SURVIVAL MODE

Skill and ingenuity of C-130J crews lead to rescue of stranded yachtsman off Hobart

MEMORABLE MISSION: Main image, the life raft carrying Alain Delord in the Southern Ocean, about 490 miles south-west of Hobart, captured from the second C-130J that came to his rescue. Below left, 37SQN loadmasters SGT Adrian Sullivan and WOFF Greig Skevington about to drop marker flares out the back of the C-130J to indicate where the life raft is located. Below right, 37SQN co-pilot FLGOFF Sam Dudman at the controls. Photos courtesy FLTLT Mitchell Beck
SQNLDR Kay said.

“Mr Delord told the rescue boat was still 30 hours away. He replied that he was cold, had no water, and his radio was getting weak,” SQNLDR Kay said.

SQNLDR Kay was the first C-130J to communicate with Mr Delord during the rescue, who sounded in good spirits despite being told the rescue boat was still 30 hours away.

That was important, because it led to believe that his radio was working — that he was holding it together,” SQNLDR Kay said.

Two attempts to airdrop sea-rescue kits to the raft failed because of Delord’s high drift rate. This led the crew to use smaller heliboxes and container rescue systems (CRS).

Delord’s requirements and perseverance to vector the ship PV Orion to Mr Delord’s lift raft as seen from the cockpit.

Langkit rescue systems (CRS) as we were running out of time.” SQNLDR Kay said.

Another C-130J was launched from Richmond to the rescue area, captured by FLTLT Mitch Beck.

To help the life raft be seen in the low visibility, the crew’s loadmasters released marker flares from the C-130.

“The cloud base had come down to 250 feet, and visibility was between one and two kilometres, with light showers of rain and last light was less than an hour away,” FLTLT Beck said.

“These cases, we were able to vecter the ship PV Orion to Mr Delord’s raft for his rescue.”

Orion comes to the rescue, too

A 236G AP-3C Orion located a vessel in distress with 12 people on board about 520 nautical miles north-east of Port Moresby on January 19.

The aircraft was assisting a Rescue Coordination Centre — Australia request to find another boat with six people on board that had been missing off the coast of Papua New Guinea for three days.

General Air and Space Operations Committee member FLGOFF Dave Field summarised the achievements of the C-130 crews.

“Crews have been using new equipment, such as the CRH, to gain the confidence of the aircrews and their ability to save the lives of people at sea,” he said.

“Putting these people on board the plane — not just the aircrew — is what will save the life of these people.”

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Air Force lends a hand in bushfire crisis

CPL Max Bree and Eamon Hamilton

AIR FORCE bases, units and aircraft swung into action to support firefighters battling bushfires raging along the Australian east coast throughout January.

Two 36SQN C-17As transported a pair of 20-tonne diesel power generators and personnel to Hobart on January 11 to restore power in bushfire-affected areas after local power grids were damaged.

A heatwave spread across the south-eastern portion of Australia on January 4 and a series of bushfires struck Tasmania. More than 20,000 hectares of bushland were burnt out and 100 properties destroyed.

From January 10 to the end of January, Ergon Energy supplied the generators and transformers, following a request from Emergency Management Australia.

Ergon Chief Executive Ian McLeod said he was grateful for Air Force’s heavy lift support.

“People worked quickly to assemble equipment and expertise that will be valuable to Tasmania’s recovery – the Air Force’s help got it there even quicker,” he said.

Ergon Team leaders supported the generators and transformers, following a request from Emergency Management Australia.

Just before Country Fire Authority volunteers staying at RAAF Base Wagga headed home to Victoria they took advantage of a little bit of local hospitality.

CO 31SOG WCDR Jo Ewington said the team was given a special tour of the base and Heritage Centre after they were stood down from firefighting.

“Believe it or not after three days of all that they did, all they could talk about was getting up close to the F-111 and how big it was and that made their whole trip,” she said.

“They were also very impressed with the food and staff in the Armen’s Mess and would not mind having to come back again if they can get to stay on the RAAF Base.”

Nice Pig you have there

JUST LOOKING: Defense Force tax specialists check out an F-111 at RAAF Base Wagga.

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SPECIAL GUESTS: Victorian fire crews staying at RAAF Base Wagga depart the base in the early morning to fight fires in the Tarcutta area.

VIP PRAISE: Prime Minister Julia Gillard thanks 29SQN members during her tour of fire-affected Hobart.

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SPECIAL GUESTS: Victorian fire crews staying at RAAF Base Wagga depart the base in the early morning to fight fires in the Tarcutta area.
Help after cyclone

Eamon Hamilton

The worst tropical cyclone to hit the South Pacific in 21 years led Air Force to deliver vital AusAID supplies to Samoa and Fiji.

Cyclone Evan struck Samoa on December 13 with winds of up to 210km/h, before hitting Fiji with similar force.

Thousands of people in both countries were forced into temporary accommodation or shelters.

A 36SQN C-17A departed RAAF Base Amberley for Fiji’s Nadi International Airport on December 19, transporting tarpaulins, shelters, water containers, blankets and hygiene kits.

The aircraft also carried air movement personnel from 1 Airfield Operations Support Squadron and their equipment, along with AusAID staff.

Further C-17A flights from Amberley to Nadi were made on December 19 and 20.

A C-130J departed Amberley on December 20 for Samoa to deliver tarpaulins, blankets and water containers, along with purification tablets.

FLTLT Cam Grealy, a co-pilot with the C-130J, said the Hercules flew on to Fiji so that it could distribute aid from Nadi to Labasa Airfield on the Fijian island of Vava'u Levu.

“Labasa has a small airstrip of about 3500 feet, with a weak tarmac,” FLTLT Grealy said.

“The team needed to assess whether Labasa could support the weight of repeated C-130J flights delivering the aid.

“The next day we flew three taps into Labasa, with minimum fuel to enhance our performance on the small airstrip, taking in water, blankets, shelters and other aid,” FLTLT Grealy said.

For the return trip to Australia on December 23, the Hercules brought home air movements personnel and support equipment.

The recent Block 6.1 upgrade across the 75SQN C-130J fleet included a number of changes to how the Hercules can be operated.

“As a part of this upgrade, the maximum allowable normal gross weight was increased from 70 tonnes (155,000lbs) to 74 tonnes (164,000lbs),” FLTLT Grealy said.

“Taking off from Nadi, we had an ‘all up’ weight of 163,300lbs – to my understanding this is the heaviest RAAF C-130J take-off to date.”

THTHE second round of changes to the Employer Support Payment Scheme (ESPS) began on January 1.

The changes strengthen the governance and management of the scheme by ensuring all claims are considered and decided by the services to ensure that capability requirements are supported.

The new determination streamlines and simplifies a previously complex set of arrangements to support principled-based decision-making in the services.

Importantly, the determination will now contain a sunset clause.

The sunset clause means that Defence will undertake a review of the scheme in 2013 to enable advice to be provided to Government in early 2014 on the effectiveness of the scheme in delivering a value-for-money, required and meaningful capability to the ADF.

Defence Parliamentary Secretary Senator David Feeney said the Service Chiefs were now able to fully control both policy and administration of the scheme, which has operated for 10 years.

This will ensure that payments are aligned with capability, and the services can record exactly where reservists, who were subject of Employer Support Payments, work and how this contributes to Defence capability.

“The unique capability requirements of each service can now be supported in a manner which is the best value for money to the services, the ADF and the Australian people,” Senator Feeney said.

CAF AIRMSHL Geoff Brown welcomed the amendment to the determination which will allow the scheme to be managed by the Directorate of Personnel-Air Force.

“This will ensure that Air Force can maintain its commitment to making ESPS payments where they provide a value-for-money capability,” AIRMSHL Brown said.

CAF also noted that the review of the ESPS will enable Air Force to provide recommendations to government.

