



Army

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The soldiers' newspaper



A rifleman from 6RAR jumps in the 'bear pit' during the obstacle course as part of the final battle run on Exercise Viper Strike at Gallipoli Barracks.
Photo: Cpl Nicole Dorrett

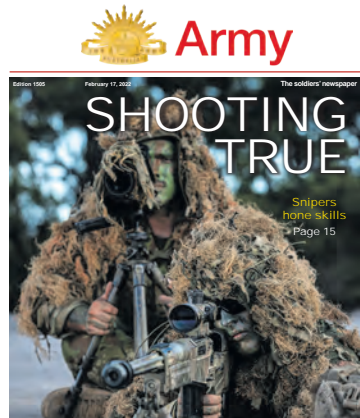
**Diggers relish
combined combat
drills on Exercise
Viper Strike**

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WARRIORS WADE IN



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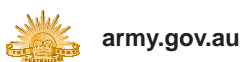
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CA Lt-Gen Simon Stuart stands in the cupola of a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System during the Australian International Airshow at Avalon in February.
Photo: Cpl Cameron Pegg

Blueprint for the future

FOLLOWING the release of the Defence Strategic Review, the Government announced a series of initiatives and investments in response to the recommendations, addressing workforce, capability and security needs.

Invest in the future force

ADF personnel could be eligible for a \$50,000 bonus payment for continuing service under a \$400 million continuation bonus initiative.

ADF members who have served a minimum of four years and are at the end of their initial mandatory period of service may be entitled to a \$50,000 bonus payment if they serve another three years.

The bonus is expected to benefit about 3400 ADF personnel in the first three years of the scheme.

Also, \$2 million will be committed in the coming financial year to a review into Defence Housing, which will consider current and future needs of ADF personnel, rental assistance and home ownership support benefits.

Manufacture and acquire missiles

About \$4.1 billion will go towards acquiring more long-range strike systems and manufacturing longer-range munitions in Australia. The investment comprises:

- \$1.6 billion for long-range strike capabilities, including accelerating the delivery of additional high mobility artillery rocket systems (HIMARS) and associated battle management and support systems, and the acquisition of precision strike missiles;
- \$2.5 billion for the Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Enterprise, which will fund the manufacturing of guided weapons and their critical components; critical support for the enterprise, such as testing and research capabilities,

Federal Budget boost

Cpl Jacob Joseph

DEFENCE spending will rise above two per cent of gross domestic product next year, with funds earmarked for the nuclear-submarine program and other DSR investments set to tip portfolio spending over \$50 billion.

Investment in priority areas including nuclear submarines, long-range strike missiles and northern-base infrastructure upgrades contributed to the spending increase.

The Government will invest \$19 billion over the next four years in these programs, including \$400

million for personnel continuation bonuses.

The nuclear-submarine program will get \$9 billion over the next four years.

More than \$4 billion will go towards developing long-range strike capabilities, including money to establish a home-grown missiles and munitions industry.

Defence Minister Richard Marles said spending would grow in the medium term and was "in line with the strategic circumstances".

Mr Marles said the Government was willing to make the hard decisions in order to get the best outcome for the ADF.

ties, and storage and distribution networks; and building stocks of guided weapons.

CA Lt-Gen Simon Stuart said long-range strike would give the ADF the ability to target with greater reach than ever before – from sea, land, air, space and cyber.

"Rapid advances in targeting systems, propulsion and Australian industry capabilities are creating opportunities and accelerating development of systems, which means better equipment, sooner, for our soldiers, sailors and aviators," Lt-Gen Stuart said.

"To accelerate long-range strike we need to create new workforces and upskill our existing workforce."

Strengthen northern bases

A \$3.8 billion investment in northern bases will enable Army to conduct littoral operations in northern land and maritime spaces, and provide a long-range strike capability. It will also equip Air Force to support operations in the north through surveillance, air defence, strike and air transport.

Defence will prioritise upgrades and development of the northern

bases network, including:

- \$2 billion for critical air bases stretching from RAAF Base Learmonth through Cocos (Keeling) Islands, as well as air bases in the Northern Territory and northern Queensland;
- \$1 billion for upgrades to land and joint estate capabilities;
- \$600 million in maritime estate investments, including HMAS *Coonawarra*, HMAS *Cairns* and the Harold E. Holt Naval Communications Station;
- \$200 million towards the acceleration of additional projects.

Secure anti-ship missile capability

Anzac-class frigates and Hobart-class destroyers will be equipped with modernised anti-ship missile protection, costing \$180 million over the coming five years.

Rheinmetall Defence Australia has signed a contract to build a multi-ammunition soft-kill system (MASS), which provides an electromagnetic decoy to protect ships from sensor-guided missiles.

Manufacture bomb disposal robots

The Government has signed a \$46 million contract with a Queensland company to manufacture up to 80 explosive ordnance disposal robots for Australia's soldiers, sailors and aviators.

The new robots, to be manufactured by L3Harris Microe, will carry cameras and sensors that have an improved ability to find, examine and neutralise IEDs and explosive hazards.

Boost national security through innovation

Spending on defence innovation will increase by \$591 million to \$3.4 billion over the next decade to establish the Advanced Strategic Capabilities Accelerator (ASCA).

ASCA will be up and running by July 1 and will replace the Defence Innovation Hub and Next Generation Technologies Fund. It will be a key element of the Defence innovation, science and technology program, the priorities for which are hypersonics, directed energy, trusted autonomy, quantum technology, information warfare and long-range fires.

Establish a submarine agency and regulator

The Australian Submarine Agency (ASA) will be established to manage and oversee Australia's nuclear-powered submarine program.

ASA will be responsible for cradle-to-grave management, including acquisition, delivery, construction, technical governance, sustainment and disposal.

Navy will continue to be responsible for training submariners and operating Australia's submarines.

The Nuclear-Powered Submarine Task Force will transition from Defence to ASA on July 1.

The Government will also establish an independent Australian nuclear-powered submarine safety regulator.



Sgt Timothy Sly
leopard crawls
under a barbed wire
obstacle.
Photos: Cpl Nicole Dorrett

Readied to deal with a persistent threat



Pte Mitchell Elliot charges through the bayonet assault course.



A rifleman jumps in the 'bear pit' during the obstacle course.

Capt Cody Tsaousis

EXERCISE Viper Strike was held this month to enhance the ability of soldiers from different units to work together in a combat environment.

Members of 6RAR took part in the exercise at Enoggera Close Training Area.

The combat team was based on Alpha Coy 6RAR, supported by elements of 2CER, 1 MP Bn, 2 Health Bn, and 1 Bn, RAA.

Based on a mechanised infantry security operation, soldiers tackled an obstacle course, set and reacted to ambushes, conducted security patrols, and dealt with sensitive population issues, including a mass grave scenario.

2IC Alpha Coy 6RAR Capt Jose Carino said the exercise enhanced the interoperability of soldiers from different units.

"Exercise Viper Strike 23 served as an excellent activity for the infantry platoons and enablers so we could operate in a combat team environment," Capt Carino said.

"It emphasised the importance of understanding the capabilities across the force and collaborating with other units to achieve training outcomes.

"These factors all help to set conditions

for our soldiers to fight and succeed on operations."

The exercise featured an enemy platoon conducting ambushes and night probes, further testing the combat team's ability to operate under a persistent threat.

OC Alpha Coy 6RAR Maj Nathan Dubbeld said training to defeat an enemy in difficult conditions was a great learning opportunity for the soldiers, and was a further demonstration of 6RAR's preparedness.

"To ensure the combat team is prepared for Talisman Sabre 23, and more importantly, is prepared for operational deployments, there is a need to train as a combined arms team," Maj Dubbeld said.

"Simulating a realistic deployment and operation, the exercise focused on training to respond to a conventional threat during a transition from competition to conflict.

"This enabled the combat team to exercise a broader range of critical warfighting and specialist capabilities, ensuring our soldiers improved their lethality and survivability."

