

Veterans Support Centre

3rd Edition August 2021



Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association (NSW)
Hastings Manning Macleay Branch Inc.



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There are NO COSTS to access the services such as Pensions, Welfare and advice provided by Veterans Support Centre, Port Macquarie

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Mental health - Who do I contact if I, or someone I know, needs help now?



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DVA Media Releases and Ministerial Speeches

A large number of DVA Media Releases and other publications are available for your information.

A copy of the full text and other less topical releases may be obtained by visiting

<http://minister.dva.gov.au/media.releases.htm>

You can also subscribe to receive all releases to your computer

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or visit our office at **Veterans Support Centre** if you require assistance

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Hello,

Please make sure that you read the important message from the President, Mr Bill Wagner, see pg 22-23.

Time flies when you are having fun, well I have enjoyed putting this issue of Contact Front together. I hope that what I choose to include in this issue is interesting and reminds you of the veteran community to which we all belong.

3 pages were very easy to include. NAMBUS was off the road for a while due to wear on the bus itself and then covid but IT IS BACK - see the pages of just 2 of the many schools they visited (pgs 18, 19, 20)

Navy have a double treat this issue with an article on HMAS Anzac III (although I always understood that ANZAC could only ever be written in capital letters but I'll not argue with them) and an article on the USS Canberra, named after our capital.

I am sure many of you have been following the progress of the legal action taken by Corporal Ben Roberts-Smith and the way that his bravery and reputation have been dragged through the mud in an effort by the newspapers to avoid the payouts to him for defamation and for ruining his reputation.

You will all know how public opinion damaged you as Vietnam Veterans and the long road still being travelled by many to find peace. Our soldiers face danger and self sacrifice every minute on the battlefield, they make split second decisions governed by rules of engagement and training, they do this for the very highest of reasons. To be awarded the Victoria Cross is an honour and thanks from a grateful nation to our bravest ADF members.

In May's issue I quoted Minister Hastie saying that the military personnel's core business will always be the application of lethal force. Those that then pick apart actions on the battlefield (most likely to be totally unaware of what it is actually like) are seeking to damage the life and reputation of this VC recipient and the reporting of the trial is one sided and written by those who have never been there, know little about the military and care little for the truth. His bravery in battle was the reason for the award, that is unchanged.

I also ask you this - if you had to detail in a courtroom exactly what and how you did something from a specific time and day over 10 years ago - how would you go??

Sadly, whatever the outcome, this soldier will never recover his trust and reputation, he will always be a broken man.

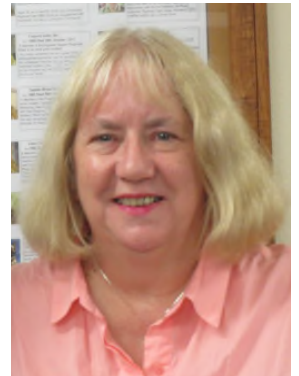
I was asked recently how do I find all the 'stuff' that I put into Contact Front. I was a daughter of a soldier, became a soldier myself, married a great man (yes, a soldier) have a soldier brother, I later worked in Defence with soldiers for many years and now work with veterans and have a continuing interest in all things military. So I do a lot of research thanks to the internet, pick up on many things that interest me and pass them on in the hope that they will interest you. I also read a lot too. None of the 'work' involved in assembling Contact Front feels like work and I am usually satisfied with the finished issues of Contact Front. I was also really proud to be able to put together the journey of this Branch and its history.

On a lighter note - I'm retired and volunteered to help out - I love it! If you have anything you would like to see included or have articles/photos I would be pleased to see them and include them in a future issue.

The above opinions are my personal opinions only.

'Til next time, Jill Opie, Editor

And, yes, we are all so fed up with the covid changes to our lives and freedom so I decided on some jokes not about covid to make you smile (or grimace), see pgs 4, 34 and 35 and enjoy!



Jill Opie, Editor

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The DVA website has Fact Sheets about a huge range of benefits that may be available to you or your partner.

One recent fact sheet is **IS45 - Partner Service Pension** and tells of when a partner may be eligible for a pension income based on your qualifying service. It is income and asset tested for those on low income.

If you need help accessing DVA's website, call the VSC for help



The **VPPAA** is dedicated to the welfare of all Veterans, Peacekeepers and Peacemakers, ex-service and serving personnel and their families. If you, or someone you know, is ill and you suspect the illness may be a result of military service, please do not hesitate to consult one of our trained volunteers.

We are here to help you and there is no cost associated with our services.



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General Business– Your Office



Our office is open weekdays - phone or call in 10am - 2pm

Committee Meetings:

Second Thursday every month held at Unit 22, 35 Merrigal Road, Port Macquarie, immediately following the Luncheon Clean up. However the Committee may determine an alternative location and day from time to time.

