

Bass Hill RSL Sub-Branch

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"The price of liberty is eternal vigilance"

Newsletter

Issue 105

August, 2021

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For service, ring the Secretary, Gary Roser on 0409 919 364

EDITORIAL Gary Roser, Editor**



What can I say about the current situation that the world is in. Bloody Wuhan Virus, now the Indian virus.

We are critical of the actions of our Government, but it's easy to be an armchair critic. I would hate to be in the position of the Prime Minister or a Premier of any State. But that's what they wanted. To represent the people and make the hard decisions. Well they certainly have that.

I ask everyone to have their vaccinations. If we don't have a large majority (and they say 80%) vaccinated, then the lockdowns will continue.

There is a lot of fear being spread about vaccination. But the alternative can be death if you don't. I know. It's your decision. But I do hope you do get vaccinated so we don't have to do a funeral eulogy for you.

***The editorial is entirely my own opinion and does not reflect the Sub-Branch Executive.*

| Sub-Branch Meetings | |
|---|--------------------------|
| <u>Committee</u> | <u>Sub-Branch</u> |
| Mondays 5:00pm | Sundays 10:30am |
| All Meetings in September CANCELLED | |
| 18 October? | 24 October? |
| 11am, 11 November ? "Remembrance Day" | |
| 22 November? | 28 November? |

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

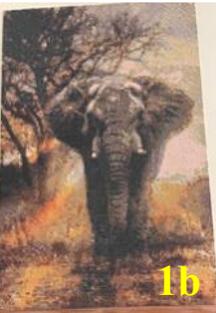
Morning All

One thing that this currant lockdown has done is to find things to do to keep us from having cabin fever. I know that I suffer from this in a big way and need a great deal of mental stimulus to keep the black dog at bay.

Since we are not able to meet or travel anywhere, for some of us living in retirement villages where social interaction is not possible, to keep and physical state good can be a great challenge.

I have several projects that are helping to keep from getting depressed and help to get through this challenging period in our lives.

Living in Port Moresby in the early sixties after tea as a family we would spend time *paint by numbers*, now in the year 2021 I have done several small pictures using paint with diamonds (Picture 1).



Currently doing a large picture of a tiger (1a) and on the wall a completed picture of an elephant (1b)

As one cannot play golf or other activities 24 hours a day, I make models of ships from kits



not only for myself but others as well. Pictures 2 & 3 are of *HMS Supply*, one of the ships in the first fleet. This is a commission for someone else, and I hope to finish it soon.

I wish you well and look forward to when we can meet again.

Keep safe, Ralph



More lockdown hobbies on pages 26 & 27

Buổi sáng tất cả

Một điều mà vụ khóa trái cà chua này đã làm được là tìm ra những điều cần làm để giúp chúng ta không bị sốt cabin. Tôi biết rằng tôi phải chịu đựng điều này một cách nghiêm trọng và cần phải được kích thích tinh thần rất nhiều để giữ cho con chó đen hoạt động.

Vì chúng tôi không thể gặp gỡ hoặc đi du lịch ở bất cứ đâu, đối với một số người trong chúng tôi sống trong các làng hưu trí, nơi không thể giao tiếp xã hội, để giữ được trạng thái thể chất tốt có thể là một thách thức lớn.

Tôi có một số dự án giúp chúng ta không bị trầm cảm và vượt qua giai đoạn đầy thử thách này trong cuộc sống của chúng ta.

1 Sống ở Port Moresby vào đầu những năm 60 sau bữa trà như một gia đình, chúng tôi dành thời gian vẽ tranh theo các con số, bây giờ vào năm 2021, tôi đã thực hiện một số bức tranh nhỏ bằng cách sử dụng sơn với kim cương (hình 1).

2 Hiện đang làm một bức tranh lớn về một con hổ và trên tường là một bức tranh hoàn chỉnh của một con voi

3 Vì một người không thể chơi gôn hoặc các hoạt động khác 24 giờ một ngày, tôi làm mô hình tàu thủy từ bộ dụng cụ không chỉ cho bản thân mà còn cho những người khác. Hình 2 & 3 là của HMS Supply, một trong những con tàu trong hạm đội đầu tiên. Đây là hoa hồng cho người khác, và tôi hy vọng sẽ hoàn thành nó sớm.

Tôi chúc bạn khỏe và mong khi chúng ta có thể gặp lại nhau

Giữ an toàn, Ralph

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Absolutely nothing to report during Covid.

Sorry about that.. The Club is closed and we can't get into the office. This Newsletter is printed by the sub-Branch printers at my place and Ron's. Keep safe people.