Exercises such as Viper Strike test the soldiers' preparedness to ensure 7 Bde is ready to deploy at short notice.



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Cpl Melina Young (RAAF) found a diversity of roles and activities for those deployed to the Middle East region.

Keeping everyone connected



Sig Tyson Antonie is upgrading software at Australia's operating base in the MER.
Photos: Cpl Melina Young

FOR communication information systems technician Sig Tyson Antonie, the chance to take his skills on operations has been a career highlight.

"Operations provides the ultimate opportunity to put all the skills I've learned to use," Sig Antonie said.

"It can be stressful, but we've got support, knowledge, and our other agencies for assistance."

Sig Antonie is three weeks into his first deployment on Operation Accordion and said he jumped at the prospect when offered.

He manages the IT systems personnel use, and is responsible for maintaining the strategic communications link to Australia, including encrypted networks, with his section playing an integral part in the operation.

Sig Antonie also works with the internet service provider in country, and various organisations in and outside the ADF.

"I'm one of the primary people who talk to our communications team

because I can speak their language on a technical level," Sig Antonie said.

He is one half of a two-person team overseas. His day-to-day role is a telecommunications technician at his home unit at ICSR, in Darwin.

He joined the Army at 17 and said it was one of his best decisions.

"All through high school I was into fitness, and I was constantly bombarded with Defence recruiting adds promoting the lifestyle," Sig Antonie said.

"I liked the idea of getting to train while learning new skills, so that pretty much grabbed me as a teenager."

Sig Antonie is a firm believer of the old adage "you get out what you put in" and feels strongly tied to his teammates and the Army's culture.

"I'm just trying to make the most of it while I'm serving," Sig Antonie said.

"I've made a lot of connections, friendships and memories in my career and I'm really enjoying it here on deployment."

Cooking up a storm in the MER



Chef Nasir Ali Monbal takes a cooking classes with Operation Accordion personnel at Australia's operating base in the Middle East.

PERSONNEL on Operation Accordion can give their taste buds a treat as they go on a delicious culinary journey.

Catering staff offer weekly cooking classes where students can enjoy the fruits of their labour at the end.

Delectable dishes on this month's menu included pork vindaloo, crispy chilli beef and tandoori chicken.

There's a folder in the kitchen full of reviews singing praise to those who run the class.

Students are finding joy in an environment where passions can often take a back seat.

Andrew Middeldorp, a contract manager, has attended nine classes and says they allow him to reset after a long week of work.

"Apart from a getting a second dinner, I get to engage with the passionate cooks and learn some of their skills and techniques," he said.

"I also get to have a great time with my fellow co-workers."

"It's a great morale booster and an excellent way to switch off the concerns of tomorrow."

Sous chef Prince Pullapalli, originally from south India, said everyone was very eager to learn.

"We share what we know with them, our cooking techniques, and how we use and play with different ingredients," he said.

Mr Pullapalli said most people

loved curries and wanted to know how to cook one.

"We are very happy to teach these cooking classes; we enjoy it because we are teaching something that we know very much about," he said.

"It's a fun class, and the students keep cracking jokes, especially when they are doing something wrong; we like telling them how to do it correctly."

Colin Paterson, the catering service delivery manager, said the initiative had been a big hit.

"It was a welcome activity after the long pause during lockdown," he said.

"People are taking notes, and if they take those little hints back home with them and make a nice meal for their family and friends, then it's success on our part."

Participating in the classes bridges gaps and forms relationships.

"They get to know the person rather than 'the chef' or 'the steward,'" Mr Paterson said.

"They introduce themselves, ask questions, wanting to know about their background, where they're from, and learn about their family."

"It's been really good and long may it continue."

Cooking students finish classes with a full belly, a dirty apron, and a new recipe to add to their favourites collection.

Tandoori chicken

Yield 10 portions

2.5 pieces chicken whole or 2.5 kg Boneless Chicken
281 g yogurt
70 ml fresh lemon juice
70 g garam masala
28 g chili Kashmiri powder
10 g turmeric
39 g coriander powder
28 g chat masala powder
28 g cumin powder
14 g kasturi methi
34 g fresh ginger
39 g fresh garlic
20 g salt/pepper
141 ml oil
40 g fresh coriander leaves
fresh mint, sliced onion and lemon wedges for garnish.

Method

- In a large bowl, whisk together the yogurt, lemon juice, vegetable oil, ginger, garlic paste, cumin powder, coriander powder, turmeric powder, chat masala, garam masala and salt/pepper
- Add the chicken pieces to the bowl and toss to coat evenly with the marinade.
- Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and marinate in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours or overnight.
- Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Remove the chicken from the marinade and place on the prepared baking sheet.
- Bake the chicken for 25-30 minutes or until cooked through and the juices run clear.
- Optional: broil the chicken for 2-3 minutes at the end to get a nice char on the skin.
- Garnish with fresh coriander leaves and serve hot.

The whole Box and dice

OFFICIALLY, his title is Middle East region (MER) Safety and Security adviser, unofficially, Capt David Box oversees many roles on Operation Accordion.

Capt Box runs basic 9mm and EF88 Austeyr weapons drills on the range at Australia's main base in the Middle East, assisting personnel in developing their weapon proficiencies.

The range is also used to zero weapons before entering operational areas, including short mission MER sustainment flights.

Capt Box provides instruction to personnel, ensuring they meet Defence proficiency standards.

Personnel who are required to carry weapons in operational areas benefit from Capt Box's coaching.

"Having them come down weekly and maintain currency and comfort with the weapon allows them to move forward into those locations with confidence," Capt Box said.

Capt Box also helps the Accordion operations officer when surge support is required.

"I'll get emails and phone calls from out stations requesting advice, specifically on security of buildings, and what they can do



Capt David Box instructs range practice drills with Cpl Jessica Edwards (RAAF).

to increase their zoning," Capt Box said.

"I also manage the flow of specialist personnel to come out and accredit and certify new builds, re-credit old builds."

"And from a safety perspective, I ensure that, across the MER, people are aware of varying things coming through the WHS pipeline from HQJOC."



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Enhancing cultural networks

Deb Hartlett

NATIONAL Reconciliation Week, from May 27 to June 3, and NAIDOC Week give Defence a chance to reflect on the contribution First Nations personnel have made, and continue to make, to capability through their unique skillsets, knowledge and perspectives.

The Indigenous Cultural Advisory Group (ICAG) plays a key role in informing Defence's First Nations strategies, policies and programs to ensure First Nations voices are heard.

ICAG Chair and Defence's Assistant Secretary Workplace Health and Safety, John Love, said the group provided senior leaders, and Defence groups and services, with strategic cultural advice and guidance.

"This ensures policies, strategies, projects and programs are appropriately developed, targeted and culturally appropriate, while still remaining focused on Defence capability," Mr Love said.

Army, Navy and Air Force have service elders who guide their services with cultural and strategic advice, mentoring and support, and enhance cultural intelligence and links with First Nations communities.

One of Navy's elders, Uncle Phillip Bowie, sees himself as a

mentor and support to younger recruits and sailors.

"I would like them to think of me as someone they can talk to if they find themselves in a difficult position or just need advice," Uncle Phillip said.

Army and Air Force also have Indigenous liaison officer networks across Australia, enhancing the services' cultural understanding and advising commanders on creating or improving local relationships with First Nations communities.

Navy has regional indigenous development coordinators, who help naval commands understand issues facing First Nations members and communities. They play a key role when the ADF is deployed to remote communities.

Air Force Indigenous Liaison Officer Flt-Lt Tramine Dukes, a Mara woman from the Northern Territory who was born in the Pilbara and grew up in Perth, describes her role as linking Aboriginal communities with Defence members, "to build relationships and break down barriers, making sure we can all work together."

"This is vital in times of crisis," she said.