Annual General Meeting Minutes and Financial Statements are available at the office.

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Contributions Welcome:

Please send any letters, stories, questions, comments, poems, jokes, photos etc to The Editor, Contact Front, PO Box 5330, Port Macquarie NSW 2444. All such submissions are subject to copyright laws, may be edited and remain the property of VPPAA Sub-Branch unless otherwise agreed. All submissions received will be considered for publication, but will not necessarily be accepted. No correspondence regarding acceptance or otherwise will be entered into.

Take a break



THURSDAYS - ON AGAIN

Join us on Thursday mornings from about 10am for an informal get together. Find out what's happening with veteran's issues, catch up with old and new friends or just have a chat over a cup of coffee or tea.

These informal mornings are followed by **OUR FAMOUS \$5 LUNCH**

HELP SUPPORT US to keep a candle in the window burning, to help someone just like you, as we have helped so many in the past.

PLEASE if you go into hospital, ring us or have someone ring us and let us know.

Even though we do a ring around at least 3 times a year, we have members go into hospital and we don't know. Even if it is an out of town hospitalisation like Sydney we can organise a visit.



Modern problems require grandma level solutions



The highest award in the Australian Honours System



Corporal Mark Gregor Strang Donaldson, VC

Mark Donaldson was born in Newcastle, New South Wales, and later accompanied his family to Dorrigo. After a number of jobs in Australia and overseas, he joined the Australian Regular Army in 2002. In 2004 he was posted to the Special Air Service (SAS). At the time of his Victoria Cross action, 2 September 2008, he was on his second operational tour in Afghanistan.

Donaldson was returning to base in the Oruzgan province, in a joint US, Australian, and Afghan convoy when the group was ambushed. In heavy fighting, he moved from cover to cover to engage the enemy with anti-armour weapons as well as his own rifle, several times drawing the enemy's fire away from the wounded. He also rescued a wounded interpreter. His actions were described as being of the "highest accord and in keeping with the finest traditions of ... the Australian Defence Force". In 2010 he was appointed the National Australia Day Council's Young Australian of the Year.

Donaldson was awarded the Victoria Cross, the Australian Active Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Australian Defence Medal, and the NATO Medal.

Mark Donaldson VC continues to serve in the SAS. He has authored a best selling book, "The Crossroad - A story of life, death and the SAS" and he is committed to assisting soldiers to settle back into Australian life after being in harms way on duty overseas. He still has the bullet lodged in his leg from the firefight.



Corporal Ben Roberts-Smith, VC

Corporal Benjamin Roberts-Smith was born in Perth, Western Australia, in 1978. He joined the Australian Regular Army in 1996 and was posted to the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, with whom he conducted two operational tours of East Timor. In 2003 he was posted to the Special Air Service, and was on his first operational tour of Afghanistan in 2006 when he was awarded the Medal for Gallantry for his actions as a patrol scout and sniper during Operation Slipper.



During his fifth tour of Afghanistan, on 11 June 2010 Roberts-Smith was involved in an operation to hunt for a senior Taliban commander in the Kandahar province. Here he took part in an assault against an enemy fortification, exposing his own position in order to draw fire away from members of his patrol who were pinned down. Fighting at close range, he stormed two enemy machine-gun posts and silenced them. For this action Roberts-Smith was awarded a Victoria Cross. His citation in the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette noted that 'his selfless actions in circumstances of great peril served to enable his patrol to break into the enemy's defences and to regain the initiative ... resulting in a tactical victory'.

Following his sixth tour of Afghanistan in 2012 Roberts-Smith was further recognised with a Commendation for Distinguished Service for exceptional leadership, courage, mentoring, and reconnaissance in the 'most difficult and dangerous of circumstances'.



Victoria Cross for Australia The Victoria Cross for Australia is the highest award in the Australian Honours System, superseding the British Victoria Cross for issue to Australians. The Victoria Cross for Australia is the "decoration for according recognition to persons who in the presence of the enemy, perform acts of the most conspicuous gallantry, or daring or pre-eminent acts of valour or self-sacrifice or display extreme devotion to duty." The Victoria Cross for Australia was created by letters patent signed by Elizabeth II, Queen of Australia, on 15 January 1991. It is listed equal first with the British Victoria Cross on the Australian Order of Wear with precedence in Australia over all orders, decorations and medals. The decoration may be awarded to members of the Australian Defence Force and to other persons determined by the Australian Minister for Defence. A person to whom the Victoria Cross for Australia has been awarded is entitled to the post nominals VC placed after the person's name.