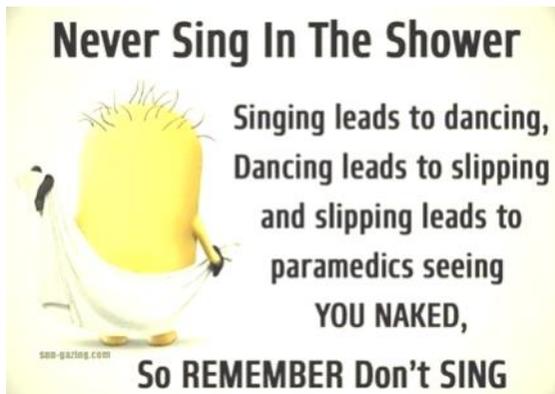
Gary Roser, Hon. Secretary



You Know When Your Over the Hill When.....



"Try to relax."



Note to Self:

Do not sit on the floor without a plan on how to get back up.

Once you hit a certain age you become permanently unimpressed by a lot of stuff.

The Fake Bomb

This story has been told in many ways, where locations of where the airfield was and how it was bombed being different but the gist is this:

An enemy decoy airfield, built in occupied Holland, led to a tale that has been told and retold every since by veteran Allied pilots. The German "airfield," was constructed with meticulous care, made almost entirely of wood. There were wooden hangars, oil tanks, gun emplacements, trucks, and aircraft.

The Germans took so long in building their wooden decoy that Allied photo experts had more than enough time to observe and report it. The day finally came when the decoy was finished, down to the last wooden plank. And early the following morning a lone RAF plane crossed the Channel, came in low, circled the field once, and dropped a large wooden bomb.

Could this story be true? The use of decoy airfields and other make-believe facilities during the Second World War was no legend at all.

Both sides tried to fool each other and there is no doubt that the Germans built wooden airplanes and sometimes complete airfields to keep the allies away from the actual airfields. They also painted bomb damage on existing airfields to make them look unusable and spare them from further bombing.

Operation Fortitude was the Allied deception operation to make the Germans believe that the invasion would take place at the Pas de Calais and not at Normandy. An entire fake army group under George S Patton Jr was set up, complete with fake airplanes, tanks and cannons.

Still, there are a lot of aspects of the story that make it seem more like an urban myth than reality:

Just as there is strategic value in fooling your enemy, there is also strategic value in allowing your enemy to continue believing he has you fooled even after you've caught onto his plans. That's a considerable advantage to throw away merely for the sake of a minor "up yours" stunt.

The proposed scheme (particularly the version quoted at the top of this page, which states the use of a single plane and bomb) is fraught with possibilities for failure that could easily have rendered it pointless.

What if the Germans didn't see the "bomb" fall from the plane? What if they watched it fall but didn't know what it was, and it broke into unrecognizable pieces when it hit the ground? What if it landed off-target

and the Germans never found it? (And why not send someone along to film the event, thereby greatly increasing its propagandic value?)

The Germans used plenty of real anti-aircraft guns around their fake airfields, if the Allies were to bomb one of their fake airfields, they would be received with real anti-aircraft fire. If there were no anti-aircraft guns around a fake airfield the Allies would quickly surmise something fishy was going on.

Would you risk one or more aircrews to drop a wooden bomb on an airfield just for laughs? Giving the fact that the life expectancy as a (bomber) pilot wasn't that high, it is highly doubtful that any could be found that would risk real Ack Ack to drop a wooden bomb.

However a book has been written on the subject, French author Pierre-Antoine Courable and his Belgian cohort Jean Dewaerheid have brought the force of serious research to the seven-decade-old legend of Allied bomber crews hitting fake German airfields with fake British bombs.

According to Vintage Wings of Canada, n 2009, Courable published his book which, for this writer, finally proves with absolutely thorough research and the first-hand accounts witnesses that everyone said never existed that the wooden bombs for wooden targets skit actually happened.. and many times. A year later, the long-sought star witness for Courable's thesis, a Luftwaffe pilot by the name of Oberstleutnant Werner Thiel came forward and was videotaped corroborating the story of the Allied air force's joke.

<https://www.facebook.com/100004459470939/posts/191360570546472/>

During WW2, the Germans built a fake wooden airfield with wooden aircraft, vehicles, and hangars in order to trick the Allies. The RAF, having known of the secret project for months, patiently waited for them to finish and then dropped a single fake wooden bomb on it



View of a Messerschmitt Bf 109 decoy sitting on the ground. Two other Messerschmitts are visible in the background. SI A-50270, Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives.

The Diggers Darling

The Owen Gun, officially known as the Owen Machine Carbine submachine gun, is the only weapon entirely designed in Australia and was assembled right here in the Illawarra.

The 'Digger's Darling' as it came to be known, was designed by keen inventor Evelyn 'Evo' Owen in 1938. Evo was born and raised in Wollongong and attended Wollongong Highschool. In 1939 he designed this .22 calibre machine gun and showed it to the



Australian Army who had little interest in this type of weapon at the time.