Senator Feeney said that having the career management/personnel management areas administer the scheme ensured payments were aligned to capability and had appropriate and adequate performance assessments.

“This is an effective and efficient means of managing the performance of the scheme,” Senator Feeney said.

The Directive on ESPS issued by CAF on November 21, 2012, is still effective and claims will continue to be made through the existing process.

Once the transition arrangements are finalised, more information will be available on the Defence Force Intranet or via the Defence Reserves Support website at http://www.defencereservesupport.gov.au/
Rhino now ready for ops

FLTLT Cath Friend

SUPER Hornet teams from RAAF Base Amberley ended 2012 on a high when they achieved Final Operational Capability (FOC) for the fleet of 24 F/A-18F aircraft.

Defence Minister Stephen Smith and Defence Materiel Minister Jason Clare jointly announced the milestone on December 13.

FOC is declared when the entire capability could be deployed on Defence operations. FOC takes into account not only the aircraft itself but also logistics, management, sustainment, facilities and training.

Mr Smith said it was a “major milestone for the Super Hornet fleet and a major step forward for Australia’s air combat capability.”

“The Super Hornet fleet ensures Australia’s air combat capability regional edge is maintained until the introduction into service of the F-35A Joint Strike Fighter,” Mr Smith said.

The letter of request does not commit Australia to purchase more Super Hornets – it will provide the Australian Government detailed information and costings to further consider Australia’s air combat capability options in 2013.

The first Super Hornets arrived in Australia from the US on March 26, 2010 and achieved Initial Operational Capability (IOC) on December 8 that year.

Commander Air Combat Group AIRCDRE Tony Grady said IOC allowed the fleet the ability to deploy within Australia and the near region for air combat operations.

“Since IOC the F/A-18F capability has continued to mature with the delivery of remaining elements of this capability and ongoing operational test and evaluation,” he said.

To help achieve FOC, 1SQN deployed to Malaysia in 2010 for Exercise Bersama Shield, Guam in 2012 for Exercise Cope North, and on multiple exercises within Australia, including Exercise Pitch Black last year.

“The Super Hornet personnel from 1 and 6SQNs have been incredibly busy over the past two years participating in exercises all over Australia and overseas, but the hard work by everyone has paid off and the Super Hornet performed commendably during the exercises and demonstrated how the capability has matured since IOC,” AIRCDRE Grady said.

He said the Super Hornets had also been working tirelessly throughout 2012 in Townsville, providing air-to-ground support to ADF units preparing to deploy for overseas operations.

“It’s great to know that we have already been providing essential support to ADF personnel and units prior to their deploying on operational deployments by providing realistic air-to-ground support,” AIRCDRE Grady said.

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AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS LIST 2013

Medal of the Order of Australia – Military Division (OAM)

WCDR Rudy Darvill
For meritorious service in leadership, development and sustainment of the Maritime Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Response capability.

WCDR Darvill’s exceptional service to MWG has been instrumental in the successful development and sustainment of Maritime Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Response capability.

WOF Russell Kennedy
For meritorious service in reserve training development and management within Director General Reserves – Air Force Branch.

Mr Kennedy is an outstanding airman who has demonstrated selfless dedication and loyalty.

SOLDR Ravinder Singh
For meritorious service in airift capability.

SOLDR Singh is an outstanding officer who displayed selfless dedication, boundless energy and enthusiasm in raising project technical airworthiness and effectiveness.

Conspicuous Service Cross (CSC)

WCDR David Abraham
For outstanding achievement in F-111 weapon system logistic support.

WCDR Abraham is an exceptional officer who has displayed professional excellence, inspirational leadership and initiative, and outstanding dedication to duty in highly challenging and demanding situations in logistic support and disposal.

Conspicuous Service Medal (CSM)

LOTC Greg Jones
For meritorious service in reserve aviation.

LOTG Jones has been instrumental to the successful provision of legal support to Defence leaders.

Conspicuous Service Cross (CSC)

WCDR David Abraham
For outstanding achievement in F-111 weapon system logistic support.

WCDR Abraham is an exceptional officer who has displayed professional excellence, inspirational leadership and initiative, and outstanding dedication to duty in highly challenging and demanding situations in logistic support and disposal.

Important role recognised

LCDR Andrew Stackpool and LEUT Ryan Zerbe

TOP End Defence personnel were among the first to be awarded the new Operational Service Medal – Border Protection (OSM-BP) for their efforts with Australia’s maritime border security under Operations Relex I, Relex II and Resolution.

NC VADM Ray Griggs and Defence Science and Personnel Minister Warren Snowdon presented 43 current and former members of the patrol boat force with their ribboned VIP, families and friends at a special ceremony in Darwin on December 12.

On parade were 37 Navy and six Air Force personnel.

OSM-BP is the first of its kind and recognises Defence members involved in all areas of border protection since 1997.

Mr Snowdon said it was a significant event for thousands of ADF personnel who had been protecting Australia’s maritime border security under challenging conditions for a number of years.

“The award provides a worthy and just recognition for all of those involved in border protection operations,” Mr Snowdon said.

Orion pilot FLTLT Nathan Bunt, of 10SQN, was among the few selected for the initial ceremony, and was both excited and proud to gain some recognition for the many months spent securing the seas over the past decade.

“The medal means a lot to us as we’ve all put in a lot of time and effort,” said Mr Bunt.

“This means so much to us, so being recognised is definitely justified and I’m proud,” FLTLT Bunt said.

Mr Bunt first went up to Darwin in 2001 for the three-week deployment and have been on average at least three times each year since.

“We spend a lot of time away from family and friends and home and I have missed many milestones, birthdays and anniversaries so this recognition goes to my wife and two daughters for all their support.”

FLTLT Bunt said the deployments meant long tiring days flying for 10 hours, let alone the pre- and post-flight requirements.

The OSM was gazetted last July and will replace the Australian Active Service Medal and Australian Service Medal for all future operations.

Although personnel who have served on Operations Relex I, Relex II and Resolution were among the first to receive the OSM-BP medal, personnel who served on border protection operations dating back to 1997 will also be included as part of a rolling process.

They are Operations Cranberry, Dirk, Stanhope, Mistral, Teebone, Celesta, Sutton and Gemsbok.

The OSM will be awarded to all personnel who deployed or force assigned to the declared operation for a total period of not less than 30 days or who completed 30 sorties from a unit assigned to a declared operation, at no more than one sortie a day.

In addition to the OSM, personnel will be awarded the Operational Service Badge, which is worn on civilian clothing.

It is issued along the same guidelines as the Returned from Active Service badge, as recognition of those personnel who have rendered operational service.

Application forms for the OSM-BP (AE 376) can be downloaded from the Directorate of Honours and Awards website at http://www.defence.gov.au/medals or from the DRN intranet Webforms centre.

WITH PRIDE: Above, from left, LEUT James Bandreth, FLTLT Nathan Bunt, LEUT Sara Mooney, LEUT Gregory Wickens and WOFF Paul Gregory stand proud after receiving their OSMs at HMAS Coonawarra. Inset, the new medal features a ribbon with a central ochre stripe flanked by one blue and one green stripe.

Photos: LS Helen Frank and LS Jo Dilorenzo

WOFF Edward O’Farrell
For meritorious achievement as the warrant officer in charge of the Assisted Learning Centre at the RAAF School of Technical Training. WOFF O’Farrell displayed excellent leadership, expertise and dedication in establishing and developing the centre.

His efforts have improved the welfare, motivation and academic achievements of students.

SOLDR Sheena Oldridge
For meritorious achievement as the Emerging Projects Development Engineer in Guided Weapons Branch, Explosive Ordnance Division.

SOLDR Oldridge is an exemplary officer who displays an outstanding level of professionalism, initiative and leadership.

WOFF Jason Stone
For meritorious achievement as WOFF Engineering at 15SQN.