Corporal Daniel Keighran, VC

As a 17-year-old army recruit, Corporal Daniel Keighran VC would stand to attention outside his room each morning and stare at the portrait of Albert Jacka, one of Australia's most famous Victoria Cross recipients from the First World War. "I have a vivid memory of getting off the bus at Kapooka on my first day in the Australian Army and being assigned to 32 Platoon amid much yelling and screaming," he said. "In our barracks was the Hallway of Valour, funnily enough, so every morning when we'd run into Hallway 32, with your bed sheet over your shoulder, there was Albert Jacka across from me, and I would stand there reading and rereading his citation, or the others around it, as we were doing roll call and I was waiting to hear my number yelled out."

Little could he have imagined that one day his photograph would appear alongside that of Albert Jacka's. But that's exactly what happened. Ten years ago, on 24 August 2010, Daniel repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire during a three-hour battle in the village of Derapet in Afghanistan, identifying targets and drawing fire away from his mates who were trying to save the life of a mortally wounded comrade. For his actions that day, Daniel became the 99th Australian to be awarded the Victoria Cross, the pre-eminent award for acts of bravery in wartime and Australia's highest military honour. "I look back and think I was just doing my job that day," he said.



Corporal Cameron Stewart Baird

Cameron Baird was born in Burnie, Tasmania, in 1981. He joined the Australian Regular Army in January 2000 and was posted to 4th Battalion (Commando), Royal Australian Regiment (now 2nd Commando Regiment). Baird served in East Timor and Iraq and was deployed four times to Afghanistan. He was awarded the Medal of Gallantry in 2007 on his second operational tour. Baird was on his fourth tour of Afghanistan in 2013 when he was involved in the action for which he was awarded the Victoria Cross. On 22 June, as team commander, he participated in an assault on the Taliban-held village of Ghawchak in Uruzgan province. Shortly after the helicopter insertion, Baird led his team in silencing a number of enemy positions while under heavy small-arms fire. He then went to the aid of another team whose commander had been seriously wounded. With selfless disregard for his own safety, he drew the fire from an enemy machine-gun position, 'the bullets hitting the ground around him'. He managed to suppress the enemy fire, allowing his team to regain the initiative. Once in the enemy compound, Baird forced his way into hostile buildings amid intense small-arms fire. He charged the enemy's position three times to draw fire away from his team. On the third occasion, Corporal Baird's actions 'enabled the enemy to be neutralised and kept his team safe, but ultimately cost him his life'.



Australian Army comrades from the 2nd Commando Regiment carry Corporal Cameron Baird's coffin out of Reedy Creek Baptist church at the conclusion of his funeral service



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HMAS Anzac (III)



HMAS Anzac (III) is the lead ship of eight Anzac Class frigates built by Tenix Defence Systems at Williamstown, Victoria for the Royal Australian Navy. The design is based on the German Meko 200 frigate.

Anzac is a long-range frigate capable of air defence, surface and undersea warfare, surveillance, reconnaissance and interdiction. Anzac's combat capabilities have been significantly improved under the Anti-Ship Missile Defence upgrade program, a world class program that provides an enhanced sensor and weapons systems capability. The upgrade showcases Australian design and integration capability, with new Phased Array Radar technology designed by CEA Technologies in Canberra, upgrades to combat systems performed by Saab Systems in South Australia, and platform integration design by BAE Systems in Victoria.



An aerial photograph of HMAS Anzac at Fleet Base West in Western Australia.



HMAS Anzac during exercises in the Western Australian Exercise Area in February 2016.

Anzac is fitted with an advanced package of air and surface surveillance radars; omni-directional hull mounted sonar and electronic support systems that interface with the state-of-the-art 9LV453 Mk3E combat data system. The ship can counter simultaneous threats from aircraft, surface vessels and submarines.

The ship's main armament comprises one Mark 45 capable of firing 20 rounds per minute, ship launched Mark 46 torpedoes and a Mark 41 vertical launch system for the Evolved Sea Sparrow missile. Anzac also has eight anti-ship/land attack canister launched harpoon missiles. The ship's other defence systems include the Nulka active missile decoy system, offboard chaff and a torpedo countermeasures system.

HMAS Anzac, like her sister frigates HMA Ships *Arunta*, *Ballarat*, *Parramatta*, *Perth*, *Stuart*, *Toowoomba* and *Warramunga* features a 'combined diesel or gas' (CODOG) propulsion plant which enables the ship to sustain sprint speeds of greater than 27 knots and allows an operational range in excess of 6000 nautical miles at 18 knots.

The ship can embark Navy's latest multi-role Sikorsky/Lockheed Martin MH-60R Seahawk helicopter which has enhanced anti-submarine, anti-surface warfare and Search and Rescue capabilities. Embarkation of a helicopter also provides the ship with the capability to deliver air-launched missiles and torpedoes.