Deb Hartlett is from Culture and People Development Branch, Defence People Group

Joining the dots in the Mid-East

Cpl Melina Young

AT weekends, WO2 Anne Dufficy can be found sitting with a paintbrush in her hand creating a sense of calm for herself.

The dots she paints connect not just images, but her Indigenous story with others.

"When you're deployed, work is all around you. If someone's got a question while I'm having dinner, I'm there for them, but painting is time out for me," WO2 Dufficy said.

Deployed in Sinai, Egypt, WO2 Dufficy is painting the entertainment wall at The Cove – the recreation area for the Australian contingent to the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) at South Camp in Sharm el-Sheikh.

WO2 Dufficy said the area was lovely but did not display any Australian culture.

"When I first came here, I noticed the Canadians identifying their First Nations, and the Kiwis with their strong Māori culture, so I wanted to showcase ours," she said.

"I have some Aboriginal blood, but I predominantly identify as a Torres Strait Islander, so I thought I'd tell my story on the mural."

Her mural fuses Aboriginal stories with the MFO, featuring a rainbow serpent, the creator of earth in Dreamtime.

Two circles represent the north and south camp and sit below the MFO emblem.

A bright orange map of Australia sits underneath the dot paintings.

"This represents the poem I like called *I love a sunburnt country*," she said.

Gaps have been filled with colourful handprints from 56A rotation personnel.

"The men and women sign their name next to their design, making their mark on the wall," she said.

WO2 Dufficy said it was important to bring Indigenous culture to the MFO.

"We're a very multicultural country and nations here want to know why we all look different," she said.

"Not a lot of people overseas know much about the Indigenous Australians. I want to share as much as I know about the culture to my new friends here."



WO2 Anne Dufficy doing what she loves with her down time while deployed.

Photo: Cpl Melina young

WO2 Dufficy is the force chief clerk, providing administrative advice and policy guidance to the force headquarters.

She also manages administration for the 13 MFO nations.

WO2 Dufficy is part of the Army Indigenous cultural advisory board and loves receiving care packages from

Indigenous children all over Australia.

"They really want to know about the culture here in Egypt, and we love writing letters back to the kids," she said.

"We know there's a lot of support from home because of the deadly care packages coming through. Thanks to all the mob back home for their support."

Corps' history informs Army's future: CA

Capt Krysten Clifton

AS the Royal Australian Corps of Transport (RACT) prepares for 50th birthday commemorations on June 1, CA Lt-Gen Simon Stuart reminded Army to "look back to look forward" during a RACT exhibit unveiling on May 11.

"2023 marks an important inflection point for the RACT," Lt-Gen Stuart said.

"It is an opportunity to reflect on the past in order to inform our understanding of what may be required of us in the future."

"As the DSR [Defence Strategic Review] directed, Army must be optimised for littoral operations in our northern land and maritime spaces. The men and women of the RACT will undertake a critical role in developing and operating this capability."

"I thank AAHU [Australian Army History Unit] for putting together this exhibition and helping us, as always, to ready ourselves for the future by better understanding our past."

Head AAHU Tim Gellel said the decision to form the RACT in 1973 coincided with a challenging time for Army, with many Defence reforms, including to pass responsibility for all sea-going vessels to the RAN.

"Two of the Army vessels rep-



Head of Corps, RACT Brig Natasha Ludwig and Head of the Australian Army History Unit Tim Gellel discuss the exhibition at Russell Offices. Photo: Kym Smith

resented here today – the 600-ton Landing Ship Medium *Brudenell White* and the 1200-ton *Sir John Monash* – reflect the zenith of Army's water transport capability, which occurred just before that period," Mr Gellel said.

"As Army reaches a new inflection point, with a renewed focus on littoral manoeuvre, this exhibit encourages us to look to the past to ensure the Army is Future Ready."

The exhibition in the office of CA is a precursor to AAHU's support provided to the corps' main commemorations at Puckapunyal on June 1.

This includes banners for RACT units, copies of the history covering RACT's first 25 years, six heritage vehicles, and a display of items selected by Deputy Head of Corps Lt-Col Philippa Cleary.



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Snipers on mark despite the odds

Cpl Jacob Joseph

SNIPERS from the School of Infantry travelled to the United States last month to test their skills against some of the world's best.

Sgt Joey Hollis led a team of three to the International Sniper Competition at Fort Benning, where 35 groups from 10 militaries competed for the title.

In the first competition since the pandemic, shooters from the US Army National Guard took first place, but Sgt Hollis said his team upheld the Australian Army's reputation.

Unable to take their Blaser Tac 2s overseas, the Australians borrowed the US M2010 for the competition and had just two hours to practise before the competition, from April 8-13, started. Learning the ballistic characteristics of the .300 Winchester Magnum ammunition and the weapon's attributes, such as trigger pressure, proved challenging at first.

"We didn't really have that inherent understanding of how the .300 would perform, because it's a new calibre," Sgt Hollis said.

"We only had two hours for the guys

to zero and collect data for the rifle before we had to be off the range."

But Sgt Hollis said they found their groove as the competition progressed.

Cpl Paul-Atilla Kovacs was second-fastest to hit a moving target over 700 metres in the final stand.

The three-man team, which also included Cpl Justin Georgelin, faced physical and mental challenges over three days.

As well as activities to test physical stamina, soldiers were tested mentally by mathematical equations to find targets.

In other events, soldiers had just one minute to identify and engage a high-value target based on information collected throughout the competition, with top points awarded to the fastest successful shot.

"Everything was very fast-paced compared to what we're used to," Sgt Hollis said.

"We have time constraints here in Australia but not as tight as that – it was a pressure cooker."

Sgt Hollis said it was a good opportunity to benchmark Army's sniper capability with partner nations.

Army will send a team to challenge the US Army National Guard again next year.



Members of the Australian sniper team practising in preparation for the competition at Fort Benning.

Photo: Sgt Matt Bickerton

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Showing flexibility on HADR ex

Flg-Off Connor Bellhouse

THE Army deployed a range of capabilities on Exercise Croix du Sud, the French Armed Forces-led humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) training activity in New Caledonia.

Functioning as Charlie Company within the land component command, the Army detachment demonstrated its flexibility, delivering a range of supporting effects, including evacuee processing, humanitarian stores distribution, security and patrols.

Maj Sean Caughey commanded Charlie Coy, which brought together elements of 7 Bde's infantry, combat engineers and cavalry, as well as MPs from 6 Bde.

"The different skill sets within our company enable us to be highly flexible," Maj Caughey said.

"We can receive a range of tasks and ensure that we successfully complete our mission."

"Whether that be as simple as distributing stores, providing security to convoys, or being a friendly face to interact with locals to reassure them that we are here to support."

"When we are responding to a natural disaster there are often hungry and thirsty people isolated in remote locations."

"It's our responsibility to make



Watch the video at:
youtu.be/h7v3K_deJI

Soldiers from 6RAR conduct a patrol with soldiers from the Royal Gurkha Rifles in Bourail, New Caledonia.
Photo: Sgt Brodie Cross

sure those stores get to where they're needed most."

The 6RAR soldiers had the opportunity to work alongside a Royal Gurkha Regiment Rifle Platoon

and elements of the French Foreign Legion.

"The relationships our team developed with our partners has been excellent, both before the exercise, conduct-

ing lead-up training with our French partners, and during the exercise with the attached Gurkha element," Maj Caughey said.

"We've seen how other countries

do business, how we can best interact with them and how we can operate with them in the future."

"I'm sure many of the relationships built on the exercise will be carried on."



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80th a crowning achievement for dental unit



Lt-Col Anthony Craig and Pte Parris Plate cut the cake at celebrations of the RAADC's 80th anniversary.

Lt-Col Tom van Heumen

MEMBERS of the Royal Australian Army Dental Corps (RAADC) gathered in Sydney on April 23 to mark its 80th birthday.