WOFF Stone’s exceptional planning, management and supervision ensured that the establishment and training of the Super Hornet technical workforce was exemplary.

His dedication and professionalism fostered the development of a healthy workforce culture and ensured the technical workforce was able to support the introduction of the Super Hornet into service.

FRIDAY
Wallaby Airlines is back

Eamon Hamilton

AFTER a 13-year hiatus, Wallaby Airlines has returned to Air Force.

At RAAF Base Richmond, 35SQN was quietly re-established on January 14.

CAF AIRMSHL Geoff Brown welcomed the return of the unit, which had served extensively in World War II and Vietnam.

“The re-establishment of 35SQN will see it prepare for our fleet of 10 C-27J Spartan Battlefield Airlift aircraft due to arrive in Australia from 2015,” AIRMSHL Brown said.

“35SQN has provided combat air-lift for Australia in several conflicts, and the C-27J is ideally suited to continue this legacy of support for personnel deployed on combat, peacekeeping or disaster relief operations.”

WGCDR Brad Clarke has taken the reins of 35SQN as its new CO, with an initial workforce of 25 which will grow to more than 200 over the next few years.

“Our first tasks are to work with the Battlefield Airlifter Transition Office to map the required workforce structure, operating procedures and introduction plan for the C-27J Spartan,” WGCDR Clarke said.

“35SQN will send the first aircrew and maintenance personnel to train on the C-27J in the US in mid-2014. “Once in service, our C-27Js will greatly increase the number of airfields Defence can operate in to, increase the level of fixed-wing support available on the battlefield, and synchronise with the existing C-130J Hercules and C-17A fleets.”

John McDougall, President of the RAAF Transport Flight Vietnam and 35SQN Association, looks forward to seeing 35SQN return to the skies.

“To see the old squadron carrying on the good work that we did, it’s made us past members very happy,” Mr McDougall said.

A retired engine fitter and loadmaster/flight engineer who served three tours of Vietnam with the Caribou, Mr McDougall was enthusiastic that 35SQN would be equipped with Spartans.

“The Spartan won’t get in to as many strips as the Caribou did, but the performance will make it a lot safer in some areas, especially with the heat and altitude in places like Papua New Guinea,” Mr McDougall said.

Meanwhile, the first Spartan for 35SQN is taking shape in Italy.

Last December, the fuselage for the C-27J – which will receive the serial A34-001 – arrived at the Alenia Aermacchi plant in Turin in northern Italy.

The aircraft’s fuselage was constructed in Naples, just south of Rome. The journey north took the fuselage by flatbed truck to the Port of Naples, where it travelled by sea freight to Genoa, and then by road to Turin.

As part of the final production, the C-27J will be mated with its wings, engines and other flying surfaces before emerging later this year.

GPCAPT Steve Young, Director of the Battlefield Airlifter Transition Office, explained each C-27J would emerge from Turin as a ‘green’ Spartan, without its advanced mission systems.

“Each C-27J will be flown from Italy to Texas, where it will receive additional equipment from L-3 Communications,” GPCAPT Young said.

“This includes key communication equipment and electronic warfare self-protection systems, which are essential for their job on the battlefield.”

EXCITING: The first C-27J fuselage taking shape in Italy. Photo courtesy Henia

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WGCDR Brian Young’s illustrious 52-year Air Force career wrapped up at the end of the year – but not before he capped it off with a flight on one of Air Force’s latest and biggest, the A41-211, at RAAF Base Amberley on December 5.

“Uniformed ADF members were noticeably absent from this annual Australian celebration of diversity, and this is not appropriate as we seek to promote the ADF’s diversity and acceptance of all members, regardless of their gender, cultural background, religion and/or sexual orientation,” AIRMSHL Binskin said.

The chairman of the Defence Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Information Service, SQNLDR Vince Chong, welcomed the change.

“I am delighted that this year any ADF member can proudly march in support of LGBTI personnel and workplace inclusion,” SQNLDR Chong said.

The Head of People Capability, MAJGEN Gerard Fogarty, said the focus of Mardi Gras today was diversity, inclusion and community, which was far removed from the parade’s origins as a right-to-exist protest 35 years ago.

“I view the ADF’s participation as a means to not only show support for our members, but to demonstrate that the ADF is an employer that welcomes and supports personnel from a wide range of backgrounds. This is very important in the ADF’s continual aim to attract high-calibre personnel from across the entire spectrum of Australian society,” MAJGEN Fogarty said.

The Director General of Cultural Reviews and Response, AIRCDRE Henrik Ehlers, said Defence’s participation in the Mardi Gras demonstration how far the ADF had come in the past 20 years.

For further information about participating in this year’s Sydney Mardi Gras, contact SQNLDR Vince Chong at vince.chong@defence.gov.au or refer to the DEGLIS website: www.dfebris.com.au. CDF’s statement on ADF participation in the Mardi Gras demonstration how far the ADF had come in the past 20 years.

ADF personnel will march as a formed body for the first time in this year’s Sydney Mardi Gras parade on March 2. CDF General David Hurley has authorised ADF members to march in the parade alongside government organisations such as the Australian Federal Police, State Emergency Services, NSW police, firefighters and ambulance services.

“Not surprisingly, the decision to allow ADF personnel to march in uniform at the Sydney Mardi Gras in 2013 has been supported by some and criticised by others,” GEN Hurley said.

“While I understand not everyone will agree with this decision, if the ADF is to remain a contemporary organisation that reflects the community it serves then change is required.”

He pointed out that it was 20 years since Australia lifted the ban on homosexual citizens serving in the military and five years since a recognised group of Defence personnel first participated in the Mardi Gras parade.

VCDF AIRMSHL Mark Binskin said Defence’s participation in the Mardi Gras demonstrated how far the ADF had come in the past 20 years.

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Rare role leads to honour

Aurora Daniels

WHEN WGCDR Andrew Lancaster was given the opportunity to be Chief of Staff of an Army-led headquarters while deployed in Afghanistan he never expected it would lead to a rare US honour.

So he was surprised when he received the Bronze Star medal – the fourth highest US military combat award – at a ceremony at RAAF Base Amberley last month.

WGCDR Lancaster, who is currently CO of 382 Expeditionary Combat Support Squadron, was deployed as the Combined Team Uruzgan’s (CTU) Air Liaison Officer at Tarin Kot in mid-2011 when the Chief Of Staff position became vacant.

The US lieutenant colonel in the job was flown home due to illness and the US brigade commander called on WGCDR Lancaster to fill the void.

“I was very lucky to be in the right place at the right time,” WGCDR Lancaster said.

“It was a fantastic opportunity for an Air Force member to be asked to fill a highly sought-after LTCOL Infantry Combat Arms Corps position. I’m sure some of my Army colleagues would have been envious.”

During the nine months he was deployed to the multinational base, 13 soldiers were killed in the region. It was a difficult time for all involved and a life-changing experience for WGCDR Lancaster.

“The insider attacks were very hard for us all – you think it could have been anyone of us, it really drilled home just how dangerous it is over there. But the tenacity, moral fortitude and total professionalism of our troops was really something to behold,” WGCDR Lancaster said.

“It was very full-on with the intensity remaining throughout the deployment. Every day was long, starting at 0600 with a late night finish and periodic calls throughout the night.

“I’ll never forget the teamwork and bonding. I was extremely well supported by the headquarters staff who equally deserve recognition for their efforts.”

Commander Combat Support Group AIRCDRE Tim Innes presented the Bronze Star and Commander of Joint Operations Commendation to WGCDR Lancaster on December 5.

“He went above and beyond all expectations to provide strong leadership to the multinational staff,” WGCDR Lancaster said.

“I’m particularly grateful to COL Bob Akam, Commander CTU, for giving me the opportunity to be his Chief of Staff – it certainly has been a somewhat unique career highlight,” he said.