After Owen enlisted in 1940, his father's neighbour, who happened to be manager of local steel works Lysaghts, observed the weapon and saw its potential. Owen was reluctantly moved to the Army Inventions Board to develop the weapon. Although the Army still had little interest in it, the government did, and the Owen gun went through a series of design trials using differing types of ammunition, until the final design was perfected.

The John Lysaght factories at Port Kembla and Newcastle produced the weapons and between March 1942 and February 1943 28,000 Owen guns were produced. Some 45,000 were made from 1942-44.

Soldiers appreciated the weapon for its reliability and soldiers from other countries took to the Owen gun with the United States and New Zealand placing orders. The gun was also used in the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

The Owen gun was used by the Australian Army up until the mid 1960s when it was replaced by the F1 submachine gun.

In the photos above, a display of Owen sub-machine guns can be seen being transported on a truck in a procession through the streets of Sydney. This parade was performed to demonstrate the immensity of the war effort in Australian munition factories.

The tanks, guns, fighting vehicles and lorries carrying products of Australian munition workers, numbered nearly 400 and took an hour to pass a given point. The photo is dated 12 December 1942.

Photographer: Ronald Keith Monro from the collection of the Australian War Memorial.

Apparently we can't visit our relatives homes but estate agents can buy and sell houses. So i've put my house on the market and mum and dad are coming for a viewing at 3.30 🤔🤔



First it was, alcohol kills Covid. Then heat may kill Covid. Now direct sunlight may kill Covid. So if you see me outside in my yard drunk, naked and laying in the sun, Mind your own business. I'm conducting important medical experiments.



Food For Thought

THE WAR IS OVER FINALLY EARLY AND FOR WHAT ?
WHY DON'T WE KNOW HOW TO WIN AGAINST
INSURGENTS ?

The withdrawal of the last Australian military personnel from Afghanistan was officially announced on Sunday, although virtually all our people left in June, five months before the scheduled retreat of the Americans (although most of them have long gone too) on the ominous 11 September .

The enemy – the Taliban, Al Qaeda and other extremist Muslim militia – have been taking back the country for some months now as Allied forces leave the ground. No one expects the Afghan government to survive more than another few months at best .

Which begs the question; what was it all FOR ?

Australia – as a member of international coalitions – has only been involved in two shooting wars in the last half-century.

And we have lost both of them.

It wasn't our fault either in Vietnam or Afghanistan. We were a small part of a war machine built by the United States of America, had no role in determining strategy and pretty much went along for the ride with our big mates.

Now, readers, the way that you and we as Serving Members or Veterans of the Australian Defence Force view this whole question is different to that of our "civvie" cousins; we all wanted to go to war (except for our conscripts in the 1960's; why join the military if you don't?) and either did or would have welcomed the chance to fight in either conflict.

Approximately 60,000 Australians served in the Vietnam War (1962 – 73) while only about half that number went to Afghanistan. 521 were killed in Vietnam, around 3,000 wounded while 41 men died in Afghan and some 261 have been reported wounded.

Proportionally, then, massive credit redounds to our combat commanders in Afghan for their effective handling of our forces at minimal human cost.

But all things in life are relative, including "minimal human cost."

If one of those dead soldiers was your son or mate, or if you are battling life-changing injuries from an Improvised Explosive Device, it's not quite so minimal.

Each of the wars differs massively topographically, politically, technologically from the other . But both were insurgencies.

Why is it that the two greatest imperialist powers in the history of the world – Great Britain and the U.S.A. – don't know how to win a war against insurgents and give no indication of trying to learn?

Australia went to both wars ... 'cos, well, that's what you DO, don't you?

The other Services played only bit parts in both, especially Afghanistan, the heavy lifting falling to ARMY. A low-intensity conflict like Afghan was a godsend to all nations involved, allowing their forces to rotate through the war zone at their own pace and all getting enough of a taste of warfighting to suit them.

The war changed the nature of soldiering in the Australian ARMY in many ways, not just tactically.

Whereas in years gone by people joined ARMY for a lifetime or long-term career, many young blokes signed up just for four years so that they could get a "trip" to Afghan, the "gongs" that went with that and then were straight out the barracks gates upon their return.

No drama and gods bless them all for their service.

But if we can spend \$90Bn buying you-beaut new submarines, couldn't we PLEASE spend a little time and money putting clever buggers in a room somewhere so that they can work out how to beat baggy-arsed guerrillas?

This is the personal opinion of [Stephen Meagher-Muchien](#)

Melbourne Patriots and Veterans, [Australian Military History](#) | [Facebook](#)



ADF helps with food hampers *By Captain Martin Hadley*



Army personnel and OzHarvest volunteers prepare dry and fresh food hampers in the OzHarvest warehouse at Alexandria, Sydney, a part of Operation COVID-19 Assist.

