No. 1 Radar Surveillance Unit renamed No. 1 Remote Sensor Unit and takes on a role that is out of this world

Centrespread

FLTLT Gene Elliott and SQNLDR Paul Kemp, of 1RSU, examine the path of space debris.

Photo: SGT Michael Dean.

ADF’S FIRST SPACE UNIT

SPECIAL LIFTOUT

ADGs’ vital security role at Kandahar

Ex Northern Phoenix over Kakadu
Budget bonus

LS Jayson Tufrey

AIR Force will benefit from increased funding for new capability, operations and pay under the 2015-16 Budget announced on May 12.

Since last year’s budget a further $5 billion in new provision investments has been approved for Defence.

This will include two additional Boeing C-17A Globemaster IIs, new personal protective equipment, deployable air traffic control systems, transportable satellite terminals and P-8A Poseidons and MQ-4C Tritons.

A complete program of capital investment in new capabilities will accompany the 2015 Defence White Paper.

Until the White Paper is released, the government will continue to approve the most urgent capability projects, provided they are affordable and supported by strong business cases.

A significant portion of the 2015-16 Budget funding will support ADFA operations in Iraq.

Operation Okra will be supported by $359.8 million additional funding in 2015-16 and $381.6 million in the forward estimates between 2015-16 and 2017-18.

This takes the total funding to $398.8 million in 2015-16 and $418.3 million between 2015-16 and 2017-18.

In total, Defence will benefit from an additional $752.7 million in 2015-16 and $802.4 million over the forward estimates.

Including previously approved funding, this takes the total operations funding to $910.7 million in 2015-16 and to more than $1 billion over the forward estimates.

As previously reported, CDFAC Mark Binskin and the government applied to the Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal in April seeking to improve the ADFA pay offer.

Subject to approval by the Tribunal, the decision to increase ADFA pay to 2 per cent a year will be effective from March 12, 2015.

Additional funding has also been approved for the Sir John Monash Centre, an Australian interpretive centre at Villers-Bretonneux, near the site of the Australian National Memorial on the Somme.

A further $18 million in 2015-16 and $89 million in the forward estimates will be added to the initial project funding of $2.8 million to complete the project.

Defence Minister Kevin Andrews said the first responsibility of a government was the safety and security of its people.

“I take this responsibility very seriously,” he said. “The budget delivers on the government’s promise to grow, rather than cut, the Defence budget.

“The government remains firm on its commitment to increase Defence spending to 2 per cent of GDP within a decade.”

Overall, Defence will receive $31.9 billion in the 2015-16 financial year and $132.6 billion between 2015-16 and 2018-19.

This is an increase of $9.9 billion compared with the four-year estimates announced in the 2014-15 Budget.

For more information, visit www.defence.gov.au/budget/15-16/
Hawks fly north for exercise

TROPICAL Cyclone Olwyn brought about a change in name and location for a biannual Hawk pilot exercise.

Exercise Western Phoenix was renamed Northern Phoenix and moved from RAAF Base Learmonth to RAAF Base Darwin due to the cyclone’s damage to the Western Australian base in March.

Exercise Northern Phoenix is the consolidation phase of the No. 49 Introduction to Fighter Course.

Aircrew will be performing formation flying and navigation exercises from May 1-21 as part of their Hawk training.

No. 79 Squadron flew six Hawks to Darwin for the exercise while about 90 personnel and equipment were transported north on a KC-30.

CO 79SQN WGCDR Justin Fitzgerald said the logistics convoy from RAAF Base Pearce to Darwin took five days and transported three trucks of additional maintenance and support equipment, with the remainder of the equipment transported on the KC-30.

“I have been very impressed with the efforts of our logistics team in getting this equipment to Darwin at such short notice,” he said.

“We made the decision to change the location of the exercise at short notice after the cyclone hit Learmonth and the efficiency of the team in getting this convoy under way is impressive. “Deverting this exercise to Darwin has given us the opportunity to add another element to the exercise for the aircrew.

“One of the aims of Northern Phoenix is to provide an unfamiliar environment for the aircrew to fly in, adding another level of complexity to the course.”

“This has also given our support personnel an opportunity to practise deploying.

“We also have maintenance personnel working on shifts at RAAF Base Tindal so this is definitely a more complex deployment than our usual exercise to Learmonth. Kakadu National Park is the largest national park in Australia, covering almost 20,000sqkm. It is home to 280 types of birds and 2000 plant species. With its spectacular rocky outcrops, waterways and bushland it has made for some jaw-dropping scenery during the training exercises. “This will also be the major opportunity for budding fighter pilots to refine their formation flying skills, which is fundamental to fighter flying.”

Commander Air Combat Group AIRCDRE Steven Robertson said Exercise NP15 was a vital part of Hawk pilot training.

“It provides the pilots with the skills required to fly into unfamiliar airfields,” he said.

“It is the first time the aircrew fly fighter mission profiles away from their home base.

“This will also be the major opportunity for budding fighter pilots to refine their formation flying skills, which is fundamental to fighter flying.”

F-35A facilities started at RAAF Base Williamtown

CONSTRUCTION of the $1.5 billion New Air Combat Capability Facilities at RAAF Base Williamtown has started.

The new assets will support the introduction, operation and deployment of the F-35A Lightning II.

Turning of the first sod on May 6 marked the start of a project that will provide facilities for the aircraft at 10 bases across the country.

Of this, the RAAF Base Williamtown facilities are expected to bring about $850million worth of work into the Newcastle region, according to Defence Minister Kevin Andrews.

Facilities to support the F-35A Lightning II aircraft will also be constructed at RAAF Bases Tindal, Townsville, Scherger, Darwin, Curtin, Learmonth, Pearce Edinburgh and Defence Establishment Myanbar.

The first F-35A will arrive in Australia in late-2018.

An artist’s impression of what the new facilities at RAAF Base Williamtown for the F-35A will look like on completion. Image courtesy of Coffey.

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Nepal Assist wraps up

CAPT Dom Sander

CREWS on Operation Nepal Assist have returned home after two C-17A Globemasters delivered much-needed aid to Kathmandu in Nepal.

From April 29-May 3 two C-17As flew 54.5 hours over eight missions, delivered 340,517lb of cargo and carried 322 passengers, including a RAAF Aero Medical Evacuation team, specialist Defence logistic staff and Australian and foreign national evacuees.

FLTLT Andre Lovett, the pilot of one of the two C-17As, said the purpose of the mission was to deliver humanitarian and disaster relief stores and get Australians back home.

“We were there to establish a shuttle between Bangkok and Kathmandu to take in aid and evacuate Australians out of Kathmandu,” he said.

FLTLT Lovett said the operation meant long days for everyone involved and his crew worked hard to deliver support and get Australians and approved foreign nationals back home safely.

“It was good to see the smiles on the faces of our passengers as they boarded our plane,” he said.

“Obviously they had been through a lot and it was good to see they still had a positive attitude.”

Joining forces for Exercise Balikatan

Air Force personnel took part in Exercise Balikatan in the Philippines to help improve multinational tactical training outcomes from April 6-30.

Defence personnel from the Republic of the Philippines, US and Australia conducted the highly successful exercise on the islands of Luzon and Palawan.

Balikatan means “shoulder-to-shoulder” in Filipino.

Commander Australian contingent CMDR Mark Jarrett said the exercise was successful in refining the abilities of the three nations to work together on regional security and humanitarian civil aid projects.

“The ADF contributed about 70 personnel and one Air Force AP-3C Orion patrol aircraft to fill a range of headquarters, command post exercise, field training and civil aid activities,” he said.