Anzac is the third Royal Australian Navy ship to carry the name of an Australian legend. Named after the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps during the First World War, the ANZACs landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula as part of a larger Allied Force on 25 April 1915, meeting fierce resistance from the Turkish defenders. The campaign dragged on for a further eight months of hellish trench warfare, giving berth to a legend of endurance, selflessness, dedication to duty and mateship in the most demanding of environments. It is a shared memory of common sacrifice for the nations involved, regardless of nationality or religion, providing an enduring example for the men and women of the Australian Defence Force and Australian's as a whole. Anzac Day is annually commemorated in Australia on 25 April. As such, Anzac (III) proudly bears her name underpinned by the motto, ***United We Stand***.

HMAS Anzac (III)



In maintaining a close link with the rich traditions of the Anzac spirit, during the NORTHERN TRIDENT 2005 deployment, Anzac visited Anzac Cove, Gallipoli for the 90th Anniversary of the landings. In company with warships of Britain, France and Turkey, Anzac provided a stunning backdrop to the official dawn service ceremony while some members of her crew participated in the services ashore. During NORTHERN TRIDENT 2005, Anzac celebrated the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar in the UK as part of the International Fleet Review.

Anzac has been granted freedom of entry to the City of Albany, Western Australia, the departure port for the ANZACs of old and also has a close association with the City of Rockingham. The Warnbro High School, near her home port, has established the 'HMAS Anzac Learning Centre' that promotes the education of our Navy and the history of Australia's most costly war.

Other notable events Anzac participated in have included deployments to the Arabian Gulf, culminating in Naval Gunfire Support of British Royal Marines landings on Al Faw Peninsula, Iraq in 2003. Anzac has also successfully contributed to Fisheries Protection, Border Protection and Maritime Rescue Operations through her years of service. In 2015 Anzac participated in NORTHERN TRIDENT 2015, where she took part in the commemorative events for the 100th Anniversary of the ANZAC landings at Anzac Cove, Gallipoli.



Aerial photograph of HMAS Anzac sailing near La Reunion during the NORTHERN TRIDENT



An aerial photograph of HMAS Anzac (left) berthed alongside HMAS Arunta at Fleet Base West in Western Australia.

HMAS Anzac is the second Anzac class frigate to complete the Anzac Mid-Life Capability Assurance Program (AMCAP) upgrade at the Australian Marine Complex in Henderson, Western Australia. The upgrade was performed by the Warship Asset Management Agreement (WAMA) Alliance and included the replacement of the Long Range Air search radar, IFF (Identification, Friend or Foe) and secondary surveillance radar capabilities. Anzac also underwent a platform systems obsolescence program to improve platform reliability and maintainability. Work was also performed to improve the ship's habitability for the crew as well as an upgrade to the ship's communications systems to resolve a number of obsolescence issues.

In May 2020, HMAS Anzac returned to her home port of Fleet Base West where she will begin conducting post-AMCAP sea trails, work-ups and testing the new equipment on-board.

In early March 2021, HMAS Anzac departed Australia with auxiliary oiler replenisher HMAS Sirius for a deployment throughout Southeast Asia and the Northern Indian Ocean. During the deployment the frigate undertook exercises and international engagement with Navies including France, Indonesia, India, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, the United States and Canada. Nearing the end of the deployment, Anzac was re-tasked to support a critical search and rescue effort. Anzac travelled 670 nautical miles west of Perth to assist an Indonesian fishing boat in distress, the ship rescued 20 fishermen who were provided with medical assistance and accommodation before being returned to Bali on 21 May 2021.



Indonesian fishermen rescued in the Indian Ocean are accommodated on HMAS Anzac's quarterdeck.

Meet 'Bill the Bastard', the unlikely war horse hero from the Battle of Romani

Australia's greatest war-horse was the unlikeliest of heroes.

The big, partly broken-in stallion played up so badly while being loaded onto the troop ship he was nearly left behind in Australia.

On arrival in Egypt, he was declared unrideable and given an unflattering nickname.

"He was called Bill the Bastard because no man could mount him and ride him. He threw them off, he didn't just smash them into the ground, he put them into orbit," historian Roland Perry said.

So the 17.1-hand chestnut was put to work as a packhorse at Gallipoli.

"When Simpson died, Simpson and his donkey, it was Bill that brought him down from the heights," Mr Perry said.

"He used to take ammo, food and water up and bring the dead and wounded back down, gently, he never bucked anyone off. It's amazing when you think about it," said Terry Shanahan, the grandson of the only man who ever rode Bill.