Photo: Corporal Dustin Anderson

As a part of Operation COVID-19 Assist, ADF personnel are supporting non-government organisations in Sydney to prepare and distribute food care packages to those in need.

A number of ADF Joint Task Group 629.1 members helped OzHarvest staff and volunteers pack food hampers in their warehouse in Alexandria.

OzHarvest Hamper Program Manager Shannon

Richardson said that the ADF, NSW Police and emergency services were helping OzHarvest to scale up the volume of their hamper deliveries as demand grows.

“Before COVID we were delivering around 2000 parcels each week. This has now doubled and continues to grow,” Ms Richardson said.

“The hampers are part of the government-funded food program and are sent to charities and vulnerable people across greater Sydney, though most of these will go to communities in Western Sydney who are experiencing difficulty in lockdown.”

Ms Richardson said because of COVID-19 restrictions the number of volunteers available had diminished. “Because of the huge scale up in the operation we have asked the ADF to help prepare the hampers, with the goal of packing as many as we possibly can,” Ms Richardson said.

Seaman Michael Gleeson said he was happy to be helping. “I think it is great that the ADF can come down to help with packaging up both dry and fresh food into these hampers,” Seaman Gleeson said.

“We are working closely with volunteers and staff from OzHarvest and getting through a high volume of hampers, which will go out to a lot of people who really need it.”

The NSW Government has requested an extra 300 ADF personnel on top of the 250 who are currently assisting with airport and hotel quarantine programs.

They are performing support tasks to assist NSW Health and the NSW Police, from supporting their COVID-19 welfare and compliance monitoring to assisting with contact tracing and vaccinations at vaccination centres.

For more information about ADF support to the COVID-19 pandemic visit:

[Latest updates - Operation COVID-19 Assist | Defence News](#)

A safe haven for refugees *By Lieutenant Max Logan*

Afghan evacuees are welcomed into a safe and comfortable camp facility when they arrive at Australia's main operating base in the Middle East.

The temporary camp was established in conjunction with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for the evacuees as they transit through the region bound for Australia.

With air-conditioned accommodation, showers, laundry facilities and regular meals, the camp is a safe haven for those who have escaped a dangerous and volatile Afghanistan.

Camp Commandant Australian Army officer Major Joel Bell said it was some of the small things that could make all the difference.

"We've provided soccer balls and a cricket set so people can enjoy themselves while they're here, as well as hot meals – all the things we take for granted back home," he said.

"The small things matter and the people here have come from a very traumatic situation.

"The camp is a safe haven and a place for evacuees to rest and be looked after to make sure they feel safe."

"When you see the smiles on the kids' faces after they've arrived on the plane, frightened, the challenges we've faced along the way seem insignificant.

"To see families coming from such a desperate situation and for a few days being able to make them feel safe and welcome, giving them that first taste of what it is to be an Australian – that's the best part of it."

The ADF will continue to support Australian Government efforts to evacuate Australian citizens, visa holders and approved personnel from Afghanistan.

Excerpt from <https://news.defence.gov.au/international/safe-haven-refugees>



Hobart Class Destroyers, HMA Ships Hobart, Brisbane and Sydney, work together at sea for the first time off the east coast of Australia, setting the standard for Australian blue water combat capability in the region. Showcasing their capability as a state-of-the-art maritime force, the DDGs conducted joint tests, trials and exercises to demonstrate and further develop their air and surface warfare capabilities, and solidify their value to maintaining a stable Indo-Pacific region.

The Royal Australian Navy's most advanced warships are now ready for operational deployment, boosting Australia's capacity to work with our strategic partners and maintain peace and prosperity in our region.

Navy's Hobart-class Air Warfare Destroyers have reached final operational capability after the third ship, HMAS *Sydney*, completed a successful test and evaluation period off the coast of the US and Canada.

Chief of the Royal Australian Navy Vice Admiral Michael Noonan said the milestone ushered in a new era for Navy.

"Navy's three Hobart-class destroyers use a number of systems in common with the US Navy, which allows our ships to be fully interchangeable with the most advanced allied naval force in the Indo-Pacific region," Vice Admiral Noonan said.

“Australian destroyers are a key contribution to the Australia-United States alliance and will be employed in maintaining the peace and prosperity of our region for the next 30 years.

“Due to the ever-changing strategic environment, the Hobart class will continue to be upgraded with the latest weapons and sensors over coming years in order to maintain a capability edge.”

About 5,000 skilled Australians have worked for or on the Air Warfare Destroyer program over the past decade, and more than 2,700 different suppliers were involved in *Sydney*'s construction.

Sydney returned to Australia in July after a successful test period, which included missile firings against low-altitude and supersonic targets.