“We provided support that included mentoring and training to Armed Forces of the Philippines counterparts and local communities.”

CMDR Jarrett said two ADF medical officers took part in lectures during a health symposium and exchanges at local hospitals.

“Australian Army engineers also worked alongside US Seabees in the construction of a multi-purpose room for a school in the Palawan region,” he said.

“Our 2 Commando Regiment personnel conducted combined field training and RAAF personnel flew out of Clark Airfield to improve tactical interoperability in the aviation environment.

“Overall we were able to cooperate across a range of capabilities and improved our interoperability for the future.”
He’s one in a hundred

FLGOFF Tom Maclean

A MILITARY working dog puppy has a big future ahead after being named Anzac, in recognition of the Centenary of Anzac which runs from 2014-2018.

When he grows up, Anzac will have to pass some tough tests to qualify to work with a handler protecting Air Force personnel and assets.

Anzac will use his sense of smell and speed to detect and catch intruders.

His first official duty was tough tests to qualify to work with a handler protecting Air Force personnel and assets.

Anzac will use his sense of smell and speed to detect and catch intruders.

Anzac's future has already started in earnest.

We do behaviour shaping, imprinting behaviour and early imprinting behaviour.

“We recruited, trained, force-prepped and deployed 40 personnel in those 30 days, when it would typically take nearly four months to do that,” he said.

“It was such a rapid response to a short-notice deployment, and this was a team effort right from the instructors to the admin staff. The team was able to conduct refresher training from Woomera for those aircrew who had previously deployed with Heron, as well as Ground Mission Station collective training for the intelligence officers and air intelligence analysts.”

Commander Surveillance and Response Group AIRCdre Chris Westwood presented the commendation on May 7, during his visit to RAAF Base Amberley for the Heron Airworthiness Board.

Military working dog handler CPL Samantha Luck plays with Anzac at the RAAF Canine Breeding Section. RAAF Base Amberley. Below, SQNLDR Craig Scott parades Anzac, the military working dog puppy, in the Anzac Day Brisbane city march.

Photo: CPL Shannon McCarthy

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New skills fill the gaps

CPL Aaron Curran

LESS than a year ago most of the Air Force Gap Year trainees would not have seen themselves carrying around a 7kg F89 Minimi light support weapon, let alone firing it.

The 54 trainees, have been doing just that and more at the RAAF Security and Fire School (RAAFSFS) at RAAF Base Amberley.

After arriving there on April 13, the trainees are undertaking a 12-week course in Security Forces training, which consists of Air Force Security governance, legislations, physical security and weaponry.

Air Force Gap Year course coordinator SGT Chris Campbell said the Air Base Protection mustering required them to undergo extra weapons training with the F88 Austeyr, 9mm Browning pistol and the Minimi.

“They are doing well,” he said.

“They are motivated and most want a career in the Air Force after their gap year, which is good to see.”

SGT Campbell said most of the challenges the trainees faced and overcame were at No. 1 Recruit Training Unit (1RTU) and they came to RAAFSFS with open minds.

“I have instructed Permanent Air Force recruits and I see no difference between them and Gap Year recruits,” he said.

“They are here for a reason, whether it be personal or professional and have displayed a professional attitude from the start.”

ACW Hannah Geyer and AC Riley Kerr were at RAAFSFS and both agreed the training on the weapons was a highlight for them.

“My favourite part was live firing,” ACW Geyer said.

“Training has been challenging but rewarding and not as hard as everyone said it would be.”

“Although being away from family and friends and some elements of it are tough, I have grown as a person and my parents have said my confidence has increased.”

ACW Geyer said after her gap year she wanted to become a military working dog handler.

“My course mates are like a big family and we look after each other,” she said.

AC Kerr has also enjoyed RAAFSFS.

“I like RAAFSFS because it has more physical hands-on components than 1RTU,” he said.

“We concentrate more on the job we are actually going to be doing.

“The firing range was good fun and I never thought I would be firing a weapon a year ago.”

AC Kerr said since starting the Gap Year course he has become a lot more organised.

“I recommend doing it,” he said.

“I got the impression the instructors wanted to be here and wanted us to do well.

“When I finish I would like to do engineering in the Air Force.”

ACW Hannah Geyer and AC Riley Kerr go through her F89 Minimi handling drills at the RAAF School of Fire and Security, RAAF Base Amberley.

Photo: CPL Aaron Curran

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Boeing updates trainers

BOEING will update two Air Force maintenance trainers better support the F/A-18F Super Hornet and EA-18G Growler.

Boeing Navy Training program manager Tom Lavender said the update would make Australia’s two Integrated Visual Environment Maintenance Trainers specifically applicable to the Growler.

“Using the same software in both the trainer and the aircraft allows Super Hornet technicians to perform maintenance tasks exactly as they would on the actual aircraft,” Mr Lavender said.

Director-General Capability Planning – Air Force A/CDRE Michael Kitcher said the upgraded trainers would support technicians working on both platforms and provide them with a key tool to qualify as Super Hornet and Growler technicians.

“This update is especially important for the new skill-set technicians will require to perform advanced work on the EA-18G Growler, ensuring its readiness to support all branches of the ADF,” he said.

Smart bombs enhanced

THE first set of production wing kits for Air Force’s Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) smart bombs was delivered by Boeing on April 30.

Manufactured by Boeing Defense, Space and Security, JDAMs provide an all-weather precision strike capability for Air Force.

The Defence Materiel Organisation’s Head of Helicopter Systems and Guided Weapons Division, RADM Tony Dalton, said one aspect of the JDAM enhancement program had been to test, certify and manufacture a range-extending wing kit for the smart bomb.

“This successful project has taken an Australian idea and, through an international collaboration, has turned it into a reality,” RADM Dalton said. “These range-extending wing kits almost triple the baseline range of the current smart bombs.”

Test and evaluation flight trials of the new extended range smart bomb were successfully conducted at Woomera last December, with the weapons landing within metres of their designated targets.

Guardian angels in MER

A SMALL group of Australians are flying the flag in Afghanistan, providing vital security at Kandahar Airfield.

SGT Daniel Kerr is the senior member of the Airfield Defence Guards embedded with the US Air Force 451st Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron as part of the NATO-led Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan.

“There are six ADGs deployed to Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan,” he said.

“We’re working side-by-side with the US Air Force Security Forces to provide a security effect in support of the train, advise and assist mission to allow that to continue.”

SGT Kerr said although Australia’s mission in Afghanistan had changed from combat operations to the train, advise and assist mission, there was still a present danger in the work the ADGs were doing.

“There is potential for it to be a dangerous role,” he said.

“We have a constant threat of indirect fire from rockets coming from outside the base as well as the threat of ground attack.”

The ADGs are providing traditional airfield security as well as expanding their role, which LAC Brett White said the team found rewarding.

“We’re in a force protection role here at Kandahar Airfield,” he said.

“Essentially that’s made up of flightline security, vehicle check points, vehicle searches, and mounted and dismounted patrols inside the wire.

“Being embedded with the USAF has actually been a great experience, learning what their capability is, and what ours is, and then putting it all together.”

OIC USAF Security Forces USAF CAPT Terry said the Australians were more than meeting expectations and were providing a vital role in the security of Kandahar Airfield.

“Right now the Australians fall into the overall structure by providing leadership, and working closely on our posts, static and mobile, on the airfield,” he said.

“We have a shared border with Afghanistan that they man and control entry and they’ll also ride in and control mobile posts such as the gun truck.

“We generally man the Quick Response Force, which the ADGs man with us, so they may be a driver one day then be a gunner the next, and they control the entire airfield with those resources.”