While Bill was recovering from bullet wounds to the rump, Terry's horse-whispering grandfather Major Michael Shanahan won Bill over with kindness and licorice allsorts.

"He helped the vet nurse him, he took him into the water at Gallipoli and when they all got back to Egypt he fought very hard to get Bill as a match," Mr Shanahan said.

Australian poet Banjo Paterson headed the Remount Service there and was reluctant to hand Bill over to Major Shanahan.

He had been making "a few pounds" betting how long soldiers could stay on bucking Bill.



Above left - Sculptor Carl Valerius and Terry Shanahan pose together in front of the statue of Bill.

(Pip Courtney)



Above right - Major Michael Shanahan and horse 'Bill'.

(Supplied: Terry Shanahan)

"Eventually granddad took him out into the desert and came back half an hour later and he was as placid as anything, he was the only bloke who could ever get on Bill," said Mr Shanahan.

It was at the Battle of Romani in 1916 where Bill and the Major made an astonishing and little-known rescue galloping towards advancing Turkish soldiers to save four comrades.

"Four Tasmanian troopers had their horses shot from under them so they're left stranded in no-man's-land," Roland Perry recounts.

"Major Shanahan got them up onto Bill, he had this reputation of being a pretty ornery horse, how would he cope with five human beings on him?"

"Under Shanahan's calm direction he took the five of them off."

Incredibly, Bill and the Major returned immediately to battle.

"Shanahan keeps on battling Turks, then he collapses because he's been shot in the leg and Bill walks him slowly back to the horse depot."

Major Shanahan's leg was amputated. He was sent to England, never to see Bill again.

He was awarded a Distinguished Service Order, while Bill's reward was to be decommissioned, never to carry a soldier into battle again.

'Retreat from Romani' memorialised

Roland Perry's book 'Bill the Bastard' inspired sculptor Carl Valerius to recreate the daring ride of Bill and the Major in bronze.

Fittingly, Mr Valerius lives in Murrumburrah, north west of Canberra, where in 1897 the first Light Horse Troop was raised to fight in the Boer War.

It's taken him nine years to capture Retreat from Romani, the moment when Bill and the Major carried four troopers to safety.



Above left - Michael Shanahan in a UK hospital after being shot in the leg in combat.

(Supplied: Terry Shanahan)

Above right - A bronze statue of 'Bill the Bastard' and his rider Michael Shanahan.

(Pip Courtney)

It's no mistake that the statue features a loose rein.

Mr Valerius explained, "The loose rein is trust 'C'mon Bill we can do this, you can do it, you can come up under five you have never taken anyone but me'."

"I tried to get the expressions in the face, that little moment of belief that 'yes we are going to get out of here, we are going to be OK'."

"What an incredible ask of an animal, but he seemed to know the circumstances in which he found himself, and the trust he had in the Major was incredible, the same as the trust the Major had in the horse, it's not a one-way thing it's a two-way thing."

A local vet gave Mr Valerius horse bones so he could get the life-sized sculpture right.

"It has a skeleton underneath it, it was made with every bone correct for 17 one hands, it moved like a real horse."

The \$780,000 needed to fund the statue came from the Valerius family, state and federal government grants and public donations.

The statue will soon stand in Murrumburrah's main street, but Mr Valerius's studio has already hosted hundreds of visitors who want to pat Bill and hear about that rescue.

Hilltops councillor Chris Manchester said there has been widespread interest from around Australia.

"No-one could imagine the sort of fear these men would be going through when Bill came along and picked them out of the middle of a battlefield and rode them a couple of miles to safety, it just amazes me," he said.

"I believe someone has bought the rights to the book, hopefully one day it will be a movie and it will put the town even further on the map."

Very few war horses returned to Australia. Most were shot to save them from a life of misery after the war.

Bill escaped that fate. He returned once again to Gallipoli as a packhorse to assist soldiers collecting battlefield artefacts.

It's believed he lived out his life with Turkish farmers, who were warned never to put anyone on his back.

Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery - 150 years of age

The **Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery** ... 01 Aug 1871 marked the establishment of a permanent **Australian artillery** capability that continues to this day

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155mm and 105mm artillery guns to provide intimate indirect fire support to the battlefield, in support of combat team operations

RBS 70 missile systems and PSTAR extended-range radars to provide air defence against enemy combat air power and the surveillance capacity to provide data to the air combat picture

Weapon locating radars, ground-surveillance detachments and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to provide real-time surveillance and target acquisition to enable development of the intelligence picture and subsequent target engagement.

On 19 September 1962, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II granted the Royal Australian Artillery the title of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery. All Australian gunners are considered members of the Royal Regiment of Artillery.

Upon the Royal Australian Artillery being granted the title 'Royal Regiment', Queen Elizabeth II also assumed the title of Captain General of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery.