The Australian Army Dental Corps was officially established on April 23, 1943. It received the Royal Charter, becoming the RAADC, in 1948 in recognition of the corps' valourous war service and its crucial role in maintaining the dental health and wellbeing of Army personnel.

Over the past 80 years, RAADC personnel have continued to serve with honour in their garrison roles and on deployment to support Australian troops on numerous exercises and operations.

A highlight of the formal dinner at Victoria Barracks sergeants' mess was the recognition of Col Geoff Stacey's retirement from the Reserve force after 42 years of service.

A RAADC forum was held at the barracks the following day to discuss the corps' future.

Presentations from corps members and Commander 2 Health Bde Brig Jocelyn King focused on enhancing the deployable dental capability.

Ideas from junior soldiers and officers helped shape a corps future statement, which outlines how the RAADC remains ready to support Army, and in the spirit of the RAADC motto, ensuring 'Strong Teeth, Strong Soldiers' that are fit to fight.



Cpl Sheree Willcox gives it her all during one of the workouts.

Photos: TrewBella Photography

A little bit of hurt worth it for a lot of our heroes

Capt Krysten Clifton

DOING 24 gruelling workouts in 24 hours isn't an ideal way to spend a weekend for most people, but that's what members of Army Logistic Training Centre (ALTC) did when they banded together through blood, sweat and tears for their Defence brothers and sisters in need.

The nation-wide fundraiser on April 22, represented by members of ALTC at CrossFit TMA Wodonga, assisted in raising more than \$300,000 for the Defence veteran charity Wounded Heroes.

During the 24 Hours of Heroes challenge, which began at 8 am, teams of six completed one 'hero workout' every hour for 24 hours. Each workout was named after a fallen Defence member, and was typically much more arduous than a regular workout.

CrossFit TMA owner Zak Rogers said the partnership between Defence and Wounded Heroes was a perfect fit.

"A lot of gyms around Australia have veterans and serving men and women at their gyms, so it makes perfect sense for them to be the bread and butter in terms of how we raise this money," Mr Rogers said.

"We had 72 participants, and of those, 25 to 30 serving personnel.

"Three teams were almost solely made up of serving members; then on top of that they had mates and other colleagues that came in and did the workout as well.



WO2 Beau Thomas reads the biography of a fallen soldier before a workout begins during the 24-hour fundraiser.

"A couple of the teams had people who got injured during it, so people were coming in at three and four in the morning, no questions asked, and went hard, too."

One of those members was School of Ordnance PTI Cpl Sheree Willcox, a high achiever in the CrossFit world who has competed at the Torian Pro and was a semi-final qualifier at the CrossFit Games.

"Having her here over the weekend really pumped a lot of people up," Mr Rogers said.

"She really resonates and connects with everyone. She's able to come down to everyone's level regardless of where she's at."

Cpl Willcox said the event was

particularly emotional before each workout started.

At 15 minutes to the hour, family or friends of the upcoming hero spoke about them, with Mr Rogers going on to read their story – who they were, how they served, how they died and the qualities they espoused.

"It was very moving," Cpl Willcox said.

"Throughout the workouts I just had it in my head that we're never going to hurt as much as those people who had already passed away. A little bit of hurt here is absolutely nothing in comparison.

"It was a very memorable event. Lots of support, lots of emotions and a lot of tired people."



Members of one of the teams show their support for each other before beginning their workout.

Planning key to success of Ex Talisman Sabre

Cpl Veronica O'Hara

THIS year's Exercise Talisman Sabre will be the biggest yet in terms of geographic spread and the number of partner nations joining Australia and the United States.

Those taking part will include Fiji, France, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany and Indonesia.

Having been observers at previous iterations of the biennial exercise, France and Germany will contribute force elements to high-intensity warfighting training this year, taking place across northern Australia from Darwin to Townsville and Brisbane, from July 22 to August 4.

Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Tonga will embed personnel with Australian Army formations in amphibious landings and land combat.

Observer nations this year include the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

Exercise Director Brig Damian Hill said the final planning conferences were held recently at Gallipoli Barracks.

"An important part of a significant military exercise like Talisman Sabre are the planning events that are required to train together in dynamic situations across an area as large as northern Australia," Brig Hill said.

"So when it comes time to conduct the exercise in July we're ready to go and show what we can do as like-minded partners working together."

Brig-Gen James Bartholomees, of US Army Pacific in Hawaii, said Talisman Sabre gave the United States

the opportunity to work with their partners to rehearse setting the theatre across the joint force.

"Ultimately Talisman Sabre is all about building readiness as a joint and combined force with our key allies, as well as building integrated deterrence," Gen Bartholomees said.

"The sheer magnitude of forces, equipment and vehicles that are required to move vast distances in order to set the theatre, enables training opportunities."

Director Joint Collective Training for Headquarters Joint Operations Command, Capt (RAN) Tim Byles, said the partner nations would bring capabilities to enhance the exercise's outcomes.

"Whether it's specialist individuals, or a respective weapon system or capability, it makes Talisman Sabre 2023 richer and enhances the outcomes for all involved," Capt Byles said.

"We have worked hard with our friends at the United States Indo-Pacific Command to design an exercise that builds and affirms our military-to-military ties and interoperability with other nations.

"Our soldiers, sailors and aviators taking part can expect a good challenge of their skills alongside partner nations from across the region and around the world."

A large component of the exercise will be held offshore, with many countries providing maritime capabilities.

Occurring every two years, Exercise Talisman Sabre is the largest bilateral military training activity between the ADF and the United States.

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SOLDIERS GET JOB DONE



A soldier from 3 Bde during an assault on the urban operations training facility.
Photo: Cpl Brandon Grey



Watch the video at:
youtu.be/6s6iF_AQxOQ

Exercise Brolga Run was a good lead-in for Talisman Sabre

MORE than 1500 infantry, combat engineer, artillery, and enabling soldiers, and about 200 military vehicles from 3 Bde deployed to the Townsville Field Training Area in late April to conduct combined arms training against a simulated enemy.

The exercise also involved stability, security and evacuation operations against an insurgency in Ingham.

The second major training exercise for the brigade this year was preparation for Exercise Talisman Sabre with partner forces in July.

Comd 3 Bde Brig David McCammon said soldiers from all

units gave it their all over the two weeks.

"Our soldiers worked up to 48 hours' straight with constant attacks from the simulated enemy," Brig McCammon said.

"This is deliberate as it adds a level of complexity, testing how our soldiers operate under significant strain as an individual, and if they can work together as a team to achieve a tactical outcome.

"It amazes me the level of initiative and ingenuity we've seen from soldiers at every level.

"Talisman Sabre will be a great opportunity to put those skills that

we've seen from the Brig... to the... ed m... from... con... duc... men... and... faci... eng... 1R... mar...



Soldiers from 3 Bde conduct an assault on the urban operations training facility.
Photo: Cpl Brandon Grey

ONE ON BROLGA RUN



Soldiers of 3RAR conduct an assault on the enemy main defensive position.
Photo: LCpl Riley Blennerhassett



A gunner of 4 Regt, RAA waits for an airlift.
Photo: LCpl Riley Blennerhassett



A soldier of 1RAR takes a sight picture of an M1A1 Abrams main battle tank.
Photo: LCpl Riley Blennerhassett

bre. **Capt Joanne Leca** reports.

“I’ve learnt over the two weeks to test against our friends down in Brisbane.”
Exercise Brolga Run was designed to test the ability of 3 Bde’s designated battle group, predominantly from 3RAR, to respond to a range of combat operations.
During the exercise soldiers conducted assaults on different environments, such as established trenches and the urban operations training facility, which involved a simulated engagement of forces from 3RAR and 4RAR.
Lt Darcy Anderson, a platoon commander from 3RAR, said the exercise

had given him a greater understanding of how a battle group could make a difference in a fight.
“On exercises like this we can work with other units, each with their own strengths, to form effective battle groups, preparing to operate in a multi-domain contested environment,” Lt Anderson said.
“This is my second exercise within this platoon, and it gave us the opportunity to figure out how we can improve.
“We’re pretty tired; we’ve had a lot of long days and nights, but we’ll always go the extra mile to get the job done.”