CAPT Terry also said the Australians were performing roles not normally required of ADGs by providing close protection at the airfield.

“From time-to-time we’ll also integrate them into our guardian angel program where they’ll provide security to key leader engagements and any time there’s something going on outside of the flightline itself where personal security is a risk,” he said.

CAPT Terry said both teams were gaining a lot from the joint operations.

“Feel like sometimes we’re getting the better end of the deal and we’re learning quite a bit from the Aussies,” he said.

“They bring a different bit of training than traditional US security forces training, much more specific to air base defence, and we’re just thrilled to have them and work with them and learn from them every day.”
Dogged effort awarded

FLGOFF Tom McLean

AN EXPLOSIVE detection dog (EDD) handler has received the prestigious Combat Support Group (CSG) Airman of the Year Award. LAC Jesse White is proud and grateful to be recognised for implementing improved EDD methods that are making ADF personnel and bases safer.

“It is something I’m very passionate about, so to be recognised for doing something I love is a great honour,” he said.

LAC White began his Air Force career as a military working dog handler in 2009. He specialised as an EDD handler after his graduation. “I saw it as a challenge and an opportunity to further my skills and knowledge, and something I felt I could contribute to and help evolve,” he said.

Commander CSG AIRCDRE Scott Winchester said LAC White’s colleagues were impressed by his ability to manage large workloads with limited supervision while resolving complex issues that would normally be handled by a SNCO.

“Jesse White is a worthy recipient of the CSG Airman of the Year Award. He is a tremendously professional and dedicated airman who continues to achieve terrific outcomes to progress Air Force’s EDD capability,” AIRCDRE Winchester said.

LAC White worked with the Australian Federal Police EDD teams during the CAF Air Power Conference 2014 in Canberra. He then teamed up with the senior Army dog handler from the School of Military Engineering and conducted a joint recruiting assessment of dogs from the NSW Police Force.

During this activity LAC White assessed and procured a high-quality recruit dog for Air Force. He also travelled to Melbourne to assess potential dogs from a private breeder. His knowledge and experience allowed him to assess that none of the dogs offered were of an acceptable standard, thus ensuring the RAAF’s operational capability was not diminished.

In May 2014, LAC White was attached to Garden Island Defence Precinct for a trial evaluating enhanced identification, search and seizure security measures at five major Defence sites across Australia. The trial looked at ways to reduce the risk from armed attackers or people or vehicles carrying improvised explosive devices.

LAC White then helped establish the EDD capability within No. 1 Security Force Squadron. Now there are vehicle and personnel bomb searches on entry to RAAF Base Williamtown, which were not previously available.

“The one career achievement that stands out for me is setting up the EDD capability at RAAF Base Williamtown, in which I received a silver commendation,” LAC White said.

“Being the sole member of the EDD section at 1SECFOR for the first part of last year I was responsible for initial establishment of the capability and all tasks associated with that. I enjoyed the extra responsibilities and gained a lot of confidence, not only in myself, but in knowing that the RAAF EDD capability is heading in the right direction.”

CSG Group Warrant Officer Rob Etllies, Combat Squadrons Association President Rob Whadley and OC CSG AIRCDRE Scott Winchester present explosive detection dog handler LAC Jesse White, of 1SECFOR, with the CSG Airman of the Year award. His EDD, Lucy, is by his side. Photo: CPL Peter Boys

Missing crew remembered

SqnLdr Malcolm Grieve

THE crew of a No. 43 Squadron Catalina Black Cat missing in action since December 1944 was remembered in a ceremony at the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific in the Philippines on April 23.

Following years of research by Paul Baker from the Australian Embassy in Manila, the daughter of a crew member was identified and invited to attend the unveiling of a memorial to her father and his crew mates.

Wendy Duke along with her two sons, Michael and Peter, the daughter and grandchildren of SGT James Robert Robinson, another crew member of Catalina A24-64, travelled to the event from Australia.

The nine crew and their aircraft disappeared while trying to evade anti-aircraft fire following an operation to lay mines off Manilla Harbour and Balabac Strait – intended to deny Japanese naval forces the ability to attack an Allied invasion on the island of Mindoro the next day.

The target was known to be well defended, though exact positions were not known. It was reported during a post-mission briefing that an explosion was observed, which might have been the last sighting of the ‘Dabster’, named by the crew as a dab band, referring to an expert.

The aircraft is thought to lie in the waters off Alas-asin Point, near the academy.

Members of No. 92 Wing laid a wreath on behalf of the Air Force.

The nine crew members had flown a number of missions together before they disappeared. They were:

– FLTLT Herbert Cunningham Roberts of Perth, Western Australia
– FLTLT Frank William Silvester of Collaroy, NSW
– FLTLT James Henry Cox of Warren, NSW
– FLGOFF Robert Carlisle Barbour of Coburg, Victoria
– FLGOFF Raymond Harold Bradstreet of South Yarra, Victoria
– SGT John Charles Macdonald of Manly, NSW
– FSgt David John Albert of Auburn, NSW
– SGT James Robert Robinson of Watson’s Bay, NSW
– SGT Harold Stanley Goodchild of Mukiubudin, Western Australia

THE DABSTER CREW

The crew of a 43SQN Catalina Black Cat missing since 1944 has been honoured with a plaque in the Philippines. Photo: CPL Seth Starr, US Marine Corps

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WILL YOU PAY TOO MUCH TAX THIS YEAR?
Some home comforts

One deployed Queenslander is enjoying a taste of Australia thanks to a pineapple-covered quilt, CPL Max Bree reports

A QUILT covered in pineapple designs that arrived in the Middle East for FSGT Pete McGarry represented an unexpected tribute to his Queensland heritage during his deployment.

A friend of FSGT McGarry took the liberty of placing one of the strangest requests the people at Aussie Hero Quilts had received.

“My mate thought I should get a quilt since he was getting one for himself,” FSGT McGarry said.

“Since I’m from Queensland I said ‘I’d like something in Queensland colours’. Somehow that got turned into pineapples.”

Aussie Hero Quilts have been making laundry bags and quilts for deployed personnel since 2011 to thank them for their overseas service.

Jan-Maree Ball, who founded the organisation, served 15 years in the RAAF, mostly as an air traffic controller.

FSGT McGarry, who is part of the contract management team at Australia’s main base, used the quilt to make his workspace more comfortable.

“I put it on my chair for the last few months,” he said.

“It’s the cushion between me and the chair so I don’t stick to the leather.”

His quilt, made by Irene Story from Hodgson Vale in Queensland, was one of the most well-received in the Middle East.

“Everybody shows them around, they love them,” he said.

“I don’t know exactly why, but they seem to be a memento of the time spent on this deployment.”

A lot of people are tapping into it now.

“I definitely show it around to my friends when they’re visiting.”

FSGT McGarry has already made plans for his quilt when he returns home.

“I reckon I’ll lay it on one of my chairs that I sit on at home all the time. It might be good for the rocking chair,” he said.

FSGT McGarry with his Aussie Hero Quilt decorated in pineapples. Photo: SGT Ray Vance

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WOFF Brett West returned to the grave of Australia’s first indigenous fighter pilot – WOFF Len Waters – during a tour with the Air Force Balloon. He had been flown up from RAAF Base Williamtown to attend the funeral, as part of a contingent representing No. 77 Squadron, in August 1993. It had been a turning point for WOFF West to think more about his Aboriginality within his Air Force roles.

“Since then I’ve looked for opportunities to increase awareness of Aboriginal culture within Air Force and to encourage indigenous people to look at Air Force as a possible career path,” WOFF West said.