It was WGCDR Lancaster’s first deployment to Afghanistan after previously completing two tours to the MEAO with the AP-3C Orion detachment.

He said his family was proud of his achievements, but they too deserved to be recognised.

“Families really do it hard and they equally deserve recognition for their efforts in maintaining the family home while you’re deployed,” he said.

“My wife said ‘well done. I’m very proud. Now get on with fixing up the house.’ It is very grounding being back home with them.

“In my case it was the best part of a year away due to the work-up training. I’m very lucky to have excellent support from my wife, family and friends.

“In that sense the award is, in a small way, recompense for my absence and something tangible for my daughters to see.”

PROUD FAMILY: WGCDR Andrew Lancaster with his wife Sue and daughter Eleanor, who displays her dad’s Chief of Joint Operations Gold Commendation and US Bronze Star Medal at RAAF Base Amberley.

Photo: LA CW Shannon McCarthy

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Firefighter SGT Paul Thorpe recalls the 2003 Canberra bushfires, a decade after facing the raging firestorm

Aurora Daniels

RESERVIST firefighter SGT Paul Thorpe, of 2SQN, received an urgent call on January 18, 2003, to take a fire truck and crew to the Canberra suburb of Duffy and “just pick a house, any house, any street – just get there!”

A decade on, he remembers the horror, and the sometimes achingly mundane, of the fire response to the raging bushfires.

The then-CPL grabbed two men and an Army bushfire truck (on loan) and raced to the scene where they spotted a fire. “We were wondering if we would have even made it,” said SGT Thorpe.

As they approached the bushfire, they watched the street – just get there.

“From that moment we knew there were people in need of help and we had to act quickly,” said SGT Thorpe.

The crew came across a female resident in the street. “We helped her to safety, finally returning it to its rightful place on the 10th anniversary of the firestorm this month.”

When they arrived the blaze had been put out. The huge telescope and other buildings were still smouldering and embers had drifted on to an administration building that would have been lost if they had not arrived at that precise time.

SGT Thorpe found a blackened gnome at the building and kept it for safety, finally returning it to its rightful place on the 10th anniversary of the firestorm this month.

He presented the gnome to ANU Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics director Professor Matthew Colless at the observatory on October 18.

Prof Colless was heartened to receive the gnome and presented SGT Thorpe with a miniature Gnome Doll in recognition of the support provided by the ANU Community. The gnome included a special note – "Thank you for your support in our time of need."

SGT Thorpe found a blackened gnome at the building and kept it for safety, finally returning it to its rightful place on the 10th anniversary of the firestorm this month.

“The ANU staff based at Mt Stromlo and Siding Spring Observatories are enormously grateful to the efforts of all the firefighters like SGT Thorpe who contributed to saving our facilities,” SGT Thorpe said.

SGT Thorpe said following the firestorm, his small crew worked on various other fires for a week-and-a-half.

With 14 years’ experience as a firefighter and attending numerous medical emergencies, he certainly was not prepared for the firestorm, he said. “‘My nights are still filled with thoughts of that day. It has changed my life forever. I am sorry we couldn’t have helped more.’

“Trees, gardens and it even the road had turned to night and I had seen for the smoke. There was no power and the visibility was down to 10 or so metres. Heat from the firestorm this month. It has changed my life forever. I am sorry we couldn’t have helped more.

“To my crew, you showed great professionalism and meritorious service in a time of crisis. You went above what was reasonably expected and for that, I thank you.”

While there are still painful memories that linger with those involved in the fires of 2003, SGT Thorpe said he had some memories that really warmed his heart.

“When we were at Duffy we had heard rumours that people were saying firefighters hadn’t been doing their jobs but when we were patrolling the streets people clapped for us. Whole streets stopped what they were doing and gave a standing ovation – even those people whose homes had burnt down.

“Our presence gave people reassurance that they weren’t in this alone.”

“We helped an elderly Italian lady who was quite upset and due the language barrier I felt that all I could do was hug her. It was a very touching moment that really sticks with me.”

My nights are still filled with thoughts of that day. It has changed my life forever.

– SGT Paul Thorpe

Dark days never forgotten.
ON THE JOB IN K

SECFOR keeps a watchful eye over Multinational Base Tarin Kot, WO2 Andrew Hetherington reports from Afghanistan

PERSONNEL from 1 and 2 Airfield Defence Squadrons (SECFOR) are keeping a watchful eye on Multinational Base Tarin Kot in Afghanistan.

The new unit, known as Security Forces (SECFOR), arrived in Afghanistan on November 4 2012, and are about learning from their Slovak Army mentors about the art of protecting communications personnel from attack.

Multinational Base Command, Colonel Rob Johnson said the new CO2R would be busy over the next few months, performing more than one role.

"Their primary role will be to secure the Murad Base compound, in addition to protecting the main airfield," he said. "They will also perform some of the tasks currently undertaken by local ADF personnel."

LAC Stanbrook has found the job very different to what he is used to in Australia.

"It's important for us to maintain the relationships with the security contractors and the local people who they would deal with daily," he said.

"This is a significant outstation, and the local people speak English and other languages, so we have a good working relationship with them."

WO2 Andrew Hetherington

Making deployments easier

WO2 Andrew Hetherington

A DEPRECATED and resourceful group of 20 ADF personnel is deployed to Headquarters Joint Task Force 633-A, known as Joint Task Force Afghanistan (JTF633-A), in support of the Afghan national army.

The new unit, known as Security Forces (SECFOR), arrived in Afghanistan on November 4 2012, and are about learning from their Slovak Army mentors about the art of protecting communications personnel from attack.

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WO2 Andrew Hetherington

Meeting new challenges

WO2 Andrew Hetherington

ONE of SECFOR’s section commanders, CPL Benjamin Rogers of 2AFDS at RAAF Base Amberley, said he was excited when he found out he was chosen to be a member of SECFOR because he had always wanted to work in Afghanistan.

"I was also excited for the guys in my section too because of how much it’s a different part of the world and it’s a part of the mission that the senior leadership at the top has.

"I was in charge of the 3 Section of 2 Rifle Flight, deployed previously to Timor Leste, the United Arab Emirates and Iraq. Since arriving, we have been focused on training the local people, so we’ve got our feet in the ground," he said.

The best part of his job will be maintaining these relationships with the security contractors and the local people who they would deal with daily.

"This is the first time I’ve been here and I’ve built a rapport with the local people, who provide security and others who work in similar areas," he said.

"It’s important for us to maintain these relationships and work with them so we have a successful deployment.

WO2 Andrew Hetherington

A HEALTHY AFGHANISTAN

CAPT Sean Childs

As Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) continue to take the lead for the nation’s security, the ANSB Medical Unit at Kandahar Airfield is delivering a wide range of medical services that are keeping the ANSB personnel healthy, whether they are on the front line or not.

"This is a significant part of the ANSB Medical Unit at Kandahar Airfield, and we are delivering Primary Health Care to all ANSB personnel here on the base," he said.

"It is important for us to maintain a high level of medical service, and we have a good working relationship with the Afghan government, and we are constantly improving our medical services," he said.

WO2 Andrew Hetherington

Well-prepared: Serving a warrant at the RAAF Security Personnel Detachment at RAAF Bases, Warrant Officer Second Class Andrew Hetherington.

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Well-prepared: Serving a warrant at the RAfF Security Personnel Detachment at RAAF Bases, Warrant Officer Second Class Andrew Hetherington.
What made AFI news headlines in 2012

January – March

- DCFAVLMs Leo Davies provided his expectations of Air Force personnel in embracing the Air Force Improvement (AFI) program, reminding everyone that AFI is the program through which Air Force and its partners realise capability, build organisational resilience, establish more cost-conscious behaviours and improve service outcomes. In particular, the program fosters an environment wherein individuals are encouraged to think about the mission and its impact.