Troopers from 2 Cav Regt move a casualty role-player during a simulated mass casualty drill.
Photo: LCpl Riley Blennerhassett

Recruit proficiency fast-tracked

Cpl Jacob Joseph

YOU could say Pte Paula Pires, the daughter of a Brazilian paratrooper, prepared for Kapooka her whole life.

"Growing up, I hated the military," Pte Pires said.

"Every weekend, Dad would flip our rooms upside down and make us reorganise everything.

"Then I went to Kapooka and it made me feel like I was home — I loved it."

While Kapooka makes some question their choices, the infantry reservist went the other way and applied to go full-time.

Instead, she was offered a position in the Reserve Accelerated Training Scheme (RATS), a program that can take a reservist from recruit school to private proficient in six months, and provide a lived experience that complements their training.

It's a process that usually takes years.

Next month, Pte Pires and 21 others will be the first to finish at 4/3 Bn, RNSWR.

It's just one of the ways 2 Div is making training more accommodating.

Lt-Col Paul Carter, of HQ 2 Div, said training needed to be flexible to reduce the attrition rate, which historically resulted in as many as 40 per cent of people not completing their training.

He said the role of 2 Div had evolved in recent years and the Defence Strategic Review reinforced its "clarity of purpose".

Army senior leadership recently approved changes to the Army SERCAT 5 Initial Foundation Training Continuum to address the attrition rate, including reducing the five-week IRTB recruit course to three weeks for all SERCAT 5 general-entry soldiers.

Lt-Col Carter said training must provide the "agility and scalability" to support the workforce and enable 2 Div preparedness for domestic and homeland security operations.

"We've created shorter training blocks, put flexibility into the system for people to off-ramp at certain points, and take ownership of their individual training

through use of the electronic competency management tool, which is current being trialled," Lt-Col Carter said.

Once soldiers complete recruit training, they could be immediately deployed on domestic support operations like COVID-19 Assist, and to support flood and fire events.

Combat corps then complete a two-week land-combat module which gives them skills to deploy on homeland security operations.

In future, trade IETs should be modular, exportable, and completed under OJT conditions as much as practicable, supported by the electronic competency management tool which will give ownership of training progression to the individual soldier.

"They can then say to their section commander, 'when are we next going to throw grenades or do section attacks? Because I want to come along and learn those skills and satisfy that proficiency'," Lt-Col Carter said.

"The standard SERCAT5 soldier doesn't have the time to do five weeks and then another three weeks, and then another three weeks residential training; their employers won't release them for such a long time, on top of the family pressures that many people are also trying to balance.

"We have a collection of amazing people contributing to our workforce and we're making it easier for them to serve because we're getting smarter about how we enable their training."

While it may be easier than ever for people juggling civilian life and service, soldiers like Pte Pires are going all in.

But when you grow up in a military family with a chin-up bar in your room, it was likely a foregone conclusion.

"I thought it would be a great idea to do RATS for six months to see whether I like full-time Army life," Pte Pires said.

"I was recently accepted for another CFTS contract for six months; once that ends I'm going to transfer to ARA."



Pte Paula Pires, of 4/3 Bn, RNSWR, during Exercise Waratah Run at Singleton.

Photo: Cpl Jacob Joseph

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Find out more.



Signallers relish return to field

Capt Peter March

144 Sig Sqn returned to training for combat in the field after several years of providing support to domestic operations.

Soldiers were put through their paces during Exercise Hermes Recon at Murray Bridge Training Area, South Australia.

Undertaking serials to develop infantry minor tactics with a focus on defensive operations, along with sharpening their high frequency radio capability, Lt Adrian Crossing said the squadron was enthusiastic about the hit-out.

"People join the Army and put on the green for this type of activity," Lt Crossing said.

"It's good for them to get back to their core skills, and I think it's very exciting for them."

Radio operator Sig Janine Frost has spent three decades at the unit as a reservist and continues to jump at the chance to participate in field training.

"The comms equipment over 30 years has changed so much, I'm always learning," Sig Frost said.

"That's what keeps me here."

However, she said there was more to it than just the training opportunities.

"It's such an amazing group of people," Sig Frost said.

"It's changed a lot over the



Soldiers with 144 Sig Sqn erect communication equipment on Exercise Hermes Recon at the Murray Bridge Training Area. Photo: Sgt Adam Barlow

years that I've been here, and different people have come through, but they've all been really amazing, so it's always changing and it always feels fresh."

OC 144 Sig Sqn Maj Erica Abend was pleased with her troops' efforts and emphasised the training's importance in supporting an integrated 9 Bde.

"9 Brigade has embraced the

Total Workforce System since the combat brigade restructure, and recognises the need for talented part-time and full-time members to work together," Maj Abend said.

"Getting back to regularly undertaking training activities such as these gives the brigade broader skills to draw-on and greater flexibility to surge when needed."



Brevet first for artillery regiment

Capt Carolyn Barnett

A PARADE marked the historic presentation of the first brevet to soldiers and officers of 20 Regt, RAA who qualified as Operators of Category 3 and higher uncrewed aerial systems at Gallipoli Barracks last month.

Awarding of brevets in the Australian Army dates back to World War 1, when the principal roles of aircrew was Air Observation Post (AOP) and reconnaissance.

Commander 16 Avn Bde Brig Dean Thompson said the awarding of the brevet was significant. "It is an important moment in the history of the regiment, brigade, the Royal Australian Artillery Corps and more broadly the Australian Army," Brig Thompson said.

"We add to the rich history of the regiment; a history of which you can be justly proud."

The wing on the brevet represents the aircrew history. Central to

the brevet is the seven-fused flaming grenade, representing the ancestry of the RAA Corps, which was last worn as wings by the Artillery Corps AOP pilots in Vietnam.

The grenade is surrounded by a wattle wreath representing the spirit of the Australian people and is surmounted by the sovereign's crown.

Since being re-raised to the Order of Battle on October 9, 2005, the regiment has been on operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, East Timor, Papua New Guinea, and Australia, flying more than 66,000 hours, of which 55,000 have been operational.

Brig Thompson said presenting the brevet to the personnel at 20 Regt recognised their skill and proficiency.

"Today you are being recognised for your hard work, sacrifices and the ongoing commitment which goes with your qualification, trade, mastery of your weapon system, and the capability you bring to the joint land combat system," Brig Thompson said.



Top: Brig Simon (Don) Roach presents the brevet to soldiers of 20 Regt, RAA during a ceremony at Gallipoli Barracks. Left: Gnr Luke Wright, the youngest serving member of the regiment, is presented with the brevet by Brig Damian Hill. Above: the brevet with its seven-fused flaming grenade in the centre.

Photos: Capt Carolyn Barnett

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[†] Discount has been calculated with reference to the manufacturers recommended retail price current as of 9 March 2023 in NSW. Savings shown are indicative and reflect estimated tax savings to an individual salary packaging the nominated vehicle and associated vehicle running costs on the following assumptions 1) a 5-year lease term, 2) annual expected km's of 15,000, 3) an end-of-lease residual value calculated at 28.13%, 4) Gross annual salary of \$90,000, 5) living in NSW 2000, 6) Salary Sacrifice using Employee Contribution Method (ECM).

Down memory lane

MOVIE REVIEW



The Super Mario Bros Movie
In cinemas
Reviewer Cpl Luke Bellman
Rating 3/5

NINTENDO fans, get ready for a power-up in this smashing, box-office movie.

Collect memories from your childhood and go on a magical adventure to the Mushroom Kingdom in *The Super Mario Bros*.

The child-friendly animation is bright and colourful, with every shot seeming to have been planned down to the last pixel.