Words: FLTLT Tritia Evans
Photo: CPL Ben Dempster

FSGT Chris Moore, SGT Paul Hogarth, FLTLT Shayne Hohensee, SGT Nick Hurn, FSGT Andy Bowen and FLTLT Franz Pulikkottil escorted the Australian flag out in slow time onto the oval in front of a sell-out audience of more than 50,000 people at the 100th Year Anzac Day commemoration pre-match ceremony at the Adelaide Oval for the Port Adelaide vs Hawthorn AFL match. They are joined here by Redgum band members Hugh McDonald and John Schumann.

Operation personnel capability specialist CPL Natalie Riggs provides operations administration support to No. 33 Squadron. Photo: CPL Ben Dempster

Memories come flooding back

WWII veteran and retired Air Force member Blue Connelly has been captured by his son, Adrian Connelly in this portrait that is now on show at the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra. People can vote for finalists in the National Photographic Portrait Prize at www.portrait.gov.au/exhibitions/national-photographic-portrait-prize-2015

Avionics fitter LACW Shaylene Macartney carries out maintenance on a KC-30A Multi Role Tanker. Photo: CPL Ben Dempster

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The new No. 1 Remote Sensor Unit is at the cutting edge of radar, and now space, technology. The unit joins international networks and will usher in three major new systems to monitor the tens of thousands of objects orbiting Earth, Jaime Abbott writes.

**FIRST SPACE OPERATIONS UN**

Controlling and monitoring activities in the space realm allows Australia to take a leading role in the global military and space domains. In particular, monitoring activities and the radar's in the Australian Space Operations Flight Commander, CO No. 1 Remote Sensor Unit – WGCDR Chris Robson, said it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. “It’s probably the most exciting thing I’ve been involved in since I joined the Air Force,” he said.

The rapid growth in space capabilities and operations, and the growing number of objects orbiting Earth, has increased the importance of space surveillance and tracking. This is where the new No. 1 Remote Sensor Unit comes in.

Launched in September, the unit is made up of a range of sensors located around the globe to monitor objects in orbit around the Earth. The unit operates from the space surveillance telescope at Exmouth in Western Australia and the space surveillance telescope at the previous home in Antigua in the Caribbean.

**AIRFORCE**

Aircraft ramping up to the takeoff runway of RAAF Base Edinburgh, a C-17A Globemaster III takes off with its nose high in the sky. The aircraft is part of the Rapid Response Force (RRF), which is responsible for providing a quick response to any potential threats or crises in the region. The RRF operates around-the-clock and is equipped with state-of-the-art technology and equipment.

**SCOPES**

Surveillance and Response Group has worked on the design and construction of the new No. 1 Remote Sensor Unit. Members of the group have been involved in the development of the unit for several years, working closely with the Australian Space Operations Flight (ASOF) to ensure the unit meets the requirements for the RRF.

**FIRST SPACE OPERATIONS UNIT (FSOU)**

The FSOU is responsible for monitoring space activities and protecting Australia's space-based assets. The unit operates a range of sensors and systems, including the space surveillance telescope, which is used to monitor objects in orbit around the Earth. The unit also has a close working relationship with other space agencies around the world, including the United States, to ensure that Australia has a comprehensive understanding of the space environment.

The unit is staffed by highly trained and experienced personnel, who are responsible for monitoring the space environment, identifying threats, and responding to any incidents as quickly and effectively as possible. The unit is also responsible for ensuring the safety and security of Australia's space-based assets, and works closely with other government agencies to achieve this.

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Remembering Op Babylift

Young airmen in Vietnam found themselves nursing sick orphans on last-minute mercy flights, SGT Dave Morley writes

The 40th anniversary of one of Air Force’s more unusual tasks passed quietly in April, perhaps overshadowed by the centenary of the Armistice landing at Gallipoli.

Operation Babylift was the evacuation of hundreds of orphans from Saigon just days before the city fell to the communist North Vietnamese Army (NVA).

The operation started in late March 1975 when an ad hoc transport unit, known as Detachment S (‘S’ for Saigon) was formed at RAAF Base Richmond to respond to the humanitarian crisis rapidly unfolding in South Vietnam.

Initially the unit comprised two C-130s from No. 36 Squadron at Richmond and two C-47 Dakotas aircraft from Butterworth in Malaysia. It expanded to eight C-130s a fortnight later, which included aircraft from No. 37 Squadron.

The aircraft were initially based at Saigon’s Tan Son Nhat airport, but as the NVA advanced and conditions deteriorated, they were based in Bangkok and flown into Saigon each day.

Assistant Inspector-General ADF GPCAPT Ian Frame, who was then flight lieutenant, said his understanding was the detachment was to conduct any relief missions agreed to by the Australian embassy in Saigon and if the situation worsened, assist with evacuations.

To facilitate this co-ordination, GPCAPT Lyall Klafter with LAC’s John Collier and William Charlton were embedded within the Australian Embassy in Saigon.

The personnel were concentrated at Saigon and spent much of the next couple of weeks flying food and other relief supplies into An Thoi airfield on Phu Quoc Island, off to the south-east, to feed a mass of refugees who had fled from Saigon.

“We had to go to Bangkok to pick up much of the aid as most civilian air traffic had stopped flying into Saigon,” Mr Leary said.

“This relief task took the bulk of our effort, mostly flying rice, fuel, meat, canvas shelters, and the odd vehicle and craft had stopped flying into Saigon.

On April 17, a further 77 children were embarked. “ABC TV has some stark footage of people trying to get on the aircraft, throwing babies to loadmasters from the back of the crowd,” he said.

GPCAPT Frame said while there had been much external focus on the Babylift flights, what was not generally acknowledged was there were no special flights.

“The baby flights were just another task in a long string of tasks both before and after,” he said.

“On April 17, our departure was delayed for nearly 90 minutes, awaiting the arrival of embassy and Red Cross officials from Bangkok.

“The kids were loaded onto flat-bed trucks and power response than the Macchi jets to propeller driven PC-9s, but numbers of aircraft were not confirmed. The PC-9s would be quieter, have a better rate of roll and power response than the Macchi.

F-111 success

AUSTRALIA’S F-111 Strike Reconnaissance Force returned from Exercise Red Flag in Las Vegas. The aircraft went in armed with their Pave Track laser-guided weapons system and terrain-hugging capability. It was reported the F-111s repeatedly struck their targeted tanks while avoiding enemy ground and air threats.

New systems

The Air Force gained a computer-aided drafting system that was hoped would increase the level of service from the RAAF drawing office. At a cost of almost $2 million – almost $4 million today – the system was based on Apollo hardware in which each node had its own computing capability and disk.
Defence Force Magistrate 3 x theft – DFDA s 47C(1)

The member was accused of the theft of certain Commonwealth monies and property. The member pleaded guilty to the charge and was found guilty of the charge. The member was reprimanded.

Defence Force Magistrate 1 x act of Indecency without consent – DFDA s 61(3) and Crimes Act (ACT) s 60(1)

The member was accused of committing an act of indecency in the presence of another member by inappropriately touching the other member. The member pleaded not guilty to the charge but was found guilty of the charge. The member forfeited seniority in rank and was fined $1000 (to be paid in instalments).

Defence Force Magistrate 1 x theft – DFDA s 47C(1)

The member was accused of the theft of certain Commonwealth property. The member pleaded guilty to the charge but was found guilty of the charge. The member was sentenced to 49 days detention and ordered to pay reparations totalling $2985.08 to the Commonwealth.

