exercise would be hard work and put everyone well out of their comfort zone, where we could truly test their ability to work on these aims,” he said.

“Along our journey there were a few minor injuries, however, the team pulled together and showed great camaraderie, encouraging each other and never showed any signs of giving up.

“The high level of mateship and determination allowed us all to complete the challenge, regardless of the pain and discomfort caused by our packs and boots.”

CWOFF (AAFC) Siovahn Daly said every cadet was challenged by having to take their turn at map reading and navigation skills.

“It’s safe to say by the end of the exercise every cadet was able to tell exactly where they were on the map just by using the few features we had around us,” she said.

“After following the track, developing our navigational and bonding skills, finally day one on the trail was almost over.

“We’d reached the half-way point, roughly 21km into our journey, but just when we thought it was going to get easy another problem arose.

“The camp site where we’d planned to stay was flooded, so our only option was to set up our hoochies in the thick scrub, with what little daylight we had left.”

CWOFF (AAFC) Thorgood said everyone woke up on day two thinking it would be the slower and more exhausting day of the expedition.

“However, the cadets seemed to wake up with a burning drive to get going and smash out the hike ahead,” he said.

“Even those who were still injured were revved up and roaring to go. They all showed an incredible sense of determination, even if it was 5am and freezing cold, and it had never been so evident just how persistent these cadets were to finish what they started.

“Our only real obstacle for the day ahead was a flood crossing, but they jumped that hurdle with no hesitation, using their newly developed teamwork and communication skills.”

According to CWOFF (AAFC) Siovahn Daly, the cadets all completed the difficult trek.

“Every cadet there had accomplished something incredible, and they had also mastered the basic skills we set out to teach them from the very start,” she said.

Thirty Australian Air Force Cadets and staff from 223SQN and 207SQN hiked the Bicentennial National Trail on the Sunshine Coast.

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March-On to good health

THE Directorate General Technical Airworthiness – ADF (DGTA-ADF) tends to approach teamwork in its own unique way and the agency has now developed a concept called March-On, to promote teamwork and raise funds for the charity Soldier On.

March-On is the brainchild of LCDR Andrew Newman and SQNLDR Matthew Taylor who were both looking for a way to support a charity, improve their workplace and enhance the wellbeing of their colleagues.

March-On encourages participants to move out of their comfort zone, by motivating participants to carpool, take public transport, or get to work under their own steam. If they fail to do so they pay a small fine, which they can mitigate with gym time, and then all money raised goes to the charity Soldier On, to assist military personnel in dealing with physical and psychological wounds.

SQNLDR Taylor chose to support Soldier On “because we wanted to raise the awareness and reduce the stigma of talking about these issues in the workplace”.

“The idea was to remind us that the journey can be difficult. Sometimes it’s a little too easy to just get in your car and drive to work.”

By asking DGTA-ADF personnel to be more mindful of how they got to and from work, the idea was to put focus back on the journey.

“Exercising, carpooling and taking public transport puts people out of their comfort zone and has them think about their health, the environment and those around them,” SQNLDR Taylor said.

This year, March-On raised more than $2500 and staff have improved their fitness and helped reduce environmental impacts. The directorate hopes to make it an annual event.

Director General Technical Airworthiness AIRCDRE James Hood was delighted by the enthusiasm shown by personnel.

“It is a great cause,” he said, “and fantastic to see people embracing this unique way to support it.”

“March-On is a great idea that engages body and mind. It encourages positive choices in terms of personal fitness, and environmental responsibility, all the while supporting a very worthwhile charity that is close to the hearts of many military personnel.

“It speaks volumes about the positive culture staff work hard to build.”

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Angela Robertson

IT IS not very often that DCAF gets to present a member with a second Federation Star, but in June AVM Leo Davies presented double Federation Stars to two personnel from the Special Projects Team of Defence People Group.

AIRCdre Ken Birrer and GPCAPT Bob Cooper were each presented with the Defence Long Service Medal with six clasps.

AIRCdre Birrer enlisted in the Air Force as an engineering cadet in 1969 and later trained as an air electronics officer. After several tours on P-3B Orions, AIRCdre Birrer crewed on Nimrods during the Cold War for the RAF, then commanded Base Squadron East Sale before becoming Director Personnel Officers – Air Force. He left Permanent Air Force in 2005 to work on projects as the Head of the Special Projects Team in Defence People Group. In recognition of his work in the personnel sphere, AIRCdre Birrer was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in the 2011.

AIRCdre Ken Birrer said there were three things during his career that stood out in his memory.

“The thrill of flying maritime operations in the Cold War with the Royal Air Force; the great opportunities for all Air Force personnel in terms of postings and participation in operations over an extended period; and the adaptability and effectiveness of the Air Force in dealing with all kinds of contingencies,” he said.

GPCAPT Bob Cooper enlisted as an engineering apprentice in 1970, graduating in 1972 as an airplane fitter. In 1977 LAC Cooper was posted to the Army Officer Cadet School, Portsea, graduating in 1977.