- 37SQN members received public acknowledgement for their efforts in improving the maintenance and logistical support for the squadron. The CAF’s managing director, Air Commodore Vikram Nayak were acknowledged for their efforts in improving the business processes in 37SQN Equipment Section.

- 65SQN Ground Support Equipment section at RAAF Base Amberley took the chair of the Combat Reform Program and made a number of worthwhile changes. 65SQN established dedicated receipt and dispatch areas for serviceable and unserviceable GSE items and returned more than $20,000 worth of surplus stock to the supply system. They also relocated their stores area within their workshops to reduce the distance and time taken to requisition spares for maintenance activities.

- Air Force commenced a 12-month fuel management trial with its fleet of C-130J aircraft. The trial is one of the projects through which Air Force intends to reduce its petroleum, oils and lubricants budget across its entire fleet by about $15.5 million over the remainder of the decade.

- CAF announced a voluntary redundancy program for selected specialisations and musterings as part of Air Force’s contribution to workforce rationalisation and optimisation of training requirements. The program was initiated through an administrative process, with the aim of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of training.

- DCFA again reminded personnel that work supporting AFI was more important than ever following the release of 2012 Federal Budget.

April – June

- Aerospace Operational Support Group launched its Foundation Element Centre to deliver more effective and efficient administrative support services across the group.

- The Director General Air Force (Counter-Counter) commended the Air Force’s willingness to play in both the SRP and AFI programs. He informed members that there were still challenges ahead for them in conducting operations, introducing and supporting new aircraft and systems, and evolving the organisation to extract the most from their capabilities in a financially constrained environment.

- Members proceeding on posting had the option to select whether or not to have the removalists do a full or partial unpack. This was a win-win situation for both the members, by electing the option that best suits them for their move, and also for Defence by receiving the maximum cost benefits from the initiative.

- RAAF Base Amberley commenced a Hospitality and Catering Reform trial, which was to consolidate mess administration services, align dinner service, consolidate dining rooms during periods of reduced activity, and to combine officer’s SNCOs’ bar.

- 45SQN at RAAF Base Williamtown reduced the number of live-fire exercise deployments in support of the Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTACs) course from four to two. This was achieved through an administrative process and optimisation of training requirements.

- DCFA again reminded personnel that work supporting AFI was more important than ever following the release of 2012 Federal Budget.

- 44WG, the Defence Materiel Organisation and Defence Support and Reform Group successfully reduced the annual operating costs of its Operational Maintenance Trainer by about $80,000 a year.

- 395 Expeditionary Combat Support Wing downsized stores holdings at Air Force’s bare bases by 25 per cent, reducing waste and ensuring assets held were a true reflection of the capability requirement.

- Directorate General of Technical Airworthiness – Australian Defence Force (DTA-ADF) developed a set of initiatives to increase efficiencies and lower costs. The initiatives focused on better ways to do business and being more responsive to the evolving needs of Air Force engineering maintenance.

- Air Combat Group removed the requirement for the F/A-18 Super Hornet Operational Upgrade training course by transferring its learning objectives to the F/A-18F Operational Conversion course and also to the F/A-18F Combat Aircrew Training Scheme. This removed the requirement to administer and deliver two separate courses a year and considerably reduced the amount of instructional flying hours required to train F/A-18F aircrew to graduation standard.

- 775SQN was named the inaugural winner of the AFI Team of the Year Award in recognition of its whole-of-squadron operating improvements program in 2011.

- FLTLT James Gosling’s efforts in launching the 37SQN Maintenance Management Improvement Program in 2011 earned him the inaugural AFI Leadership Award.

July – September

- The Air Force Band continued its efforts in becoming an important strategic and public relations asset. The band now aims to enrich Air Force culture, strengthen partnerships, shape people’s attitudes and commitment to Air Force values, and promote the image of the Air Force to the wider community.

- 382 Expeditionary Combat Support Squadron embraced a culture of continuous improvement (CI) as part of its daily activities. CI team members from the Military Working Dog and Explosive Detection Dog sections made savings in the area of kennel waste, resulting in an ongoing saving of about $2000 a year.

- Air Lift Group’s Airdrop Capability Management Centre (AMCC) commenced transitioning from a ‘platform-based’ scheduling approach to an ‘effects-based’ outcome to meet tasking requirements. The resulting outcomes will see the streamlining of AMCC’s work processes so it can support aircraft which are significantly larger and more capable than platforms previously used.

- DGTADF commenced transferring key technical publications to an electronic format. This was the first of several work packages that intended to convert other key DGTADF sponsored publications to electronic manuals.

- The inaugural version of the Air Force Capability Management Manual (AFCMM) – AAP 1005, was launched by Director General Capability AIRCDRE Warren McDonald.

- CPL, Shanna Nichols, of 755SQN’s hydraulic bay, implemented a simple solution that has reduced the occurrence of ‘hot brakes’ incidents experienced by 755SQN aircraft at RAAF Base Tindal. CPL Nichols designed a cover for the F/A-18A/B’s main wheel to protect the brake assembly from hydraulic oil spillage. This initiative has improved safety and increased aircraft availability.

October – December

- Combat Support Group successfully completed a review of the functions of all permanent Air Force bases, including RAAF Base Butterworth. Twenty-four reform projects have been initiated to address identified issues.

- Air Combat Group personnel improved F/A-18A/B availability by significantly reducing maintenance induced damage (MID) across the aircraft fleet. MID had been a major ADF initiative to have cost the F/A-18A/B fleet an extra 4200 hours of maintenance time per year to rectify, with an associated cost of 540 flying days a year.

- 3SQN implemented a simple solution to reduce the overheads associated with carrying out F/A-18A/B aircraft washes. In doing so, they generated nearly 200 more aircraft flying opportunities a year for Williamtown-based Hornet squadrons.

- With the assistance of the DGTADF, regulated organisations were able to review the way they certified technical maintenance tasks by remaining committed to looking for ways to improve clarity of regulation and encourage more efficient use of the technical workforce.

- DGTADF finalised the design of the TAMM and commenced transferring it to electronic format.

- DGTA-ADF staff continued to engage with other regulated organisations to pinpoint where they could remove unnecessary overheads and processes when interpreting Technical Airworthiness Regulations.

- Combat Support Group’s Health Operational Conversion Unit started reaping the benefits of incorporating the continuous improvement and AFI methodology into its day-to-day operations by removing unnecessary duplication in course reporting as well as identifying future projects.

- CENTRE
New capability focus

Air Force imagery support goes expeditionary

AIR Force has a new expeditionary imagery capability — Air Force Imagery Specialists (AFIS) — thanks to a revamp of the former photographic mustering.

The new AFIS capability will use personnel from the existing mustering to continue to support base requirements, with an increased role of public affairs and community engagement.

Under the management of 28SQN, AFIS personnel are based at Air Force Imagery Detachments (AFIDs) at RAAF Bases Amberley, Williamtown, Richmond, Edinburgh and the Air Force Strategic Imagery Centre (AFSIC) in Canberra.

Under the Strategic Reform Program, the AFIDs will be supported by APS imagery specialists at each location.

AFIS support includes coverage of operations, exercises, events and activities which contribute to Defence and Air Force strategic messaging objectives, as well as support to bases with no extant capability, such as RAAF Bases Pearce, Tindal, Townsville and Wagga.

AFIS Flight Commander SQNLDR Trevor Grant said the concept provided the capability, such as RAAF Bases Pearce, Tindal, Townsville and Wagga.

AFIS members — Turpin "Trev" Grant at trevor.grant2@defence.gov.au

If you have any questions about AFIS, contact SQNLDR Grant at trevor.grant2@defence.gov.au

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It’s official, he’s the oldest fighter pilot

Sqn Ldr Phillip Frawley dethrones Israeli, reports CPL Mark Doran

Air Force’s most experienced fighter instructor has been recorded in the 2013 Guinness World Records as the world’s oldest active fighter pilot.