The corps motto is '**Quo fas et gloria ducunt**', which is Latin for '**Where right and glory lead**'.



Above left - guns in action, centre - RAA Gunners Memorial, right - cap badge (top) and Vietnam Citation

The Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery, normally referred to as the Royal Australian Artillery (RAA), is a Regiment of the Australian Army descended from the original colonial artillery units prior to Australia's federation. Australia's first guns were landed from HMS Sirius and a small earthen redoubt built, near the present day Macquarie Place, to command the approaches to Sydney Cove. The deployment of these guns represents the origins of artillery in Australia. These and subsequent defences, as well as field guns, were operated by marines and the soldiers of infantry regiments stationed in Australia.

The first Royal Artillery unit arrived in Australia in 1856 and began a succession of gunner units which ended with the withdrawal of the imperial forces in 1870 resulting in the raising of the Victorian Artillery Corps in Melbourne in 1870 and the New South Wales Artillery in Sydney in 1871. The First World War saw the raising of 60 field, 20 howitzer and two siege batteries along with the heavy and medium trench mortar batteries. Until 19 September 1962 the Australian Artillery was referred to as the 'Royal Australian Artillery', however on this date HM Queen Elizabeth II granted the RAA the title of 'The Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery'. The Regiment today consists of Regular and Reserve units.

1RAR recognised for Vietnam service

The Governor-General, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK, MC (Retd) has formally approved the awarding of the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation in recognition of the military assistance provided to the former Republic of Vietnam while under the operational command of the United States 173rd Airborne Brigade. The Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation was awarded by the former Government of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) to specific military units that distinguished themselves in battle.

Vietnam Citation

The Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation was awarded by the former Government of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) to specific military units that distinguished themselves in battle.

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US Navy christens only warship named for a foreign capital



LEFT - The littoral combat ship USS Canberra sits pierside in Mobile, Alabama, on Saturday for its christening ceremony.
RIGHT - The Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Gabrielle Giffords, front, takes part in exercises with the Singapore navy's Formidable-class multi-role stealth frigate RSS Steadfast in the South China Sea, May 25, 2020.

A bottle of wine was broken across a mass of gray metal in Mobile, Alabama, on Saturday, as the United States Navy unveiled the only ship in its fleet to be named after a foreign capital.

The USS Canberra – named for Australia's seat of power – is a brand new littoral combat ship, one of the US Navy's newest platforms.

"It says much to the strength of the friendship between our two nations that Australia is the only allied country whose capital the US Navy has used to name a ship," Commodore Matthew Hudson, Australia's military attache at its embassy in Washington, said at the christening ceremony Saturday.

The ship is the second US Navy vessel to bear the Canberra name. The first was during World War II, when the then-USS Pittsburgh, a cruiser, was renamed Canberra after an Australian ship of the same name was sunk by Japanese forces in the Battle of Savo Island, part of the Guadalcanal campaign in the Solomon Islands.

The Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Gabrielle Giffords, front, takes part in exercises with the Singapore navy's Formidable-class multi-role stealth frigate RSS Steadfast in the South China Sea, May 25, 2020. The cruiser Canberra would go on to serve until 1970, with roles in the Cuban missile crisis and the Vietnam War.

"I am proud to join Australian partners in continuing the legacy of this name," Vice Adm. Ricky Williamson, US deputy chief of naval operations, said at Saturday's ceremony.

The first Canberra was also in the US fleet when the ANZUS Treaty, a non-binding security agreement among the United States, Australia and New Zealand, was struck in 1951.

Hudson noted that milestone on Saturday.

"As we mark the 70th anniversary of the ANZUS alliance, the friendship between our two countries is stronger than ever," he said.

"The alliance between our two countries makes the world a safer place," said Todd Schafer, an acting assistant secretary of the Navy.

The newest USS Canberra is a 421-foot- (128-meter-) long, 3,200-metric-ton ship that can accommodate a crew of up to 75 sailors.

With a top speed of around 50 mph (80 kph), it will be one of the fastest ships in the US Navy. It will also be armed with the Naval Strike Missile, a sea-skimming cruise missile that is difficult to spot on radar, and can maneuver to avoid enemy defenses.

Littoral combat ships come in two variants, the single-hull Freedom class and the Independence class catamarans, of which Canberra is the 15th.

The symbolism of tight US-Australia security ties extends beyond the ship's name. It was built at the shipyard of Austal USA, part of the Australia-based global defense giant Austal.

"Just 16 years after Austal USA joined the US defense industrial base, the company is hosting its 15th littoral combat ship christening – LCS 30, a ship proudly named after the capital of Australia and yet another symbol of the great ties between our two countries," Austal USA interim president Rusty Murdaugh said.