Vice Admiral Noonan said the Hobart-class Air Warfare Destroyers were the most capable warships in Australia's naval history.

“They are equipped with layered defensive and offensive capabilities for above water, surface and undersea warfare,” he said.

“Our destroyers are a force multiplier for the Australian Defence Force and a key element of the Joint Force Integrated Air and Missile Defence capability.”

Find out more about Navy's guided-missile destroyers at

<https://www.navy.gov.au/fleet/ships-boats-craft/ddg>



"I see you finally sewed on my button."



One dream inspires another

By Sub Lieutenant Nancy Cotton



Then-Lieutenant Fatena El-Masri on board HMAS Melbourne (III) where she was the only female in her division and worked as the deputy weapons electrical engineering officer.

As a child growing up in Lebanon, Lieutenant Commander Fatena El-Masri dreamed of being an astronaut, but she now has other dreams.

Her love of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects is driving her new dream to set up a program to encourage children studying those disciplines.

“There are a lot of smart kids out there who may not have the right people around them

to encourage them, guide them and keep them focused on STEM: I have a dream to do that,” Lieutenant Commander El-Masri said.

Her drive and determination resulted in her becoming the first female Arab pilot to fly over Lebanon.

“I was the only girl in my engineering class in Lebanon and wanted to do something different so got an internship with an airline as an avionics engineer,” she said.

“I loved it but wanted to fly, too, so I tutored mathematics to pay for my flying tuition and became a pilot flying Cessna 150 planes”.

Lieutenant Commander El-Masri joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1995 as a deputy weapons electrical engineering officer (WEEO).

She said she enjoyed the work but her foreign language skills also proved useful.

“I love the ocean. As a WEEO, my job was to make sure the communications, combat systems, information and ammunition systems were all compliant,” she said.

“Speaking four languages also came in handy during our time in the Persian Gulf.”

With a PhD in Computational Science (Applied Mathematics and

Statistics), her focus now is building Navy's capability in artificial intelligence (Ai) and machine learning (ML).

Working as a reservist for the Defence Science and Technology Group, she said the work was extremely interesting and important as it would assist Navy with the process of decision-making in human-machine teamed environments.

"With Ai, it will provide alternate options to people such as combat systems operators at sea. With their own analysis and understanding of the situation, it could really help them, especially in high-pressure situations," Lieutenant Commander El-Masri said.

"I work with some incredibly smart people. This project is very exciting for the future of Navy and its capability."

With her other hat on, Dr El-Masri also teaches university graduate students advanced econometrics and marketing analytics, which she said she loved as both were very heavy in mathematics and statistics.

"I really enjoy teaching, which is why I would like to be able to help younger children in STEM, too, but working in Navy is also important to me," Lieutenant Commander El-Masri said.

"I still have amazing friends from my Navy community back from my days as a WEEO.

"I am proud to be able to serve in Navy as a reservist and be a part of Navy's future and would one day like to return in a full-time capacity."

<https://news.defence.gov.au/people/one-dream-inspires-another>

THE MIRACLE OF TOILET PAPER

Fresh from my shower, I stand in front of the mirror complaining to my husband that my breasts are too small. Instead of characteristically telling me it's not so, he uncharacteristically comes up with a suggestion.

If you want your breasts to grow, then every day take a piece of toilet paper and rub it between them for a few seconds.

Willing to try anything, I fetch a piece of toilet paper and stand in front of the mirror, rubbing it between my breasts.

'How long will this take?' I asked.

They will grow larger over a period of years,' my husband replies.

I stopped. 'Do you really think rubbing a piece of toilet paper between my breasts every day will make my breasts larger over the years?'

Without missing a beat he says, "Worked for your bum, didn't it?"

He's still alive, he may even walk again but will probably continue to take his meals through a straw for quite some time



Gunner Akbar Joeharris, from the 4th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery, monitors the Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System inside a command post Bushmaster vehicle during Exercise Talisman Sabre.

Photo: Corporal Jarrod McAneney

Joint Fires targeting data can now easily pass between Australian and US units following certification and validation of the latest version of the Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System (AFATDS) on Exercise Talisman Sabre.

During the exercise firepower demonstration, US and Australian artillery observers sent digital targeting data to the Australian Joint Fires and Effects Coordination Centre.

From there, data was routed to a regimental command post

which issued digital orders to US M777A2 Howitzers and Rocket Artillery, as well as Australian M777s.

Australia received the AFATDS upgrade earlier this year, and one of those setting up behind the scenes was Sergeant Dave Fordham, a networking sergeant at the Headquarters 1 Division Joint Fires Coordination Centre.

“On previous exercises we’ve fused systems to make it work. This is the first time we were fully integrated,” Sergeant Fordham said.