Born in March 1952, Sqn Ldr Phillip Frawley, of 76SQN at RAAF Base Williamtown, replaced Israeli fighter pilot, Brig-Gen Uri Gil, who set the previous record of 60 years and 72 days.

With more than $3000 flying hours - close to 5000 in fast jets and more than 2000 flying instruction - Sqn Ldr Frawley said the main thing which had not changed during his career was the thrill of flying.

“I gain a great deal of satisfaction from instructing, so my real thrill is seeing our young, talented pilots leave the Hawks to become F/A-18 pilots,” he said.

“I always wanted to be a pilot, so I’m just doing what I love and to be in the current Guinness World Records is the icing on the cake.

“My advice to future pilots is to never let anyone dissuade you from achieving your dreams.”

Sqn Ldr Frawley joined the RAAF when he was 15 in 1969 as an apprentice scientific instrument maker.

In 1973 he was selected for pilot training and after graduating flew the C-130 Hercules for five years before beginning his training as a fighter pilot in 1980.

Sqn Ldr Frawley recalled an embarrassing incident from his days flying C-130s.

“I went out to the flightline at RAAF Base Richmond looking for the aircraft which was flying to Darwin,” he said.

“The ground crew pointed me towards a Hercules, so I started doing all the pre-flight checks in preparation for the captain and the rest of the crew.

“I was sitting in the aircraft ready to start the engines when I noticed people running around a C-130 at the other end of the flightline like the Keystone Cops.

“It was then I realised I was in the wrong aeroplane and they were looking for me.”

After flying Mirages for five years with 77SQN and 78SQN in Butterworth and becoming a qualified flying instructor, Sqn Ldr Frawley spent two years at RAAF Base Point Cook training pilot recruits before becoming the lead-in fighter flight commander.

He began training on the F/A-18s in 1988 and was retained by 2 Operational Conversion Unit as an instructor and Hornet training flight commander.

Sqn Ldr Frawley said he had a few close calls as a fighter pilot.

“One was when I was flying Mirages - I nearly had a mid-air collision in Malaysia,” he said.

“It was during a strafe pattern run and the other aircraft passed so close I lost control of mine, developing into a spin at 1500 feet above the water.

“I was lucky to escape from that one - adrenaline, panic and self-preservation took over.”

His last posting in 28 years of full-time service was as the CO of 76SQN, which he regarded as the highlight of his career.

British Aerospace then gained his talents as an instructor with the Royal Saudi Air Force for five years.

On his return to Australia Sqn Ldr Frawley rejoined the Air Force in his current role as a dedicated reserve instructor on the Hawk Lead-in Fighter.

He said because of his age, medical staff placed close attention to his health and fitness requirements.

“Fitness for a fighter pilot is a high priority, but as I am an avid surfer who walks everywhere, I can still pass my aircrew medicals,” he said.

“But it is getting harder.”

Warbirds take up Sqn Ldr Frawley’s leisure time and he was the first pilot to fly a civilian jet warbird in Australia.

As a civilian instructor with a low-level aerobatics qualification he has been an air show demonstration pilot since 1989 with the Sabre for the RAAF Museum and is now involved in flying civilians in warbirds.
Facing up to it

CPL Bill Solomou

IT WAS better late than never, but the face on the Air Force balloon, Air Force Imagery Specialist CPL Amanda Campbell, of 28SQN, finally got aloft in “her” balloon in Canberra last month.

It had only taken six years.

When the new-look balloon was launched on September 13, 2006, CPL Campbell could not go up on the inaugural flight because she was pregnant.

The image of CPL Campbell dressed in half Disruptive Pattern Combat Uniform with face paint and half Air Force Service Dress was designed to depict the two faces of the Air Force – the representative and the operational.

An F/A-18 Hornet is pictured on the other side of the canopy.

Back in 2006, CPL (then LACW) Campbell, who had been in the Air Force for five years at that stage, admitted being a little self-conscious about having her image on the balloon but agreed that it looked “pretty good”.

“It was a bit embarrassing but my parents were very proud,” she said. “Not everyone can say that they have their face on the Air Force balloon.”

Six years on, she is still somewhat embarrassed by all the attention.

“People tell me they have seen me here, there and everywhere,” she said.

CPL Campbell and her husband SGT Morgan Campbell enjoyed their short yet memorable flight over Canberra on December 3.

She said it was well worth the wait.

“The flight was awesome and peaceful and we got to fly over Parliament House,” she said.

CPL Campbell’s image was originally used as a prototype, but, as they say, the rest is history.

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RCAF Air Force January 31, 2013

Feature

RAAFSFS fills a need for both Air Force and Army, reports CPL Mark Doran

A wealth of experience

CO RAAF SFS WGCDR Antony Houghton is a communications electronics engineer by trade and spent 20 years with the Royal Air Force, which included service in Northern Ireland, Bosnia and the Middle East before he joined the RAAF in 2004. On his last deployment he was Commander FGL7 in the Middle East.

WGCDR Houghton said living behind a defended wire with armed guards in the UK and overseas for such a long time had given him a strong alignment and experience with force protection.

"It’s fantastic to have so many of the key force protection trades in one school," he said.

"Being in Air Force Training Group means we can focus on the basic skills before the trainees go to their units for further specialist and equipment training.

"Air Force and Army have a lot of common skills, vehicles and equipment; it is largely only the application of these skills and the employment of those systems which separate us from a doctrinal perspective.

"From a force protection perspective, the centre of gravity for Air Force is its air bases, whereas Army has a greater focus on manpower.

"We have been able to rationalise our common areas of training and teach them in one place which will save money for Defence and allow us to work with greater synergy on operations."

January 31, 2013

RAAF Security and Fire School (RAAFSFS) at RAAF Base Amberley last year.

The facility, which opened in November 2011, delivers 54 different trade and employment courses for ground defence, security police, military working dog handlers, airfield engineers and firefighters.

Airfield engineer courses include training for site foremen, electricians, plumbers, carpenters and plant operators.

RAAFSFS is also home to the ADF’s only military working dog breeding program, which develops dogs from puppies through to young adult dogs ready for teaming with a handler on course.

On completion of the police course at RAAF SFS, students are teamed with a dog and begin a 13-week military working dog (MWD) handler course.

Dog handler instructor SGT Craig Westendorf said students were taught theory and practical lessons on how to control and handle a dog in order to protect Defence assets.

"We watch the dogs before the course to understand their temperament and level of training and also observe the students’ personalities to try and match them with their dogs as best we can," he said.

"Clear Signals Training used by the US Department of Defense is what we are looking at for future training at the school as it is all about motivating focused dogs to do what you want rather than compellng them. It’s more productive, easier on the dogs, they respond to it well and there is very little which can go wrong,“

The RAAF SFS basic firefighting course is 22 weeks of physically and mentally demanding training.

When qualified, members are able to rapidly respond to incidents involving aircraft and structural fires, road accidents, hazardous materials, bushfires and technical rescue tasks.

They also adapt their future training for the needs of their particular base or unit.

CPL Neil Gill has been an instructor with the Fire Training Flight for nearly two years and said initial employment as well as post graduate training was conducted at the school.

“We are teaching the most up-to-date technical skills," CPL Gill said. "Students are required to do a lot of study, including after hours, as fire fighting is a technical trade requiring specialist tools.

"I recommend students who come here have an open mind and a positive attitude.”

Gas-operated fire simulators at the RAAF SFS include a passenger aircraft, a fighter jet and a multi-story building, which are all controlled by computers and software from the simulator control office to give the trainees a realistic training environment.

The simulators allow instructors to recreate different emergency scenarios such as fuel spills, wing or tail fires and help develop realistic internal rescue scenarios while providing maximum safety at all times.