Defence Force Magistrate 1 x breach – DFDA s 47C(1)

The member was accused of using a Commonwealth credit card to obtain goods totalling $629.30 in value that the member was not entitled to receive. The member pleaded guilty to the charges and was found guilty of the charges. The member was reprimanded.

Defence Force Magistrate 1 x theft – DFDA s 47C(1)

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Belinda Duke

THE ICT Service Desk takes more than 100,000 calls a year for help.

Senior Manager Defence ICT Service Desk team Simon Brettell said it was faster and easier to access this help online.

“Many people think they can get services and items faster if they request them through the ICT Service Desk,” Mr Brettell said.

“This just isn’t true. “You can now get help, order ICT hardware or software, request access to websites, or even unlock your DRN account online.”

The Service Request Catalogue, password reset tool and other self-service tools are all available from the ICT Services icon on the desktop.

The catalogue allows orders to be created and tracked from approval to delivery. Personnel can request a website be unblocked, get access to an OpenGroup or SharePoint site, order a phone, or request any number of the hundreds of items listed in the catalogue.

Members who register to use the password reset tool, will be able to immediately unlock the DRN account without any help, anytime they want.

The Service Request Catalogue will also allow someone to lodge an order or request for someone else, so support staff can order on behalf of their boss or colleagues.

To access the catalogue go to http://sigo/requests.

IN BRIEF

Time to vaccinate

AIMREN and women are encouraged to get their annual flu shot to help protect themselves and their colleagues. The flu is a highly contagious virus that causes illness and serious health complications in susceptible members of the community. Influenza is spread by coughs and sneezes or by direct contact with respiratory secretions. Every year it causes illness and absence in the Defence workplace. Combined with good hand hygiene, the yearly flu shot is the safest and most effective method of preventing influenza infections. Commanders are encouraged to support voluntary vaccination. Contact your local Defence health centre to arrange a vaccination.

 Rewarding achievement

ENTRIES are open for the Telstra Business Women’s Awards. The awards are open to women in all states and territories, providing them with opportunities to meet, mentor and support other aspiring business women. In the past five years, nine ADF women have been recognised as winners and finalists. Women in the ADF can enter the Government and Academia category. Nominations can be made at www.telstrabusinesswomensawards.com/entry-242.aspx or by calling 1800 817 536. Entries close on June 29.
On song with what’s right

Squadron Leader Mathew Shelley said he was proud of the ongoing commitment that all band members and band business are keeping on song and on track with these meetings and their other commitments to New Horizons.

Since redeveloping their Code of Conduct in 2012, AFBAND have introduced a number of values-based initiatives, including the monthly meetings, which started in October 2014, and a culture of asking “Is this right?” which serves as a health-check for whether our culture is right.

“Squadron Leader Shelley said the expectat - 150x601 - tion of AFBAND SNCOs compelled them to consider the moral dimension of their decisions and to also hold him accountable for his decisions. “I expect them to speak up when things do not seem right,” Squadron Leader Shelley said. He said the AFBAND Leadership Development Forum was created to not only refresh skills and discuss local management and leadership issues, but to invite other experts and sensor airmen to the unit to share their expertise. The next forum will be held in July.

“Importantly, it has enabled the sharing and evolving of ideas around New Horizon within AFBAND,” he said.

The forum has included formal briefs from legal officers, professional development sessions with Warrant Officer Disciplinary (WOD) staff and Executive Warrant Officers with regular internal discussions between AFBAND SNCOs and Command.

Squadron Leader Mathew Shelley said the forum had assisted him and his peers with skills development such as dealing with bystander and unacceptable behaviour and had brought the SNCOs together as a management team.

“The presentations, in conjunction with personal mentoring by a WOD, have given me greater confidence to be an effective leader and manager in a professional and dynamic workplace,” he said.

RAAF College Commandant Group Captain Ross Jones said AFBAND’s initiative and commitment to embracing New Horizon served as an example to other Air Force Task Group and Air Force units.

“With Air Force Band is demonstrating is what all Air Force members know about integrity and values,” he said.

“That is, we do what is right, wherever we are, and no matter who is – or isn’t – watching.”
Affirmative, we’re on track

WGCDR Julie Canterbury

A NEW database developed to capture and track all of Air Force’s initiatives and projects is now live and is being used by Air Command.

The comprehensive Air Force Initiative and Reform Monitor (AFIRM) database was built in SharePoint and developed to capture all initiatives and projects being undertaken or planned across the Air Force Improvement Program.

Endorsed and mandated by the Air Command Board in late 2014, the AFIRM site enables Air Commander Australia to have visibility of the level of reform across all domains and a method of capturing data on the benefits to Air Force.

HQAC Project Manager WGCDR David Worrall said these benefits were identified within the ADF strategic framework of workforce, capability, economic and reputation.

“This is the first time we have a comprehensive view of the brilliant ideas and projects across the organisation aiming at embedding our continuous improvement culture” WGCDR Worrall said.

“A principal design feature of its business rules is all units will capture ideas so a collective intelligence on lessons learned and benefits realised is visible across the command.”

More work is being undertaken to better develop AFIRM’s full potential by defining its reporting parameters and design in line with those of the Air Command Board and subsequently the Air Force Reform Board.

WGCDR Worrall said many improvement projects spanned Force Element Groups and often included DMO partners in the various System Program Offices.

“HQAC is working closely with DMO, Army and Navy to align the reform reporting requirements with the plan,” he said.

“This is to amalgamate all reform activities into one database, enabling significant efficiency in developing and tracking improvement initiatives.”

To see and access the AFIRM website on the DRN visit http://caas/areas/RAAF/IRDashboard/Lists/Initiatives/AllInitiatives.aspx

Air Command can now capture data on Air Force initiatives and projects to see what stage they are at.

Photo: LS Jayson Tufrey

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CHOOSING the right financial adviser is an important decision. Spending time researching and comparing a number of advisers will improve your chances of finding the right one for you.

Financial advisers register
Before you decide to work with an adviser, you should check ASIC’s financial advisers register. This new register contains a list of people who provide personal advice on investments, superannuation and life insurance.

The register tells you:
• the adviser’s experience and employment history;
• what product areas the adviser can provide advice about;
• whether the adviser has been the subject of disciplinary action by ASIC;
• the name and number of the Australian Financial Services licence holder who employs or authorises the financial adviser to provide advice; and
• details about who owns or controls the licence holder.

If the adviser is not operating under a licence, do not deal with them. They are breaking the law and you will have little protection if things go wrong. From mid-2015 the register will also contain information about an adviser’s qualifications, training and professional membership details.

Qualifications
A financial adviser can be qualified to give advice only after meeting minimum training requirements.

To increase the chances of getting advice that is right for you, look for an adviser who also has a diploma, an advanced diploma or degree in a relevant discipline such as finance, economics, accounting or financial planning.

Experience
Ask the adviser about their typical clients. This will help you judge whether they have the experience to deal with people with similar issues and goals to you.

For example, are the adviser’s other clients planning for retirement or are they young families wanting to save for their children’s education?

The amount of experience an adviser has is also relevant. For example, an adviser who has recently graduated may be highly qualified, however, they may not be as experienced as an older adviser with fewer qualifications.

Financial products
Check that the adviser can provide advice about the financial products you currently have.

This is important as the adviser may not be able to give you advice about your current investment products if they’re not on the adviser’s ‘approved product list’.

Professional development
Like other professionals, it’s important for an adviser to keep up with industry or regulatory changes that might affect their clients.

An adviser should participate in regular training activities such as courses or seminars run by universities, industry associations, professional bodies or registered training organisations.

Association membership
Check to see if the adviser is a member of an industry association and/or professional body. Most associations require members to participate in ongoing training, have a code of conduct for members to follow and a mechanism for handling complaints.