In 1990, GPCAPT Cooper attended Army Command and Staff College. He was CO RAAF Security and Fire School and inaugural OC Airfield Defence Wing before joining AFHQ, the Defence Personnel Executive and OC Ground Training Wing. Since joining reserves in 2010, GPCAPT Cooper has been managing the Defence Census.

GPCAPT Robert Cooper said he had seen a lot of changes in Air Force over the years.

“When I enlisted we had two Air Forces – one for men (RAAF) and another for women (WRAAF),” he said.

“We had a static Air Force in the 1970-80s and torrid change in the 1990s, but changes have made the Air Force a much better and inclusive environment for all its people today.”
Using your smart phone and tablet at night may be reducing your sleep quality, psychologist CAPT Jason Harris reports.

Exposure to bright light suppresses melatonin, which increases alertness and attention, and is accompanied by physiological changes associated with wakefulness such as body temperature.

- Reduced cognitive performance;
- Poor work performance;
- Increased risk of accidents; and
- Increased irritability.

Long-term effects include interpersonal, social and occupation problems, as well as psychological distress. For ADF members, potential operational effects of blue-light exposure, it will be included in the impact of:
- Reduced vigilance, concentration and attention;
- Decreased morale;
- Accurate information due to memory and cognitive impairment; and
- Skill degradation.

To reduce the impact of LED devices, it is best to avoid or reduce using them in the hours leading up to sleep. Alternative suggestions include dimming the brightness settings on electronic devices or using amber glasses to filter and reduce the effects of blue light. When more information is available on blue-light exposure, it will be included in ADF psycho-education literature.

For tips on getting a good night's sleep, visit www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au

HOW UNIT HELPS

CAPT Jason Harris is posted to 1st Psychology Unit. The unit has provided operational psychology and mental health support to ADF members for 52 years. The unit can be activated to respond to short-notice critical incidents.

CO, 1st Psychology Unit LTCOL Laura Sinclair said the unit also provided expertise in human performance initiatives through the application of biometrics, resilience and mental fitness training and psychological readiness strategies.

"The intellectual and emotional demands of both operations and everyday life require intellectual preparation and psychological endurance," she said.

"It is through the development of mental resilience paralleled with physical resilience that personnel can aim to achieve their full potential."

This is where 1st Psychology Unit can provide command with the tools, expertise and guidance to build and foster the human and psychological capital of their capability – their people."

For more information, visit http://legacy/TeamWeb/211/ARMF/psycmdlt1-19-S-55-BDE/1/PSYCHUNIT/
Air Force takes on the services in touch footy

SGT Dave Morley

RAAF Base Richmond was the scene of some hard-fought touch football action on May 29.

Air Force played four services in the ADF Touch Football Competition, drawing 3-3 with a Navy team, coming in second to the Army Team 2, 4-3, Army Team 1, 10-3, and 9-5 to Army Team 1 in the semi-final.

Air Force team captain LAC Clayton Brown said it was great to see how well the team played.

We had a number of new players, but they all improved over the course of the day with winger AC Stephen Manila bagging a heap of tries," he said.

“The experienced players on our team were CPL Nat Thomason, LAC James Pike, LAC Christopher Schulz and Cpl Luke Smith.”

LAC Brendan Hunt was rock solid in defence and LAC Sean Thomson has improved dramatically since last year’s interservice comp.”

LAC Brown said the team’s preparation led to their downfall in the end. “If we had a few more training sessions together to work out combinations on the field and how to defend and attack the line, I think we would have been a lot more competitive," he said.

According to LAC Brown, Richmond was chosen as the venue for the competition because of its already established touch competition. “The fields are already marked and well-maintained and the majority of the committee work from Richmond," he said.

Reservists to get involved in ADF basketball

THE 2015 ACT-Wagga interservice basketball competition will be held at the ADF gym from August 1-2.

Interested permanent and active reserve personnel who wish to participate are to gain written approval from their CO before applying to compete through their service representative.

The competition will be used to select a combined ACT-Wagga interservice team for the national championships to be held at RAAF Base Laverton from November 27-December 6.

To contact Air Force’s representative SGT Peter Goff, email peter.goff@defence.gov.au and ADF’s representative OCĐT Claye Wilcox, email claye.wilcox@defence.gov.au for more information on interservice basketball competitions in your state email adfa.basketball@gmail.com

Fulfilling Origin dream

LS Jayson Tufrey

TO RUN out in front of a packed ANZ Stadium before the start of a State of Origin match would be a dream for most people – to do it twice, indescribable.

Part-time NRL official CPL Brett Suttor, an airfield defence guard with 1SECFOR at RAAF Base Richmond, got to do just that, running the line in both games one and two of the pinnacle sporting event in Australia’s rugby league calendar.

Currently officiating in one or two games per week, he said he was only made aware of his selection for game one when his mates called to congratulate him.

“The appointments come out 10 days before the game and I missed the initial call,” he said.

“I was amazed to hear from many people I’d not heard from in years who called and sent messages, some I’ve not yet had the chance to get back to.”

“I honestly never thought I would get to take part in such a prestigious series of league games – I was initially nervous to be selected, yet happy the years of sacrifice had been worthwhile.”

CPL Suttor said it was great that his whole family could come to the game to watch both the game and him in action.