The Canberra's christening marks the ship's evolution from construction to testing its systems at sea. It will be commissioned when that testing is complete and then join the fleet for deployment.

One other ship in the US fleet, the amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli, does bear the name of the capital of Libya. However, the ship was named for the involvement of US forces in the 1805 Battle of Derna, fought in what was then known as the Kingdom of Tripoli, a province of the Ottoman Empire.

Source - By Brad Lendon, CNN news, June 8, 2021

NAMBUS RETURNS TO MID NORTH COAST



Above left to right - Peter Goldsmith, Barry Lynch and Derek McNeil Below - Kerrin Brown

Below - James Tejcek (left), Peter Page (right)- all veterans share their personal experiences with the students



Below - Peter Goldsmith



NAMBUS RETURNS TO MID NORTH COAST



Top left to right - Barry Lynch, Peter Page, Bill Wagner, Peter Goldsmith and Peter Page

Centre L - Kerrin Brown, Ian Johnson, Peter Goldsmith, Lindsay Thompson, Barry Lynch

Left - James Tejcek

Right - Lindsay Thompson and yes, it really was that cold!



NAMBUS RETURNS TO MID NORTH COAST

After some repairs and the covid clearance to take to the road, the NAMBUS came back to Port Macquarie, Laurieton and Kempsey to conduct a tour of local schools and the PM Army Cadets. The Vietnam Veterans who take this bus on tour offer students several presentations of their own experiences of the Vietnam War, displays of artefacts and documents, as well as equipment and clothing. The veterans were made welcome by the schools and are pleased to include the talks, displays and interaction into the school curriculum again. Lindsay (below left) explains selection to the students ie there was no choice at all.

Although the bus itself has changed, it is back on the road again for a whole week and the schools and students were both entertained and interested, question time was just not long enough for some. The students have a variety of military items of clothing to see or try on and ration packs, photo albums and hardware to see.



MOBILE MUSEUM: Ian Johnson, Barry Lynch, Peter Goldsmith, Cr Sharon Griffiths, Lindsay Thomson, Phil Dewhurst, Cam Smith and Kerrin Brown.



Port News article and photo above by Lisa Tisdell

War museum on wheels

STUDENTS had a history lesson with a difference thanks to a travelling museum and the contribution of Vietnam veterans.

The Nambus visited schools in Port Macquarie, Laurieton and Kempsey to educate students about Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War.

The bus has been converted into a mobile museum equipped with memorabilia, photographs and displays including a diorama of the underground tunnel system.

Local Vietnam veterans joined the Nambus crew to share their stories.

Veteran Support Centre committee member Barry Lynch said it was a two-way process - telling their stories was therapy for the veterans, while students were educated about the Vietnam War.

On their visits to schools in the area a fortnight ago, the veterans took students on a journey back to the 1960s, and the conscription era, and shed light on the conflict and its aftermath.

Nambus crew member Lindsay Thomson's association with the mobile museum dates back to 2004.

He said the Nambus was a saviour for a lot of the

veterans who were able to put something back into the community.

Mr Thomson said students could only get so much out of books, but there was nothing like talking to the Vietnam veterans..

The Vietnam War, from 1962 to 1975, involved 60,000 Australian personnel.

The impacts of the Vietnam War are still felt today.

The war claimed the lives of 521 Australians and more than 3000 were wounded.

The conflict whipped up social and political dissent in Australia.

— LISA TISDELL

NAMBUS tours

Right - 2017

Below Left - 2018

Below right - 2019

Bottom - 2021

Photos - Jill Opie



Sources - Port News article & photo Lisa Tisdell, all other photos Jill Opie, Veterans Support Centre

Info from Compensation Advocate

I have just been informed that there has been a change to the way DRBDB and MSBS invalidity benefits (Class A or B) are taxed following a Federal Court decision last year. The following allows you to see if you might be affected:

If you have received invalidity benefits paid by the DFRDB Scheme or the MSB Scheme, follow the steps below to work out if you are affected by the court decisions.

Step 1:

Were you discharged on or after 20 September 2007?

If Yes, you are affected.

If No, go to step 2.

Step 2:

Did your invalidity pension start on or after 20 September 2007?

The date your invalidity pension started will be stated on documentation provided to you by the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC).

This will generally align with when you were classified as Class A or B.

If Yes, you are affected.

If No, you are not affected. Your invalidity benefits were correctly taxed as superannuation income stream benefits.

If you are affected

If you believe you are affected, you can choose to start the streamlines amendment process now. The ATO roadmap to remediation (PDF link can be downloaded) that will let you know the likely timeframe for completion. You don't need to call CSC to get additional information – the ATO are obtaining relevant data from CSC for you.