For more information, including a list of questions to ask before you engage an adviser, visit www.moneysmart.gov.au

Research before you get advice
Do your homework before choosing a financial adviser, says Australian Securities and Investment Commission chairman Greg Medcraft.

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Preparation is key to pass

Fitness assessments are part of life in the ADF, but the varied lifestyles and postings can impact on fitness routines. Therefore, it’s important to ensure you’re at your best when it’s time for a PFT.

The fitness assessment consists of a 2.4km run, 5km walk, a push-up or flexed-arm hang and sit-up component with pass marks varying depending on your age. Russell Offices PTI CPL Laurie Iljazov says the assessment is designed to test basic fitness and members should always be prepared to pass.

“Taking a week or two off physical activity would not normally be a detriment to your fitness,” he says.

“But you need to watch out for longer absences from work, such as over Christmas, and make sure you keep active during those rest times.” Local PTIs can be a wealth of information and assistance if you require a remedial fitness program after a long absence from physical activity and most of the training can be done at home without equipment.

Most local gyms will have programs available for you to take part in or instruction sheets that you can take and do in your own time.

CPL Iljazov says it is important to look after yourself and ensure you’re in the best shape for the actual assessment.

“If you do PT every day then it might be a good idea to have a rest the day before your assessment,” he says.

“It’s recommended you don’t do a fitness assessment, or any physical training, within 24 hours of receiving inoculations.

“It’s also advisable to stay clear of any alcohol the night before.” As with any physical training, a warm-up and cool-down session is recommended.

However, CPL Iljazov says it is crucial to watch your technique throughout the assessment.

“Take notice of the examples before each component of the test,” he says.

“Not only will you be marked down if you display incorrect or unacceptable technique but it could potentially cause an injury.”

He says to watch for poor technique, which can happen due to having weaker muscles.

Planking and upper back and other strengthening exercises can ensure you have the strength required to perform the best techniques to pass your assessment.

For more information, speak to your local PTIs.

Life challenges are indiscriminate and broad ranging. HELP IS AVAILABLE to address service-related or personal challenges that can impact on service.

Reservists who render service and their families can ACCESS THE RESERVE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ON 1300 361 008 for confidential, independent, cost free counselling.

Officer cadets and midshipmen take the Initial Fitness Assessment. Photo: John Carroll

Check out our comprehensive range of boots from Altama, Crossfire, Garmont Meindl and Tracerlite.

www.airforceshop.com.au/boots or Air Force Shop at Military Shop 65 Kembla Street Fyshwick Canberra 02 6123 2930
Netballers shoot to the top

SGT Dave Morley

The ADF women’s netball team white-washed the New Zealand Defence Force team in a series of games played in Western Australia either side of Anzac Day.

The games were played at Barcaldine on April 20 (ADF 47 – NZDF 32) Albany on April 22 (33 – 28) and at HBF Stadium in Perth, after the West Coast Fever vs Waikato-Bay of Plenty Magic NZI Champion ship game, on April 26 (41 – 26).

ADF Netball Association publicity officer CMDR Steve Wall said the ADF team was represented by four Air Force, six Army and two Navy players and was selected from the ADF carnival held in Sydney in October 2014.

“Army CPL Mick Kiker coached the team, assisted by CPL Dean Burke with LEUT Lauren Enggs acting as team manager,” he said.

The New Zealanders got off to a great start in the first game, but LS Mel Lavelle, playing in an unfamiliar role, pegged them back.

“Some strong play in the second half by the ADF ladies allowed them to pull away with some strong play in the defensive third by Air Force CPL Lisa Merriman.”

Coordinator of the Air Force team CMDR Steve Wall said.

It was a very proud moment for everyone to have our service publicly recognised at half-time during the Fever vs. Magic game and to have the opportunity to play after the Fever vs. Magic game at such a great venue with a large crowd.” CMDR Wall said the second game proved a close and tense struggle with strong defensive work from both sides keeping the scoring to a minimum.

“LS Lavelle was again great for the team,” he said.

Both teams returned to Perth and had a busy Anzac Day, attending the Dawn Service and march in Fremantle.

They headed to HBF Stadium on April 26 for the ANZ Championship match where all the players and staff were introduced to the crowd of about 1000 at half-time.

CMDR Wall said the stage was set for an exciting game after the Fever defeated the Magic by 55-49.

“In the final game the ADF consolidated their previous wins with a strong performance, led by LT Karmen Sampson in the midcourt and supported well by PTE Shannon O’Grady in the goal third converting many of the turnover opportunities created into scores,” he said.

LT Karmen Sampson was awarded the most valuable player of the series with the NZ co-captain LEUT Keri Hayden named runner up.

FLTLT Brewer said CPL Merriman proved once again to be very strong in defence.

“Without a strong defensive end, such large wins would not have been possible,” she said.

“CPL Merriman also showed great team spirit on and off the court always cheering on her team mates.”

Lace up those skates, ice hockey an official ADF sport

Eamon Hamilton

AIRMEN and women soon have the chance to hip-check and take slap shots with impunity as ice hockey an official ADF sport

The ADF Ice Hockey Association (ADFIHA) vice-president SQNLDR Simon West said the association has grown to 147 members, and held its first training camp from March 30 to April 1.

“We do have a significant portion of ex-patriots or lateral transfer members, or those who lived overseas when they were growing up,” he said.

“Over 70 members are currently playing in Ice Hockey Australia leagues around the country.”

Seventy members attended the Sydney training camp that began with skills training and practice matches before the final match was played between the top 20 players in front of the Commissioner of the Australian Ice Hockey League (AIHL), a semi-professional ice Hockey league and the highest national level of competition.

SQNLDR West said the Chair of the ADF Sports Council approved Ice Hockey as an ADF Sport on February 24, and the immediate goal for ADFIHA was to gain full membership within Ice Hockey Australia.

“This will allow ADF teams to participate in leagues, tournaments and other events around the country,” SQNLDR West said.

“This is likely to include ADF teams in regular Tournaments for open, masters and women’s categories.”

The association plans to hold its first inter-service competition in November.

More information is available at ADFIceHockey.defence.gov.au or www.facebook.com/ADFIHA

Futsal teams give it their all

CPL Ben Mann and FLOGOFF Laura Haw were voted most valuable players by their respective teammates.

CPL Lauren Cooper takes on Victorian Women’s Football League players in the Anzac clash in Melbourne.

LEUT Matthew Cavedon and LS Jayson Tufrey

THE ADF Australian Rules Men’s All Star representative side scored a nail-biting win against an old foe in the dying stages of an Anzac Day AFL curtain-raiser.

In a repeat of last year’s win against the Australian Combined Emergency Services (ACES) side, the ADF team took out the match at Adelaide Oval in the warm-up game of the AFL Blockbuster between Port Adelaide and Hawthorn.

After a five year period the ACES dominance was ended in 2014 and the ADF were determined to keep the Anzac Challenge trophy where it belonged, in their trophy cabinet.

The 100 year anniversary of the Anzac Legacy added to the internal performance expectation of the ADF team.

No. 75 Squadron’s AC Patrick Gallery said it was a fantastic experience to play in the curtain raiser for such a prestigious game.

“I ran, on, on the wing, and felt like I had a good game – it was great to be a part of a side with so many skilled players,” he said.

The ADF team benefited from a week preparing for the game at the Port Adelaide AFL football club.

Port Adelaide club legend Russel Ebert was instrumental in providing the ADF players with a top-to-bottom understanding of how Port Adelaide football club functions and what is required of an AFL player at the highest level.