In the beginning the two brothers are on a quest to make their plumbing business a success.

On a plumbing job underneath the Brooklyn footpaths, Mario (voiced by Chris Pratt) loses Luigi (Charlie Day) and they are sucked into another dimension.

Fortunately, Mario is warped into the friendly Mushroom Kingdom ruled by Princess Peach (Anya Taylor-Joy). Luigi isn't as lucky and gets dumped in the dark lands ruled by Bowser (Jack Black).

Bowser, a deluded turtle-like monster, is determined to make Peach his bride and take over the world with the super star that he stole from the penguin army.

The Mario sound effects help recreate the original video game vibe.

With the princess as his mentor and Toad (Keegan-Michael Key) as his companion, Mario sets off on a quest to find his lost sibling.

Mario also goes up against Donkey Kong (Seth Rogan) and his barrel-rolling tactics.

Viewers are able to reminisce about the old-school game as they follow Mario and Luigi on their usual adventures, including a classic cart race battle.

While the movie is filled with nostalgia, Chris Pratt, voicing Mario, doesn't work as he sounds like Tony Soprano ordering pizza.

From the small screen to the big screen this movie is definitely "Okey-dokey!" "Here we go!" "It's-a me, Mario!" "Alright!"

THE QUIZ



9



2

Quick-fire questions

1. What is the name of the weather instrument used to measure atmospheric pressure?
2. What type of animal is pictured in image two?
3. How many children were part of the Von Trapp family in *The Sound of Music*?
4. Which American state does the San Andreas Fault run through?
5. In 2020, which Australian brought their Olympic medal tally to 11 – the most for any Australian?
6. What nut is in the middle of a Ferrero Rocher?
7. Which pop star is the godmother of both of Elton John's sons?
8. Who is Australia's richest person – worth \$30.6 billion?
9. In Greek mythology Nike was the goddess of: victory, hunting, war or the sun?
10. Which of these words: 'second, minute, hour', would fit in this group of words: 'tiny, small, little'?



6

1. A barometer; 2. Tapir; 3. Seven – Liesl, Friedrich, Louisa, Kurt, Brigitta, Marta and Gretl; 4. California; 5. Swimmer Emma Kckeon - 5 of her 11 medals are gold; 6. Hazelnut; 7. Lady Gaga; 8. Mining magnate Gina Rinehart; 9. Victory; 10. Minute, as in "mi – newt" meaning small or tiny or little.

GETTING OUT?

Come to the **ServeOn** stall at the following ADF Transition Seminars.

- // Townsville - 31 May
- // Melbourne - 7 June
- // Ipswich - 21 June
- // Newcastle - 28 June

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New respite policy announced

A NEW ADF-wide policy addressing respite concerns raised in the Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force Afghanistan Inquiry report has been published in the Military Personnel Policy Manual (MILPERSMAN).

The policy addresses the recommendation of the inquiry that a professional review of appropriate dwell times (respite) between warlike operations be undertaken.

Commands must provide ADF members with adequate respite between ADF-named warlike operations so they can recuperate and estab-

lish, re-establish and foster important connections with family and friends.

Service career management agencies and COs may also consider respite periods when members are absent from home for significant periods on particular tasks.

The policy provides a default period of respite depending on the length of time a member is deployed in the preceding 12 months, provided the total cumulative time deployed exceeds four months.

For example, a member who has been deployed for a cumulative period between four and six months in a

12-month period will be entitled to a default period of 12-months' respite. For cumulative deployments exceeding six months, additional respite may be applicable.

The application of the policy will depend on the strategic situation and the respite period may need to be deferred on some occasions, such as during high-tempo warlike operations.

Head People Capability Maj-Gen Wade Stothart said the policy was designed to support the wellbeing of personnel returning from warlike operations, including their family relationships.

"Respite periods help ensure members have the time to participate in training, undertake career development, take well-earned leave and maintain physical and mental health and wellbeing," Maj-Gen Stothart said.

The new policy can be viewed under Part 7 – Personnel Management, Chapter 11 – Respite Policy of the MILPERSMAN.

The new policy replaces an interim one first published in 2021 and was completed as part of the Afghanistan Inquiry Reform Program, which coordinates and drives Defence's response to the Afghanistan inquiry, focusing on

enduring reform and the implementation of recommendations.

Implementation of the policy is the 105th of the 143 inquiry recommendations to be actioned by Defence.

The ADF has committed to delivering agreed reforms by the end of this year.

More information about the Afghanistan inquiry and Defence's response, including the Afghanistan Inquiry Reform Program, is available at: afghanistandinquiry.defence.gov.au/defence-response

Program offers flexibility and better life balance

Jon Kroiter

TRYING to find the right balance between being a senior firefighter, managing his own business as an electrician, staying connected with Army and spending time with his family was a challenge for LCpl Michael Letts.

He realised he needed a new approach to fulfil his career endeavours while also remaining connected with Army.

He has been able to continue serving in a flexible way through the ServeOn initiative.

Over his 25-year career, LCpl Letts has posted to 2RAR, having deployed to East Timor and to Afghanistan twice.

In 2012, LCpl Letts transferred to the active Reserves so he could spend more time with his young family.

"My daughter was two and I'd been away for 18 months of her life," LCpl Letts said.

"A huge part of my decision was to spend more time with my family and just be a bit more grounded."

He began full-time work in the mines, started his own business as an electrician, and found a reservist role with 21 Construction Sqn before moving to Sydney.

Once in Sydney, LCpl Letts began working as a firefighter and discovered flexible service options with Army that allowed him to balance his new commitments.

LCpl Letts is now an elec-

trical supervisor at the School of Military Engineering on a SERCAT 3 basis.

"When I first transferred to the Reserves, it was hard to balance Army with my work and business," LCpl Letts said.

Transferring to SERCAT 3 provided him with the flexibility and balance.

"Now, I give them days and they fit me in whenever they need me," he said.

In his new position at 5 Engineer Regt, where he's teaching courses, he has been able to plan his schedule well in advance.

For members wanting to remain connected to Army while not being sure how, LCpl Letts believes his journey shows it can be done.

"I would most definitely recommend the avenue I've taken because of the flexibility in the way you can structure your life," LCpl Letts said.

"It's such a brilliant program where I've slid back into the team I'm working with, the people I used to know and really respect. I feel like I'm contributing."

To find roles that suit your location, availability, and other circumstances, use OneArmy, Potential or ForceNet.

To discuss flexible service options, submit the contact form and the local contingent workforce management cell will be in touch with you.



LCpl Michael Letts, of 5 Engineer Regt, at Holsworthy Barracks.

Photo: Sgt Brodie Cross

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Aviator shoots for the stars

Flt-Lt Nicholas O'Connor

A LIGHTBULB moment at university paved the way for a smooth transition into aviation for 1 Avn Regt's Lt Catherine Gerrard.

Building extra-terrestrial rovers and spacecraft models as a child led to a dream of becoming a rocket engineer.

She joined Army in 2019 as part of the Long Term Schooling program in the Defence Undergraduate Scheme and is now posted to

Robertson Barracks.

Lt Gerrard said the move to Defence provided interesting career choices.

"When I was studying aerospace engineering at university, I discovered that almost all aerospace industry in Australia is to support Defence," Lt Gerrard said.

"I was interested in working with aircraft and I found a program where Defence would sponsor you to complete your degree.

"I also liked the commu-

nity aspect of being a part of Defence, as well as the leadership opportunities it presented."

Since moving to the Top End, Lt Gerrard has spent time consolidating her training with practical experience and gaining exposure to the attack helicopter capability with ARH Tigers.

"As a learning engineering officer, we do rotations with each of the senior engineers," she said.

"Last year I worked in the

technical operations cell distributing engineering advice about maintenance issues, coordinating scheduled maintenance and conducting technical investigations following incidents on aircraft.