“We’re all on the same current version. It’s fully digital with no workarounds. It’s now plug and play, with a little bit of work in the back end.”

AFATDS coordinates and calculates fire missions for mortars, artillery and naval guns, with efforts underway to link it with aircraft.

“It will recommend a solution based on the targeting requirements stipulated by the commander,” Sergeant Fordham said.

“The commander might say ‘when I see a tank, I recommend it be engaged by an aircraft’ or a specific type of munition.

“The system will coordinate the fire onto the target. It will also recommend a solution of where to send that fire mission to.”

The new AFATDS version features additional targeting menus, while the older open map system is retained alongside a new whirlwind 3D imagery mapping engine.

“If you take the time to cache all the imagery, it can produce a really good view of the area you’re operating in,” Sergeant Fordham said.

“As an artilleryman, wherever I go, I can drop that in the back of the system and have the best mapping possible.”

Receiving fire orders via the updated system was Gunner Akbar Joe Harris, an artillery command system operator with the 4th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery.

From the Battery Command Post, he processed AFATDS targeting data.

“It works out the information you need to send bombs down range,” Gunner Joe Harris said. It’s a supercomputer for gunnery.

“We’ll get target numbers, grids, what type of mission it is: like ‘fire for effect’, ‘adjust fire’ ‘at my command’ or ‘when ready’.

“It’s very user-friendly. There are different shortcuts for what we mainly use. Visually, it looks similar to Windows XP menus.”

When target data arrives, Gunner Joe Harris performs a comms check to make sure nothing has dropped out, then checks the data.

He reports the fire mission to the command post officer, who confirms and reads it back.

The mission is then checked for safety.

“Everyone takes their posts and the data goes to the gun line,” Gunner Joe Harris said.

“It sends the guns all the info, like elevations and deflections. Everything it needs to know for the guns to fire.

<https://news.defence.gov.au/international/right-target>

A politician was visiting a remote little rural town in Australia and asked the locals what the government could do for them.

“We have two big needs,” said the townspeople.

“First, we have a hospital but no doctor.”

The politician whipped out his cellphone, spoke for a while and then said, “I have sorted that out. A doctor will arrive here tomorrow. What is your other need?”

The townspeople replied, “We have no mobile phone reception in our town.”

Forces combine for live-fire mission

By Lieutenant Gordon Carr-Gregg



The ADF and the Marine Rotational Force – Darwin (MRF-D) recently conducted a rapid insertion long-range fire mission in the Northern Territory.

Exercise Looby took place this month in the Bradshaw Field Training Area, 350km south of Darwin.

More than 100 United States Marine Corps (USMC) personnel deployed in four MV22B Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft to secure Nackaroo Airfield before a Royal Australian Air Force Boeing C-17A Globemaster III touched down on the short dirt runway to insert a USMC M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS).

The rapid insertion of the HIMARS, which is called a HIRAIN mission, enabled a successful missile strike on a simulated anti-ship missile battery target.

Commander of the Marine Rotational Force – Darwin, Colonel David Banning, said the bilateral activity demonstrated increasing interoperability between ADF and US forces with the ability to project joint capability into the region.

“This year marks 70 years since the signing of the ANZUS Treaty and 10 years since the announcement of the MRF-D,” Colonel Banning said.

“The MRF-D has grown in size and complexity since the first rotation of 200 US marines through Darwin in 2012.”

The incorporation of the HIRAIN mission was an example of the increased complexity of Exercise Looby.

“Executing highly complex joint training scenarios such as Exercise Looby continues to challenge our forces and better prepare us to rapidly respond in the region, if and when called upon to do so,” Colonel Banning said.

Australian Army Commander Headquarters Northern Command Colonel Marcus Constable said an activity like this was important in further developing the longstanding relationship between the two forces.

“Looby means ‘together’ in the local Indigenous language,” Colonel Constable said.

“During this exercise, we worked together with the MRF-D to practise interoperability across different capabilities, including command and control, information sharing between our networks, joint airspace management and bilateral planning and mission execution.”

US marines cleared the airfield of enemy threats, while the Australian Army took care of the ground-based air defence.

“During the C17A flight, we were able to connect the HIMARS platform to our in-flight navigation system for the first time, so that the moment it rolled down the ramp, it was ready to fire,” Colonel Constable said.

Exercise Looby sets the scene for Exercise Koolendong, the largest bilateral live-fire exercise so far for the MRF-D and a key training event for the Australian Army.

“More than 2,500 troops and 500 vehicles will conduct a significant coalition land combat scenario in some of the most remote and austere Australian outback areas, with many more supporting the exercise from other locations,” Colonel Constable said.

<https://news.defence.gov.au/capability/forces-combine-live-fire-mission>



Returned from the grocery store with the hubby. Took masks off. It turned out it was the wrong hubby! Be attentive!