The talented and experienced ACES side intensely took it up to the ADF team from the first bounce.

In front of about 30,000 people, with the scores tied and approximately 10 seconds remaining in the game it was SMN Brayden Wilson, from HMAS Sydney, who slotted the winning goal fulfilling every footy lover’s childhood dream and sealing a ‘heart-stopping’ win for the ADF.

AC Gallery said the day would stay with him for a long time.

“It was amazing to play in front of so many people,” he said.

“The conditions were pretty greasy out there after a day of drizzling rain, but the surface of Adelaide Oval was immaculate, great to play on.

“A hard hitting four quarters, and with the score still pretty low, it was looking like a draw – it was a relief when we kicked the winning goal in the dying seconds.”

Although the rivalry is intense between the two sides it is played with a focus on sportsmanship and respect, the ADF team are already looking forward to the next instalment in 2016.

For detailed game results go to the ADFAR webpage www.adfar.org or follow ‘ADF Aussie Rules’ on Facebook.

ADFA All Star team members tackle an Australian Combined Emergency Services player during the Anzac Day 2015 AFL clash.

Photo: CPL Colin Davis.

THE ADF Women’s All Stars Australian rules football team have tasted success for the third year in a row with a two-point victory against the Victorian Women’s Football League All Stars in the annual Anzac clash played at Shpley Oval, Dandenong, Melbourne.

CPL Eliza Oates, who was voted the players’ player, said she was proud of all the girls’ efforts to fight hard on the field, and once again hold on to the Geoff Ledger Cup.

“The team did really well considering the tough conditions and short training time. Every member of the team put in 100 per cent and their hard work definitely paid off for us,” she said.

The ADF, who were picked following the National Carnival in March, had a slow start against the Victorian side, but, after a motivating speech from Coach, MAJ Dani Glatz, the team managed to turn around the performance and take home the victory in the 3.9.27 to 4.1.25.

“Much like last year the game was very stressful, it depends on attitude and I’m really proud that when it came down to it the girls had the right attitude when the pressure was on,” MAJ Glatz said.

Best on ground awards went to PTE Louella McCarthy and PO Tricia Muller, who both had an outstanding game.

“The quality we were up against was the best we have seen and the talent of the ADF players was the highest standard that I’ve ever played with across the board,” PO Muller said.

With a mainly Army and Navy team, MAJ Glatz talked about the important contribution from the two RAAF players.

“RAAF has had a long enduring part of the game and counter attack. Our weaknesses were few (passing and positioning) that stemmed from a lack of preparation having only trained together once before the competition. As long as we can keep this core group together we can only get better,” he said.

FLGOFF Haws said the competition was a lot of fun and was played at a really high standard.

“I enjoyed the skill and speed of futsal,” she said. “We had a strong turn out. The majority of us had played soccer before, but many were new to Futsal. As a result, an obvious weakness was our experience levels, understanding of creating rotational movement.”

FLGOFF Haws said the attitude, aggression and intensity demonstrated by the girls was first class.

“I think as the day went on, our ability to keep possession, create scoring opportunities and man-mark the opposition increased exponentially,” she said.

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“The quality we were up against was the best we have seen and the talent of the ADF players was the highest standard that I’ve ever played with across the board,” PO Muller said.

With a mainly Army and Navy team, MAJ Glatz talked about the important contribution from the two RAAF players.

“RAAF has had a long enduring part of the game and counter attack. Our weaknesses were few (passing and positioning) that stemmed from a lack of preparation having only trained together once before the competition. As long as we can keep this core group together we can only get better,” he said.

FLGOFF Haws said the competition was a lot of fun and was played at a really high standard.

“I enjoyed the skill and speed of futsal,” she said. “We had a strong turn out. The majority of us had played soccer before, but many were new to Futsal. As a result, an obvious weakness was our experience levels, understanding of creating rotational movement.”

FLGOFF Haws said the attitude, aggression and intensity demonstrated by the girls was first class.

“I think as the day went on, our ability to keep possession, create scoring opportunities and man-mark the opposition increased exponentially,” she said.

THE ADFF Women’s All Stars Australian rules football team have tasted success for the third year in a row with a two-point victory against the Victorian Women’s Football League All Stars in the annual Anzac clash played at Shpley Oval, Dandenong, Melbourne.

CPL Eliza Oates, who was voted the players’ player, said she was proud of all the girls’ efforts to fight hard on the field, and once again hold on to the Geoff Ledger Cup.

“The team did really well considering the tough conditions and short training time. Every member of the team put in 100 per cent and their hard work definitely paid off for us,” she said.

The ADF, who were picked following the National Carnival in March, had a slow start against the Victorian side, but, after a motivating speech from Coach, MAJ Dani Glatz, the team managed to turn around the performance and take home the victory in the 3.9.27 to 4.1.25.

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ON THE eve of the Anzac centenary, the Australian Services Rugby Union (ASRU) team lined up against the New Zealand Defence Force in a unique commemoration to all who have served and those who serve today.

For FLTLT Arthur Iconomou it wasn’t a game he will easily forget. “It was an honour and a privilege to play for ASRU in the Anzac centenary test,” he said. “I was honoured to have this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to represent Australia and do my part to help people remember those who have given their lives for this great country.”

The teams fought for the title in the curtain-raiser to the Brumbies and Hurricane Super Rugby at GIO Stadium in Canberra. The Kiwis triumphed 25-13 in an intense game. The passion was evident from the outset as the Kiwis performed a stirring haka before an advancing line of Australians with arms linked in solidarity.

ASRU put points on the board first with a penalty awarded in centre field. PTE Mahn Darley coolly kicked the ball over the cross bar. New Zealand gathered the troops in-goal and whatever was said had impact as they immediately had the Aussies on the back foot. ASRU head coach WO Tony Doherty pulled positives from the first half, but said the strengths in the opposition needed to be nullified. “The highlight for ASRU in the first half was the scrimmaging of the forward pack that provided the backs with opportunities to attack,” he said. The standout player of the first half was CAPT Jason Squires who dominated his larger opponent, particularly in the scrum.

WO Doherty acknowledged the New Zealand team was more urgent to win the ball at the breakdown and capitalised on their opportunities. After a five-minute half-time turnaround, the game restarted at a more controlled pace. The ASRU Warriors managed to implement their game plan, resulting in a try to winger FLTLT Arthur Iconomou.

“This was on the back of some spectacular one-handed lineout takes by AB Aaron Loudon, resulting in good driving mauls from the forwards,” WO Doherty said. As the game wore on, fitness became an issue for the ASRU team.

FLTLT Robbie Harlow, of 28SQN Combat Communications Support Flight, kicks the ball for the Australian Services Rugby Union against the New Zealand Defence Force Rugby team. Photo: LCPL Kyle Genner

Captain FLTLT Robbie Harlow said the team would be working on stamina for future events. “In our lead up to the International Defence Rugby Competition the teams needs to ensure their preparation and work-up for the UK tour is the highest standard,” he said. “We want to be hitting peak performance. This will mean that when all members come into camp, the team can focus on playing well as unit as our fitness will already be there. It is then that I think we will be a force to be reckoned with.”

WO Doherty echoed FLTLT Harlow’s sentiment. “The take-home message from the game is that there was improvement from when the ASRU team last played in Darwin, last year,” he said. “This was evident in the players’ understanding of the game plan and ability to execute it at times during this match. “Working on our fitness in the lead up to the IDRC and the ability to have a few extra days in camp will assist the players knowing each other and learning to play together.”

The award for ASRU’s best player went to CPL Craig Rogerson.

Final score: New Zealand 25, ASRU 13.