"Currently, I am assisting the technical support troop commander, who manages the aircraft technicians that conduct maintenance on the helicopters."

Lt Gerrard said she looked forward to advancing her career, while enhancing

her knowledge and skills through formal training.

"Next year I hope to move into the role of technical support troop commander, managing maintainers and planning maintenance, then I will be a part of the transition from the ARH Tiger to the new aircraft, AH-64E Apache," Lt Gerrard said.

"I have also started a Masters of Space Engineering and will one day move into the space domain."



Lt Catherine Gerrard with an ARH Tiger at Robertson Barracks. Photo: Flt-Lt Nicholas O'Connor

Tell your story and win

A storytelling competition has been launched to encourage Army personnel to share their stories on the topic 'why I serve'.

DCA and Head Army People Capability Maj-Gen Natasha Fox said the competition helped Army highlight the diverse experiences of members and their personal reasons for serving.

"Army's greatest stories have always been, and continue to be, those of our people," Maj-Gen Fox said.

"By reflecting on the reasons why we serve, and sharing our stories with others, we're building a culture in Army that values your commitment to service and recognises the central role our

people play in Army's capability and success."

Five competition winners will be selected. Each will receive an invitation to the CA Symposium in Perth in August, inclusive of flights and accommodation.

"I am looking forward to hearing from our people about their reasons for serving," Maj-Gen Fox said.

"I urge everyone to submit a competition entry."

Entries are open until June 16.

For more information on rules and prizes, visit: [//drnet/Army/DCA/FRW/Pages/Army-Storytelling-Competition.aspx](https://drnet/Army/DCA/FRW/Pages/Army-Storytelling-Competition.aspx)

STORYTELLING COMPETITION

"Why I Serve..."

...my reasons for continuing to serve are different from why I joined."

...always improving myself through experiences."

Tell your story.

...has become the foundation of my leadership style."

...I'm the fourth generation in my family to serve."

...and now we're mates for life."

"History is a reminder of..."

"I wanted to complete my father's service time..."

5 WINNERS will receive a trip to attend the Chief of Army Symposium; a \$500 adventure gift voucher; and a Chief of Army coin.

"There's a shared strength..."

"I wanted to get to know myself."

"Asking myself what I believe in..."

My mother was in the Air Force, but I joined the Army because...

...to create an open door army."

Submit your story to peoplecapability@defence.gov.au or visit the intranet homepage to learn more

Entries close 16 JUNE

More support for veterans in Budget

THE Government is investing an additional \$328.1 million to support the more than 340,000 veterans and dependants accessing services through the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA).

This builds on the \$537.5 million invested in the October 2022 Budget as part of the Government's commitment to ensuring a better future for veterans and their families.

The 2023-24 Federal Budget makes significant investments to further reduce the veteran compensation claims backlog.

This includes:

\$64.1 million in 2023-24 to retain more than 480 DVA staff who are working to deliver frontline services to veterans and families;

\$254.1 million over four years to modernise and sustain ageing IT systems, and ensure more timely payments and access to services for veterans and families through DVA.

These investments support the Government's response to the interim recommendations of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

The Government is also expanding eligibility for the Acute Support Package introduced in the October

2022 Budget to include grandcarers – grandparents who are full-time carers of children of veterans.

This expansion acknowledges the challenges experienced by families and provides services such as childcare, counselling, household assistance, education support and financial aid for veteran families in crisis.

The Government is also funding critical support capabilities and programs including \$2 million to continue important mental health awareness and suicide intervention training for volunteers supporting veterans.

Recognition for going above and beyond

THE Defence Commendations Scheme recognises outstanding/exceptional achievement, or specific acts of bravery, for which awards from within the Australian Honours System are not an appropriate medium of recognition. Nominations are processed with the following individual eligibility criteria:

Gold: superior achievement or devotion in the application of skills, judgement or dedication to duty

Silver: excellent achievement in

the application of skills, judgement or devotion to duty

Bronze: high or noteworthy achievement

Our people continue to achieve excellence through commitment, selfless service and devotion to duty. On behalf of CA, RSM-A congratulates the following recipients who have recently been recognised under the Commendation System.

Defence Commendations		
2 DIV		
Chap/Maj D Horne	HQ 11 Bde	Bronze
Maj N Peach	HQ 11 Bde	Bronze
Capt N Crosbie	31/42 RQR	Bronze
Capt S Russell	12/16 HRL	Bronze
Capt C Watts	9 RQR	Bronze
Capt B Xenos	11 ER	Bronze
WO1 N Bullock	31/42 RQR	Bronze
WO2 C Fidler	25/49 RQR	Bronze
WO2 M Greenhatch	9 RQR	Bronze
WO2 L Kavanagh	HQ 11 Bde	Bronze
Cpl W Mazzei	12/16 HRL	Bronze
LCpl R Meharg	25/49 RQR	Bronze
Pte(P) Z Brincat	25/49 RQR	Bronze
APS Level 2 C McBain	31/42 RQR	Bronze
AAVN COMD		
Maj D,Rees	SAA	Silver
AHQ		
Maj M Meggitt	CM-A	Silver
WO2 M McGavin	CM-A	Silver
WO2 P Mitchell	CM-A	Silver
Capt J Millier	CM-A	Bronze
WO2 M Dunning	CM-A	Bronze
FORCOMD		
Maj T Lynch	3 Bde HQ	Gold
WO2 F Mason	1RAR	Gold
Capt M O'Callaghan	3 Bde HQ	Silver
Sgt J Flanagan	1RAR	Silver
Sgt J Steinhauser	HQ CATC	Silver
Sgt L Vassallo	1RAR	Silver
Maj C Booth	1RAR	Bronze
Lt J Taylor	SOI	Bronze
WO2 S Brady	1RAR	Bronze
WO2 W Scheafer-Steel	SOARMD	Bronze
WO2 G Williams	SME	Bronze
Sgt C Hosie	1RAR	Bronze
Sgt M Davitt	1RAR	Bronze
Cpl S Hobday	1RAR	Bronze
Cpl R Stephenson	3CER	Bronze
Cfn P Ryan	5RAR	Bronze
Cfn S Ryan-Winn	5RAR	Bronze

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Cpl Jacob Joseph pushed himself to the limit of endurance when he completed his longest run at Ultra-Trail Australia.

Gruelling test of mind and body



A happy and relaxed Cpl Jacob Joseph, in orange cap, sets off at the start of Ultra-Trail Australia. Photo: Camila Leon

EVERY year in May, groups of scraggly looking runners hobble their way along the streets of Katoomba, having run anywhere between 11 and 100km across the Blue Mountains in the world's second largest trail-running event.

Ultra-Trail Australia (UTA) draws more than 5000 participants and is the national crown jewel for professional athletes and weekend warriors alike, looking to test their endurance.

Among them were a bunch of runners from the ADF Running and Athletics Association, including yours truly.

I signed up for the 100km race after dipping a toe in the world of ultra, with a handful of 56km events under my belt.

Being my first attempt at this distance, I leaned on the experience of seasoned ultra runners, like Leut Mark Hollingsworth and Gp-Capt Ben Poxon, for advice.

Gp-Capt Poxon started running ultras in 2012 and completed his third UTA this year in a respectable 15 hours and 57 minutes.

"It's just about achieving the course on your own and getting to the end," Gp-Capt Poxon said.

"If you've never run 100 kilometres, your goal should be to run 100 kilometres no matter how long it takes.

"Whatever time you get, improve on it next time."

As the first runners took off at dawn, I saw the group captain at the start line.

Contrary to his earlier advice about running my own race, he encouraged me to try and catch him. In the 16 and a half hours it took me to finish I didn't see him again.

I saw my first ADF singlet about 40km, or six hours in, when I came across ASLT Scott Tunnard.

As we ran down a path on one of the easier sections, he told me he was taking it easy to finish without "blowing out a knee", so he could keep running in the lead-up to his 100-mile race in France in September.