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RAAFSFS fills a need for both Air Force and Army, reports

CPL Mark Doran

CLOSE: to 500 Air Force and Army students completed training at the RAAF Security and Fire School (RAAFSFS) at RAAF Base Amberley last year.

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We thank our valued Air Force customers for your support over the last 20 years. It has been our honour to support you and we look forward to continuing our strong relationship in 2013 and beyond.

We wish all Air Force personnel and their families, at home and abroad, a very safe, happy and prosperous year ahead.

www.ssds.com.au
YOU'VE GOT MAIL: Above, FSGT Fiona Crasby received a letter from Cameron, an 11-year-old from Hammondville Public School in NSW, in a 'Stockings for Soldiers' care package sent to deployed members in Afghanistan. Coincidentally, she has an 11-year-old son named Cameron.

FULLY WIRED: Above, airfield engineer LAC Thomas Vincent, of 1A0SS, cuts wires for power points on Manus Island as part of the ADF contingent that deployed to the island to assist in building temporary offshore immigration processing facilities.

HAPPY HOMECOMING: Left, 11SQN AEA FSGT Colin Renton with his two boys moments after arriving home to RAAF Base Edinburgh on board the last AP-3C Orion aircraft to return from deployment to Al Minhad Air Base in the United Arab Emirates.

MEDICS ON MANUS: LACW Megan MacAuslan, of 2EHS, and LACW Pixie Gerber, of 1EHS, look over a Widget on Manus Island during a deployment on the island as part of Operation Resolute. Air Force medics were part of an ADF contingent that deployed to the island to help building temporary processing facilities in support of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

THANKS, AND GOOD LUCK: Former Commander Joint Logistics AVM Margaret Staib is presented with a bouquet of flowers by CAF AIRMSHL Geoff Brown, flanked by AVM Staib's daughter Alexandra and son Lachlan, at a farewell function at Duntroon House on December 11. After 31 years' service as a logistics officer, AVM Staib farewelled the Air Force to take up her new appointment as CEO of Airservices Australia.

JUST DOING MY JOB: Above, ground support equipment fitter AC Boean Carson, of 382ECSS, completes a full service on a power cart at RAAF Base Amberley.

FAMILY OUTING: Right, Natasha Robinson, an AAFC cadet with 334 (City of Canberra) Squadron, and her father GPCAPT Ken Robinson in the cockpit of an KC-30A tanker during the aircraft's stop-over in Canberra.

NEW AIRCREW: Air Force’s newest crew attendants LACWs Keely McDonald and Alexandria McNally after being awarded their brevet at a ceremony at RAAF Base Amberley. LACW McDonald has been posted to 33SQN to work on the KC-30A, while LACW McNally has been posted to 34SQN to work on VIP aircraft.
More days for carers

Sue Caddaye

The number of carer’s leave days for ADF members that can be approved in a calendar year has been increased from five to 10.

For SQNLDR John Cotterell, this change, along with the addition of carer’s leave for unexpected emergencies – to a maximum of two days per occurrence – definitely helps in the juggle of work and family life.

“I have a five-year-old-daughter Kate, and while I don’t like using carer’s leave, as it means Kate is sick, these changes allow me the flexibility to be there for her when needed.” SQNLDR Cotterell said.

“Also by incorporating the ability for the DGPERS to have the discretion to approve additional carer’s days if required, I see as a great safety net.”

“A few years ago when Kate broke her leg I was lucky to have that flexibility to work from home as needed, but if you don’t have this then this change is of real value. Ultimately I see these changes as an insurance policy against Murphy’s law.”

The changes to improve carer’s leave benefits came into effect on December 1 last year as part of Defence’s commitment to giving members more flexibility in meeting their family commitments.

Defence Science and Personnel Minister Warren Snowdon the improvements support Defence’s Pathway to Change strategy for cultural change, particularly the recommendations of the Review into Employment Pathways for APS Women in the Department of Defence and Elizabeth Broderick’s Review into the Treatment of Women in the ADF.

“The reviews encouraged Defence to provide more assistance to serving men and women to balance their work and family commitments,” Mr Snowdon said.

“Extending carer’s leave is one step towards wider cultural reform in Defence.”

Further information is available at http://www.defence.gov.au/OPEN/PAC

New training systems website

With training affecting all AF personnel and being a crucial component of Air Force’s capability, information relating to the training system must be current and accessible.

With this in mind, Air Force has a new user-friendly Air Force Training Systems (AFTS) website that provides guidance on Air Force education and training and provides links to existing sites such as PMET and CAMPUS.

Users will be able to research and apply for nationally recognised qualifications and find information and services associated with maintaining quality training, including auditing and workplace assessment.

Existing resources available on the AFTS website include practical easy to understand handbooks, checklists, examples, case studies and flow charts that are adaptable to users’ needs and essential information for all training stakeholders.

When enough handbooks and resources become available at the new site, the Manual of Training – Policy and Procedures will be withdrawn.

The aim is for this to occur by mid-2013. On the Air Force homepage, look for the training cycle logo (analyse-design-develop-conduct-evaluate) that replaces the RAAF base locations portal.

All-in-one form to reduce burden on employers

FLTLT Julia Ravell and Deanna Nott

RESERVISTS can now arrange time away from their civilian workplace with a new all-in-one form designed to streamline notifications regarding reserve service.

The Office of Reserve Service Protection, in conjunction with the services, introduced the form that replaces ad-hoc individual arrangements with employers.

Director Lisa Jelfs said the Web Form AE 380, released on November 28, would clarify employers’ obligations and responsibilities when reservists needed to be released.

“The AE 380 ensures that employers have been notified about deployments and refers employers to the relevant ADF contact if the absence of their employee will seriously impact their business or organisation,” Ms Jelfs said.

She said the form’s introduction was a positive step forward for good relations between reservists and their employers.

“Our intent is that the form will help reduce the administrative burden on employers so they can focus on the benefits of having highly trained and motivated reserve personnel in their organisation.”

For more information on the new form, contact the Office of Reserve Service Protection on 1800 671 368, email arnp@defence.gov.au or go to the Defence Reserves Support website at www.defenceservicesupport.gov.au

LGB handbook now online

THE Air Force Workforce Diversity (AFWD) section within the Directorate of Personnel – Air Force has published another addition to their growing series of online diversity handbooks, designed to provide support to a wide range of members in Air Force.

The handbook for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) members was developed by AFWD staff in close consultation with serving members of Air Force’s very supportive LGB community.

The President of the Defence Gay and Lesbian Information Service (DEFGILS), SQNLDR Vince Chong, said the handbook would be a valuable tool for members.

“I hope that these handbooks help to foster a work environment where same-sex attracted personnel don’t feel they need to suppress their sexual orientation to be accepted and included,” he said.

“A number of the experiences of DEFGILS members had been incorporated into the handbook and DEFGILS was pleased to have had an opportunity to contribute.”

The handbook is also intended to help the friends, co-workers, managers and commanders of LGB personnel foster improved understanding and awareness of issues faced by members within their team. A separate commander’s handbook is also available online.

For suggestions for future diversity handbooks or to contribute to any of the handbooks currently under development, email SQNLDR Jade Devaney at jade.devaney@defence.gov.au or the AFWD group mailbox.

Platelets on trial
An ADF surgeon leads the research effort on frozen blood, Michael Weaver reports.

You are serving on a military operation overseas and you’ve just been badly wounded. You hear muffled voices trying to stem the blood loss before a doctor makes the call for an urgent platelet transfusion.

Platelets are blood cells required to stop bleeding and platelet transfusion can be lifesaving.

Your only hope is with cryopreserved (frozen) platelets, produced and stored using techniques yet to be approved for widespread civilian use.

This scenario has been very real for Australian, Dutch and coalition personnel in Afghanistan since 2006, where frozen platelets have been used with very encouraging results.