Point scorers for ASRU: PTE Mahn Darley one conversion and two penalties, FLTLT Arthur Iconomou one try.

FLTLT Robbie Harlow, of 28SQN Combat Communications Support Flight, kicks the ball for the Australian Services Rugby Union against the New Zealand Defence Force Rugby team. Photo: LCPL Kyle Genner

GAME OF THE CENTENARY
Our first air campaign

Just a month after the Anzacs landed at Gallipoli, Australian Flying Corps’ Half Flight confronted Turkish forces.
A month after the Anzacs landed at Gallipoli, the deployment of the Australian Flying Corps’ Half Flight to Mesopotamia marked the beginning of the first air campaign by Australian airmen, the Office of Air Force History reports.

When the Mesopotamian Half Flight launched its aircraft on a reconnaissance mission on May 31, 1915, it marked the beginning of the first air campaign undertaken by Australian aviators.

The Mesopotamian campaign, which included Australian and New Zealand personnel, was part of the broader Mesopotamian campaign, also known as the Mesopotamian campaign, which was conducted by the British and their allies against the Ottoman Empire during World War I. The campaign was fought in what is now Iraq, and its aim was to capture Baghdad, the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

The Mesopotamian Half Flight, which consisted of seven qualified pilots, was one of the first air units to be deployed to the Western Front during World War I. The flight was formed in early 1915 and was initially based at Basra, in southern Iraq. The flight was commanded by Captain Henry Petre, who was one of the first and most senior of the Australian Flying Corps’ pilots.

The Mesopotamian Half Flight was tasked with a range of missions, including reconnaissance, spotting for ground forces, and towing balloons. The flight was also involved in the capture of several Ottoman airfields, which resulted in the capture of several Ottoman aircraft.

Throughout the siege, attempts were made to keep the garrison supplied and observe the situation. The flight was able to observe the enemy's movements and the air bridge was ably supported by the Australian mechanics.
LT George Pinnock Merz

LT George Merz was Australia’s first military aviation war casualty and his loss was a tragedy for the Half Flight in more ways than one. He had graduated from Melbourne University in 1913 with a medical degree, and as well as being one of Australia’s first military pilots, was greatly valued as a doctor.

He had joined the Melbourne University Rifles, but transferred to the Flying Corps as a member of the first pilot’s course at Point Cook.

Upon graduation, he, CAPT Eric Harrison and four other ranks were sent to New Guinea with the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force to assist with the capture of the German outpost. The aircraft that accompanied them was never used, so they returned to Australia without having seen action.

On July 30, after completing a reconnaissance of Nasiriyeh in a Caudron, LT Merz and LT William Burn, of the New Zealand Staff Corps, as observer landed in the desert near Abu Salibiq with engine trouble.

The pair went missing and, after searching, LT Will Wills SSgt Cyril Heath, an Arab river pilot and two Indian soldiers used a ‘bellum’ – a form of flat-bottomed boat – to investigate. For this effort, SGT Heath was later awarded the only AFC Distinguished Conduct Medal for the war. His citation read, “For considerable pluck and determination in Mesopotamia on 1st August 1915, when he assisted to pole a bellum 28 miles in 12 hours, in most intense heat, in order to rescue aviators who had been forced to descend in the enemy’s territory.” Despite his and LT Wills’ efforts, LTs Merz and Burn were never found.

According to Arab reports, the missing aviators were attacked by marauding Arabs and although the pair put up a good running fight covering more than 8km using their service revolvers in defence they were killed. Their hacked apart aircraft was located two days later and was returned to the depot for salvage.

While much is made of the Gallipoli Anzac spirit, unheralded is the fact that Australia and New Zealand’s first air casualties were LT Merz and LT Burn who died together, beginning the close relationship the two air forces still share today.

CAPT Thomas White

TOMMY White joined the Australian Flying Corps as one of the first student pilots at Point Cook in 1914. In April 1915, he was appointed captain and adjutant of the Half Flight and arrived in Basra for flying duties.

He and his fellow Australians began flying in May and soon developed a reputation for daring and skill. CAPT White pioneered the use of aerial photography in Iraq, although its success was limited.

It was CAPT White’s other aerial adventures which remain enduring. On October 22, engine trouble forced CAPTs White and Frank Yeats-Brown, an Indian Army observer, down near Zoor. CAPT Yeats-Brown, armed with only a rifle, acted as guard and navigator while CAPT White taxed the aircraft back across the rocky ground.

The audacity of the move must have stunned the Turks, who never fired a shot. After taxiing for 24km, the engine picked up and they were able to fly home. It was a remarkable escape.

In early November, CAPT White rescued MAJ SEN George Kemball, the chief of staff to the commander who had been forced down in enemy territory when one of the Short seaplanes in which he was a passenger developed engine trouble. Landing close by, CAPT White returned to the general area to camp, leaving the seaplane pilot and a salvage crew to get the seaplane out.

On November 13, 1915, CAPT White, in a Longhorn with CAPT Frank Yeats-Brown, volunteered for a mission to cut the main telegraph line running from Turkey to Baghdad. Carrying necklaces of gun-cotton and extra tins of fuel and oil, the pair discovered that the telegraph wire ran westward from Baghdad along the main road and not out into the desert as the maps depicted.

As Turkish troops were constantly moving along the road, it was inevitable they would be caught. Although landing in a spot where the surface looked smooth, the aircraft crashed into a telegraph pole and was badly damaged. Despite the arrival of an armed party, CAPT Yeats-Brown managed to blow up the wires while under fire as CAPT White refuelled the aircraft, hoping to taxi it to safety as he had done previously. But his efforts were to no avail, and they were captured and interned.

CAPT White later escaped after two-and-a-half years in captivity, recalling his story in his book Guests of the Unpeachable. In July 1918, he escaped from a train in Constantinople (now Is- tanbul), travelled through Ukraine and Russia and eventually made his way to England aboard a cargo ship, arriving in December.

After the war, he turned to politics and served the Lyons government as Minister for Trade. Taking leave from Parliament, he joined the Citizen Air Force and served as a group captain in WWII.

Post-war, he returned to politics as Minister for Air and Civil Aviation in the late 1940s. He ended his working life as Australia’s High Commissioner in London. He was knighted for his services in 1952 and died in South Yarra in 1957.

MAJ Henry Petre

HENRY Alloysius Petre was an English solicitor who had earned his pilot’s wings in 1911.

Petre, whose name is pronounced Peter, came to be known as Peter the Monk because of his quiet and introverted demeanor.

Responding to an advertisement in the paper for an aviator to set up a flying school in Australia, he applied, was accepted and commissioned honorary lieutenant in the Aviation Instructional Staff, Australian Military Forces.

In 1913, he set about founding the flying school at Point Cook in Victoria. After the Indian government requested Australia provide aviators for Mesopotamia in early 1915, Petre was appointed to command the Half Flight. By June 1915, the flight was in action with Petre leading from the front.

After the fall of Kut in 1916, Petre was the last remaining Australian pilot.

The Half Flight was officially disbanded in December 1916, replaced by No. 30 Squadron Royal Flying Corps.

Petre became ill with enteritis, transferred to India where he recovered and eventually returned to England to command No. 29 (Training) Squadron, Australian Flying Corps, at Shawbury.

In 1918, he transferred to the Royal Flying Corps where his final posting was to command No. 75 (Home Defence) Squadron.

For his service, Petre was awarded the Distinguished Service Order, the Military Cross and was Mentioned in Dispatches three times.

After the war, he returned to his law practice and only briefly visited Australia and Point Cook in 1961. He died in London in 1962.