Underscoring the popularity of UTA is the fact it's UTMB-branded – short for Ultra Trail du Mont Blanc, which is both a franchise and an event.



Cpl Jacob Joseph at breaking point in the last stages of the Ultra.

UTMB World Series races like UTA are held all over the world.

Runners who participate get a number of running stones based on distance and event status.

100km runners are awarded three stones for finishing.

Runners get double for completing a world major, like Doi Inthanon in Thailand or Canyons in USA.

The more stones you get, the higher your index and the greater your chances of winning the lottery to race in the finals, which culminates with a 100-mile ultra across Mont Blanc in the French Alps.

Some people will never win the lottery to race at Mont Blanc. ASLT Scott Tunnard got a ticket on his first attempt.

I said goodbye to ASLT Tunnard, focused on putting one foot in front of the other and running more than walking.

The next hours passed quickly and soon it was dark.

After 80km, the course has a 10km steep downhill section followed by 10km uphill, topped off by the iconic Furber Steps to reach the finish.

To my surprise, I finished the last 5km of the track hobbling along with my PTI from the School of Infantry back in 2018.

There's a collegiate sense among

participants, and in the darkness of the night, when the small circle of your head torch is the limit of your world, a chat with someone else slugging it out on the trail makes the kilometres easier.

Sgt Thomas Hunter was one of the last people I expected to meet on the challenging final ascent.

It was hard to fathom that of 834 finishers, I would have a connection to the person with whom I climbed the last 970 stairs to the top.

In a bizarre and beautiful moment of self-reflection, he asked me whether there was anything he could have done better at Singleton.

Running in darkness, generally alone, the journey is mostly introspective, which is why his question struck me.

This moment was indicative of the mental journey that happens during ultra and how personal growth can come often during times of self-inflicted pain and monotony that force the mind and body into a meditative state.

And maybe this is why people who do it keep coming back.

I've already signed on for another 100km race in December, this time in Kosciuszko National Park, confident I can make the distance but curious to find out how quickly and what may happen along the way.



Pte Feao Faka'Osi (blue judogi) demonstrates his favourite throw, "drop seoinage", on ADF Martial Arts Association president Maj Derek Morris during a demonstration and (right) with one of his competition medals.



Soldier throws everything at Games qualification

Cpl Veronica O'Hara

A SOLDIER has his sights set on next year's Olympics after recent podium finishes at high-level judo tournaments in Australia.

Missing out on Olympic qualification 12 years ago after dislocating his shoulder, Pte Feao Faka'Osi thought he would never get another chance.

Now, he has been identified by Tonga for selection in its 2024 Olympic team, dependent on qualifying in upcoming competitions, the results of which he will learn in June next year.

Judo didn't exist in Tonga until the owner of a local fishing company, also a sensei, opened a dojo in the kingdom's capital, Nuku'alofa, where Pte Faka'Osi grew up.

At age 13, he began learning judo with his six brothers and sisters. Now 39, he competes domestically in senior men's and veteran men's under 90kg divisions with competitors aged from 18 years and 30 years respectively.

Pte Faka'Osi said his most successful result was at the Canberra International Open in February, when he won gold in the veteran men's category, and a bronze in senior men's.

"The senior men's is hard work because I'm fighting competitors who are 18 or 19 years old and are still young and growing," he said.

But he has learned from competing

that size doesn't really matter. Strength and conditioning is a large component of Pte Faka'Osi's training because every muscle is used.

Students of judo, called judokas, learn to fall safely – referred to as breakfalling, as well as how to throw someone safely, such as holding their partner's sleeve to avoid dropping them.

However, he said it was different during competition where world champions throw people in the air and let go.

The soldier, who joined Army nearly four years ago, was recently recognised as an elite sports participant, which attracts financial support to train, develop and compete.

ADF Combat Sports Association President Maj Derek Morris said ADF branding on the soldier's judogi (judo uniform) at competitions raised interest in younger athletes and parents about military careers that include opportunities to continue developing and competing.

"Feao has developed a reputation as a hard competitor, humble in winning and gracious in defeat," Maj Morris said.

Starting with the Judo Australia National Championships at the Gold Coast in June, Pte Faka'Osi is planning to also compete at the Perth Oceania Open, XVII Pacific Games, and Tahiti Oceania Open before the end of the year.

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Sig Sam Farmor, of 7 Sig Regt, fends off the Navy defence.



Cpl Mykayla Crisp, of 1CSSB, stares down her Navy counterpart during their match.

Photos: WO2 Kim Allen



Teammates provide support to Cpl Mykayla Crisp, of 1CSSB, as she sprints towards the try line during the ADF Rugby Union Championships Army versus Navy match.

Army takes both titles at champs

Sgt Matthew Bickerton

BIG hits and massive runs led the men's and women's Army Rugby Union teams to complete victory during the 2023 ADF Rugby Union Championships in Brisbane in early May.

Army's fitness gave both teams the upper hand against Navy's superior weight and stopping power.

Men's senior player Sgt Josh Gray said their plan was to be faster and make use of the entire field.

"What we wanted to do was get them stuck in the middle, then spread it wide and just keep dragging them to create holes where possible," he said.

Despite Navy's efforts, Army won 30-10.

The women's Army team experienced a similar triumph over Navy scoring 37-7.

Women's team captain Cpl Yolanda Forsyth said Navy always

had bigger and stronger forwards.

"Our aggression and work rate throughout the game paid off," she said.

The Army women dominated in their scrums throughout the game, which allowed them to spread the ball to the edges.

Army's matches against Air Force were one-sided, with the men scoring 57-3 and the women 54-0.

"Our defensive work completely halted their attack, but they threw everything at us," Sgt Gray said.

"They were excellent across the board and made us work for those points right until the end when we ran away with the game."

Having played 15, 13 and eight years respectively, Sgt Gray and fellow veteran players Cpl Apaitia Matalau and Cpl Jackson Pearson, will retire after representing the ADF in France during the Defence Force World Cup in August and September.

Men win hockey nationals

Cpl Luke Bellman

WITH a simple strategy, Queensland men hit their way to victory at the ADF Field Hockey National Championships in Daceyville, NSW, last month, beating the combined VIC/TAS/WA team 2-1 in the final.

Combined team centre half LS Daniel Sekulich said although he felt his side was better towards the end, Queensland were too good on the day, capitalising on both their chances to score.

In the last three minutes, the combined team got a penalty shot at the goal and the Queensland goalie did a "remarkable save" to secure the win.

Queensland men's player Sgt Shane Rudken said although the scores were tight, a basic game

plan and high intensity got them over the line.

He said the strength of the team was the players' diverse backgrounds.

"Most people play in civilian clubs, but we have players of all levels," Sgt Rudken said.

"Some play in division one and some only picked up a stick last year."

The round-robin-style tournament had six men's and four women's teams and included 30 players from the Royal New Zealand Navy.

The score line in the women's final was as tight as the men's with NSW beating NZ 2-1.

NSW state rep and player Flg-Off Fiona Young said morale was high after the win, having been tied 1-1 until the fourth quarter.

"Their second goal was a great demonstration of teamwork, finished off by a slick, one-time slapshot by AB Courtney McVeigh," Flg-Off Young said.

"We made the ball do the work, passed it around them and avoided their very strong players in the middle."

Sgt Andrew Nash, who recently became the vice-president of the association, said having the New Zealand players come across lifted the overall standard of the competition and encouraged more players to get involved in ADF hockey.

"The more people we have in our association the better-quality hockey we play," Sgt Nash said.

Contact ADF.hockey@defence.gov.au for more information.

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Men and women
victorious at ADF
championships

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Pte James Stanley, of 1 RAR,
tries to break through the Air
Force defence during their ADF
Rugby Union Championships
match at GPS Rugby Club at
Ashgrove in Brisbane.
Photo: WO2 Kim Allen

ARMY RUNS AWAY WITH IT