Why use frozen?
The five-day shelf life of conventional platelets means they are usually only available in major urban civilian hospitals, which has prompted Australia’s widespread civilian use.

An initial pilot study involving 90 patients in civilian hospitals will be conducted by a team led by the Defence Professor of Military Medicine and Surgery at the University of Queensland, LTCOL Michael Reade. It is hoped this will pave the way for a larger, conclusive study that will provide sufficient evidence for the Therapeutic Goods Administration to assess.

America is trialling a similar technology in a different patient group, and the results of both studies will be analysed in detail.

LTCOL Reade, a specialist intensive care physician with a raft of experience in military and civilian hospitals as a reservist before being appointed to his current full-time military position, said the US Navy first developed the method to freeze platelets, subsequently refined by the Netherlands blood bank, which allows storage wherever needed, including deployed ADF hospitals.

“However, there is insufficient clinical trial evidence for widespread use, so in collaboration with the Australian Red Cross Blood Service and the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists, the ADF clinical trial, if successful, will be pivotal in the world wide introduction of this lifesaving technology,” LTCOL Reade said.

FREEZING PROBLEMS

Normal freezing methods destroy the clotting function of platelets, while studies have shown that up to 80 per cent function is retained using a protective, but toxic, chemical called dimethyl sulfoxide.

LTCOL Reade found out about the technology while deployed in 2009 as the clinical director of the NATO military hospital in Tarin Kot, where it was being used by the Dutch.

A Navy Reserve colleague at the Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital, CMDR Anthony Holley, travelled to the Netherlands as part of a specialist Defence working team and established a close working relationship with the Dutch military blood bank.

“We are now both working very closely with the Australian Red Cross Blood Service, which has researched and further developed the Dutch technology,” LTCOL Reade said.

WIDER INTRODUCTION

Broader trials
A small trial of cryo-preserved platelets by the US Navy compared the outcomes of patients given fresh platelets with those who received thawed frozen platelets during heart surgery. It found frozen platelets were better at reducing bleeding and reduced the amount of blood transfusions required.

“Up until now, there’s been a focus on short-term outcomes to transfusion products, where people have thought that if something seems to work and the lab tests you do on patients are encouraging, then that’s probably good enough.

“There’s been a movement around the world that some of the subtle effects of transfusions aren’t apparent when assessed that way, so studies of a few hundred or even a few thousand patients are required to demonstrate things are truly as effective and safe as they seem to be, so it’s that kind of trial we are going to embark on.

“If the results of the trial show what we think they will, this technology can be used everywhere that Defence provides a deployed surgical capability, be it on operations in a combat environment, in a humanitarian assistance role, or even during a major exercise where we set up a field hospital.

The pilot study will be completed by February 2014, with final results of the trial expected in 2016-17.

PLATELET PIONEERS: CMDR Anthony Holley and LTCOL Michael Reade are performing a pilot study on frozen platelets after encouraging results in Afghanistan.

Photo: Tim Asher
Kiwis on the radar

GPCAPT Peter Davis will lead a contingent of ADF men and women softballers to take on New Zealand in March. Participants from all three services competed for team and individual honours during the Australian Defence Softball Championships held at RAAF Base Williamtown on March 2-3. The action kicks off from 9am and is open to all Defence members. Teams will consist of 12 players, with an entry fee of $20 a team. Prize money will then be divided between the winners and runners-up. Further details are available from LAC Shaun Connolly at shaun.connolly@defence.gov.au.

Ice hockey soldiers on

A CHARITY ice hockey match will be held between the Canberra Knights ice hockey team and the Soldier On organisation. The event will take place at Phillip Swimming and Ice Skating Centre, Phillip, ACT, on March 23 at 5.30pm with tickets available on the night at $20 a head. Proceeds will go to Soldier On. Further details are available from the Soldier On website or 04765 89132.

Cadets show Murray spirit

FTLT (AAFC) Danny Salmon

THE Albury-Wodonga 412SQN Australian Air Force Cadets (AAFC) received the Mark Thornthwaite award for best encapsulating the spirit of giving and incredible effort at the Murray Marathon in December.

The award honours Mark Thornthwaite, who started the Murray Marathon when he led some friends down the mighty Murray River in the late 1960s.

Six adults and 18 cadets, aged between 14 and 19, kayaked 68km from Yarrawonga to Swan Hill in the five-day marathon from December 27-31.

412SQN had three relay teams and three solo paddlers in the event.

Team organiser PLTOFF (AAFC) Andy Snell said the cadets were very encouraging of other paddlers, helped anyone who required ground crew assistance with their boats and were great ambassadors for the event.

“When we were leaving the marathon we were stopped by so many people who told us what a great job the cadets had done and how they had helped people during the whole marathon,” he said.

Fellow team organiser CPL (AAFC) John Schneider said it was the 11th consecutive year the AAFC had taken part in the Murray Marathon.

“The Murray Marathon is a great event for the AAFC because they gain leadership, teamwork, camaraderie and a huge sense of achievement,” he said.

“They are encouraged to display good sportsmanship and fair play. They realise that this is more important than winning and the new skills they learn enhances their whole Air Force Cadet journey.”

CPL (AAFC) Schneider said the cadets were from around Albury, Wodonga and outlying towns as far away as Wangaratta, so it was good to know the funds raised would be reinvested back into the Murray region.

It was the third Murray Marathon for 16-year-old cadet CPL (AAFC) Madeline Hillas, of Wodonga.

“I really enjoy the physical challenge of the lead-up training and the event itself. There is nothing like the feeling of going over the finishing line in Swan Hill,” she said.

The Murray Marathon is a fundraiser for the YMCA and all funds raised are invested back into Murray River region through grants to address disadvantage.

For further information, contact CO FTLT (AAFC) Danny Salmon on 0427 414 894.

READY: Australian Air Force Cadets from 412SQN at the Murray Marathon.

FULL STORY: Page 23

ATTENTION: ARMY NAVY AIR FORCE

SPORT

Sevens at Williamtown

THE Williamtown White Pointers Rugby Union Club will host the second rugby sevens competition at RAAF Base Williamtown on March 2. The action kicks off from 9am and is open to all Defence members. Teams will consist of 12 players, with an entry fee of $20 a team. Prize money will then be divided between the winners and runners-up. Further details are available from LAC Shaun Connolly at shaun.connolly@defence.gov.au.

ADT teams:

Men’s team: LS Christopher Murray, PO David Williams, PO Linda Mooney, AB Michael Taylor, SGT Nathan Sandow, LS Brendan Chappell, CPO Adrian Trevis, CPL Tony Chave (captain), U Aron Kleinsdale, LCPL Corey Parkinson, AB Samuel Ryan, PTE Casey Fern, AB Joshua Falls, AC James Mathews, CPL James Ashby.


Finalists: Softballers from the ACT and Southern States teams after their final at the Australian Defence Softball Championships.

Photo: LAC Brenton Keatirski

Australian softballers from the ACT and Southern States teams after their final at the Australian Defence Softball Championships.

Australian rugby union and Australian rugby league football teams will be in action at the Sydney Sevens at Allianz Stadium later this month.

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Australian softballers from the ACT and Southern States teams after their final at the Australian Defence Softball Championships.

Australian softballers from the ACT and Southern States teams after their final at the Australian Defence Softball Championships.
BATTER UP

ADF men and women softballers to take on Kiwis in March in tour of New Zealand

Full story page 23

YOU'RE OUT!: Air Force softballer SGT Tracey Mosley (far right) throws the ball to Army's SGT Rebecca Wiggins to run out the player (out of shot) during the women's final of the Australian Defence Softball Championships at RAAF Base Edinburgh last December. ACT (in yellow and blue) was victorious, defeating Southern States 8-2.

Photo: LAC Brenton Kwaterski

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