“It was such an amazing feeling to look up at them with more than 90,000 people just before kick-off,” he said.

“The crowd sang the National Anthem so loudly I couldn’t actually hear the person singing it – that is something I’ll never forget.”

With such passionate crowds and intense games, players and officials really have to be on the ball to ensure the best possible game.

“Every call is hard to make. Considering the pressure associated with it, I really have to just totally focus on concentrating the whole time,” CPL Suttor said.

“I don’t get nervous anymore, but I certainly did when I first started refereeing state league years ago.”

CPL Suttor began refereeing in 1999 and took up a full-time role from 2006 until 2014 when he transferred back into the permanent Air Force, he said the transition was an easy one.

“My fitness was already at a pretty high standard due to the amount of training I had been doing over the previous eight years,” he said.

“The support I have received from work which helps me to maintain my role in the NRL is fantastic. I have a flexible working arrangement allowing me to work an eight-day fortnight. This permits me to get to training and make it to the away games.”

“DCAAF has also approved me with elite sports status extra leave and I also receive part-time leave without pay.”

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SUTTOR’S STATS

- Refereed 110 NRL games
- Refereed 1 City v Country
- Refereed Prime Minister’s 13 v PNG
- Ran line for Tonga v Samoa test match
- Ran 65 NRL lines

STATE OF ORIGIN 2015

Game 1:
- NSW 10 – QLD 11
  - NSW tries: Josh Morris, Beau Scott.
  - QLD tries: Cooper Cronk, Will Chambers
  - NSW conversions: Trent Hodkinson.
  - QLD conversions: Johnathan Thurston
  - QLD field goal: Cooper Cronk.

Game 2:
- NSW 26 – QLD 18
  - NSW tries: Michael Jennings, Josh Morris, Aaron Woods, Josh Dugan.
  - QLD tries: Matt Scott, Greg Inglis, Matt Gillett.
  - NSW conversions: Trent Hodkinson.
  - QLD conversions: Johnathan Thurston.
  - QLD penalty goals: Trent Hodkinson.
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State of Origin game 3 – Wednesday, July 8 at Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane

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WO2 Andrew Hetherington

NEW South Wales men’s and women’s ADF teams dominated the 2015 combined hockey championships held at Moorebank, Sydney, from May 9-15.

The combined NSW men’s team repeated their success from last year, winning the event by defeating Queensland 4-0 in a tight final.

NSW team manager and player Navy WO Will McConnell said there was a lot of fast-paced play between the two sides from the beginning of the match.

“In the first half there wasn’t much ground given by either side’s defence and at half-time, we were 1-0 up,” WO McConnell said.

“We came out in the second half and scored two quickly and were a bit stronger and seemed to have a bit more life in our legs.

Late in the half, NSW scored another goal to take the title undefeated 4-0.

“The highlight of the match for us was our toughness, even when Queensland kept coming at us,” WO McConnell said.

“Even though the score was 4-0, the match was tight, with players from both sides going after the ball at a fast and hard pace.

“We were composed in our defence and when we eventually broke theirs down, we reacted quickly to attack their goal.”

Air Force’s CPL Warwick Smith was the NSW team captain and also received the overall best and fairest award for the men’s competition.

“I played as one of two centre halves and I switched to being a defender against stronger teams,” CPL Smith said.

“I found it easier to direct the team and play from the back half, as I could see more of the game.

“I knew we’d do well after winning last year and having such a quality side this year.”

He said part of his team’s success during the competition was having the ability to adapt its match strategy.

“We were able to do this during each game and even at half-time after a team chat,” CPL Smith said.

“This was the key to for us being successful in the last two matches, including the final against Queensland.”

The NSW women’s team was coached by CPL Daniel Taylor who said their final, also against Queensland, was a hard fought match.

“The first half was fast paced and they came out and scored the first goal three-quarters into the half,” CPL Taylor said.

“We maintained our composure and were able to level the score before the end of the half.”

The second half had both sides trying to break through the strong defence lines.

“It was even, with end-to-end play continuing for the whole half,” CPL Taylor said.

“Both sides had opportunities to score, but narrowly missed their shots and full-time sounded with scores locked at 1-1.”

Extra time was played with periods of 10 minutes, which included player drop offs, meaning both teams lost a player after each 10-minute period until someone scored.

“We were down to seven players on each side, when finally we got a break and managed to be awarded a penalty short corner,” CPL Taylor said.

“LEUT Christie Underwood pushed the ball out from the sideline to team captain Army CPL Shayne Buenoobra, who hit a cracker into the goal for victory.”

One of Air Force’s best players was forward striker SQNLDR Zalie Duffy.

“We stuck to our game plans throughout the competition, playing our positions and in the structure we decided on,” SQNLDR Duffy said.

“We played together as a team and had fun on and off the hockey pitch.

“Certainly winning the grand final in extra time was great for us.

“Although being undefeated heading into the final had some added pressure.

“It was a relief we’d played so well throughout the week and could finish off with the win and watching the NSW men’s team also win their grand final was an extra bonus for us.”

Help fight the invisible battles hidden within our veterans.

Our veterans are in desperate need of crisis support.

We need your help urgently.

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