Wing Commander Shannan Forrest, left, in a file photo discussing the engineering characteristics of the F/A-18A Hornet engine exhausts.

Photo: Sergeant Rob Mitchell

Ever since Shannan Forrest was young, she knew she wanted to travel the world as an aeronautical engineer in the Air Force.

Growing up as a ‘RAAF brat’ with her father in the Air Force, now-Wing Commander Forrest can recall going along to RAAF Base Laverton to watch the Air Force Cadets fly gliders every weekend.

Even though she wasn’t in cadets, she would often volunteer to get involved in the glider

maintenance.

“My hands were small enough to fit in the holes, and I helped re-skin a wooden fabric glider,” Wing Commander Forrest said.

“It was interesting and fun, but it was probably my work experience in high school with a local contractor at Avalon Airport building the F/A-18 Hornet aircraft which really helped me make a final decision to become an engineer.

“The company also designed and built the Nomad aircraft and I helped them complete the mathematics required to keep the aircraft flying longer.”

Declining an engineering cadetship with the company, she applied and was accepted into the Australian Defence Force Academy and moved to Canberra to study a Bachelor of Engineering – Aerospace.

After four years of study, her first posting was to Weapons Systems Support Flight at RAAF Base Williamtown, where the team was making their own software patches for the F/A-18 Hornets.

“Our team got to design the oxygen delivery warning system and a number of other testing systems for the aircraft, which was really exciting and important,” Wing Commander Forrest said.

She then moved to No. 3 Squadron at RAAF Williamtown, where she spent two years as the maintenance officer.

She investigated the operation of the undercarriage doors for the Hornets. "My team redesigned how the doors were fitted, which was then rolled out across the fleet, including in the United States," Wing Commander Forrest said.

But it was her next move back to Laverton, Victoria, which she said was one of her most exciting postings.

Wing Commander Forrest and her team got to test the fatigue life of the F/A-18 aircraft to see how many hours they could fly before the airframe would break.

"We tested the tail section of the aircraft," she said.

"We would run this complex, world-leading, test rig and check for cracking each day, and if it cracked, we would design the repair system for it. "The whole idea was to keep testing until it would break."

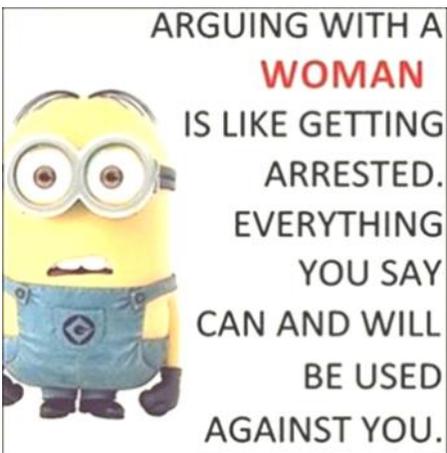
Wing Commander Forrest's career has since involved multiple overseas postings, where she has had roles in safety, contract management, logistics, and even leadership, including an eight-month deployment as a commanding officer in the Middle East in 2020.

"Being an engineer isn't just about design. You learn to break down complex problems into simple parts that you can manage and solve in new ways," she said.

"In the Air Force as an aeronautical engineer, you can work in ground roles, flying roles, logistics and acquisition.

"There are so many opportunities, places to travel and ways to challenge yourself."

<https://news.defence.gov.au/people/gliding-engineering-career>



Wartime tales of survival inspire *By Corporal Veronica O'Hara*



Commanding Officer Combat Survival Training School Squadron Leader Simon Longley with historian Lynette Silver, who has researched the World War II Sandakan death marches.
Photo: Corporal Veronica O'Hara

Having listened to his grandfather's wartime tales of survival as a child, Squadron Leader Simon Longley now leads the unit responsible for teaching survivability to ADF aircrew.

The Combat Survival Training School's commanding officer since 2020, Squadron Leader Longley's interest came from his grandfather's – then-Private Albert Longley – experience as a POW in Borneo during World War II.

“If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be at this school delivering survival training now,” Squadron Leader Longley said.

He was motivated by him to pay tribute to the sacrifice of Allied POWs by naming some CSTS facilities in their honour – Forward Operating Base Kinder and the Sandakan Room.

Squadron Leader Longley's Air Force career began in 1989 when he joined RAAF, sparked by seeing a P-3C flying overhead as a teenager. He joined as a radio technician with his twin brother, Warrant Officer Andrew Longley.

Seven years later, Squadron Leader Longley switched to being an airborne electronics analyst, then commissioned as an airborne electronics officer in 2002.

His grandfather grew up in Essex, UK, and completed a coach-building apprenticeship before joining the British Army in 1940.

The young Englishman married his long-time girlfriend, Lily Alder, before shipping to Singapore in 1941.

The soldiers disembarked at Batavia (now Jakarta) but it fell soon after, and Albert Longley was captured and taken to Singapore to be held at the Changi POW camp for six months.

He was then sent to the Batu Lintang camp at Kuching, Sarawak, to build an airfield and other infrastructure.

Private Longley used his carpentry skills to help build coffins and 800 crosses for buried POWs.

When wood ran out because of the high death rate, bodies were wrapped in rice sacks. Private Longley started making coffins with hinged bottoms for reuse.

While a POW, he recorded events and thoughts in a small diary – a wad of papers held together with a pin – even though he would have been killed if it was found.

“Every so often he gave an insight into what he suffered. Beatings and torture were common, as was disease,” Squadron Leader Longley said.

Australian forces reached the camp on September 11, 1945, and Private Longley was finally able to send a letter to his wife.

On the morning of September 13 – the day he turned 26 – Albert Longley heard he was in the first draft to be repatriated, and left the camp that morning. In his diary he had written, “I had the best birthday ever.”

Administrative records found indicated a delayed “death order” was to have been carried out by Japanese guards two days after.

Of the 2000 POWs held in Private Longley’s camp, only 750 returned home alive, according to Squadron Leader Longley.

After the war, Private Longley never ate rice again, after surviving on little more than a daily ration of one to two cups of rice porridge he called “pap”.

“During our chats, I recall his excitement as his liberation drew nearer following the Japanese surrender, when Allied planes dropped clothes, fresh bread and butter,” Squadron Leader Longley said.

“Granddad said, ‘the taste of such a simple meal was luxury after more than three years of pap’.”

After taking two months to return to England, Albert Longley found employment, reunited with Lily, and soon after, Squadron Leader Longley’s father, Fred, was born.

The family immigrated to Australia in 1951, settled in Adelaide, and Albert Longley started work with the Government Weapons Research Establishment, now known as the Defence Science and Technology Organisation.

His work included building the town of Woomera and facilities in the Woomera Prohibited Area, and later the wind tunnel at RAAF Base Edinburgh.

Squadron Leader Longley said his grandfather closely followed his grandsons’ careers until he died in 2004, aged 84. His grandmother, Lily, recently turned 101.

“Granddad was very proud we chose a military career and would have seen that we had opportunities to deploy and make a difference by helping others and serving our nation,” Squadron Leader Longley said.

<https://news.defence.gov.au/people/wartime-ales-survival-inspire>

The Covid Lockdown, and How Members are coping with it!

Hugh De Lapp

In response to your request for info on what is keeping people sane during the covid lockdown, I have gone back to my old hobby of making model aircraft. Putting the models together is the easy part. I get most satisfaction from the painting and finishing.

Since the lockdown started in 2020 I have made a little over 20 models comprising British German, American and Japanese aircraft. My latest effort, my first attempt at armour, being a Panzer V "Panther" tank. I was surprised at the amount of detail required in finishing this tank.

I have attached a photo of the finished Panther plus a Spitfire Mk 22 - the last of the Spitfires.



Greg Brown

Covid 19 has forced Sue and myself to start our spring cleaning earlier this year and I have also written my report earlier

I am also reading a Reader's Digest book of the (Great Cases of Scotland Yard) 690 pages

Also we are experimenting on different ways to cook up our meals with different spices and ingredients.

I have already repaired the shelving in the laundry and looking for more repairs

I also need someone to cut my hair that is getting longer by the minute. Next I may need to buy a fiddle.

Going shopping just before they open to avoid the shoppers that want to stand one meter behind you in the aisles and at the checkout.



This is how Greg feels when he can't get to the hairdresser

Jim Baba

Building Boat models.



Tony Reidy

I'm not handling isolation too well. Two weeks without a beer and tonight I demolished a slab after my meal. *(Tony lives in Grenfell out west. It is a town with 3 houses , a cat, dog and a horse. Just kidding....Editor)*

Gary Roser

Re-laying the pavers that I should have done over 20 years ago.



Ron Duckworth

Our Treasurer designing Badges and Logos for Facebook

(Footnote: [Pinched from another place](#))

The FAB (Facebook Action Badge)
For those who ALMOST joined the
military but are now Middle East
conflict experts.



LAST POST



Clifford James Berrigan
Born 29 September 1929—Died 20 August 2021
Flight Sergeant - A25975
9 Sep 1952 to 24 Jan 1975
Motor Transport Fitter Grade 2
Malaya - RAAF



Vale

James “Jim” Green
Husband of Joy Green, Women’s Auxiliary

Patricia Walker
Wife of Member James “Jim” Walker

May They Rest In Peace

STOP PRESS

All Meetings for
August and
September are
CANCELLED