Note: Even if you are affected, an amendment to your income tax assessment may not result in a credit or refund. The ATO will need to consider your specific circumstances before the outcome can be determined.

Mike Opie, Advocate HMMVPPAA

02 6581 0642

PLEASE NOTE: We only work on Tuesday and are normally busy with veterans all day and so are unable to take telephone calls. To assist us, you are requested to reply to our emails by email or to provide a direct telephone number so that we may call you when we are able to do so. Your assistance in this matter is appreciated.



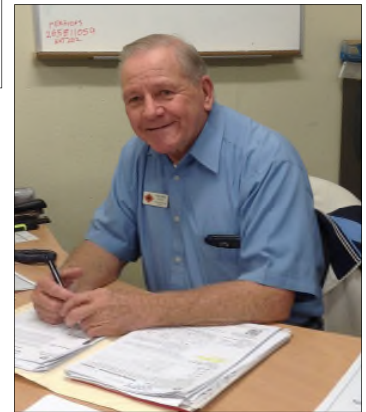
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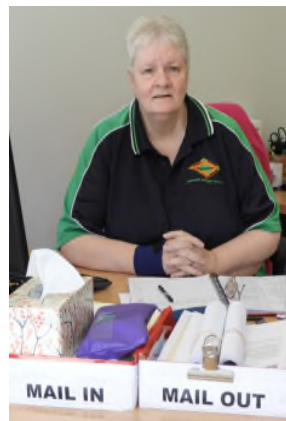
Welfare Officer's Report

I hope that you are all well and coping with life according to the covid rules. It can be tough and if you need to talk to someone, the office is open 10-2pm each weekday. I am in the office on Tuesdays and I am happy to talk to you.

Take care, stay well, Peter



Treasurer
Peter Dorman



Lyn Hancock
Office Manager

President's Report

The office is now QR code registered to comply with Service NSW regulations. Please keep wearing your masks and stay safe.

At the moment the Granville office has postponed committee meetings until further notice. The Vietnam Veterans function for 18th August has also been cancelled.

A meeting with Mr Pat Conaghan MP together with Amber Lynch (Open Arms), Jody Geosits (Soldier On) and myself where we put forward our thoughts on what was required to continue our operation regarding pension and welfare work. The main aim was to obtain his assistance to locate future premises. Although we are very grateful for his contribution we feel that his proposal for the future could take longer than our funds could manage to enable us to keep going.

In the meantime, a letter has been forwarded to the Mayor Peta Pinson in the hope that the Mayor may be able to assist us in finding a suitable location. A reply email has been forwarded to our office from their Property and Leasing Co-ordinator asking for details of our requirements which is now being prepared.

The office has received funding from the DVA grant which will assist us in obtaining requirements for the office.

Members, I am happy to discuss any thoughts or advise you may have and I am grateful for your time and any assistance you may be able to offer.

If you have any serious solution to this issue, please make contact with me as soon as you possibly can. The solution might be an unused office space rent free or a building that we could work from with low rent.

Mr William Wagner
President

HONOUR THE DEAD BUT FIGHT LIKE HELL FOR THE LIVING



President - Bill Wagner



Membership Officer
Trevor Morrow

What is the Census?

Every five years, the Australian Bureau of Statistics counts every person and home in Australia. We (ABS) call this the Census of Population and Housing.

The Census is the most comprehensive snapshot of the country and tells the story of how we are changing. It includes around 10 million households and over 25 million people. Census data tells us about the economic, social and cultural make-up of the country.

Governments and businesses use the information you give us to:

- make important decisions about transport, schools, health care, roads and buildings
- help plan local services for individuals, families and communities.

When you need to complete the Census

Census night is on **Tuesday 10 August 2021.**

In early August, we will send you instructions on how to take part.

This year you can complete your Census as soon as you receive your instructions, if you know who will be home on Census night. This is different to past years when you had to fill in your form on Census night. Census staff will be working in remote communities. They can do face to face interviews with people living there between July and August 2021.

You can fill in your form online, on paper or with help from us.

Key dates

- From early August 2021 - Households will start receiving their Census instructions
- 10 August 2021 - Census night
- After Census night - Households who have not responded will receive reminder letters and visits from Census staff
- Late August 2021 - Field staff start visiting households that have not responded

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MA'AM June 12 2021

The Queen's Birthday -

Did you know that the Queen has two birthdays - her actual birthday (21st April) and an official one, on which the country celebrates? In 2021 her official birthday was on 12th June. It's a great excuse for a celebration and to recognise the achievements of this country's longest serving and well-loved monarch.

It's an old royal tradition that dates back to her great-grandfather King Edward VII, who reigned from 1901 to 1910. His actual birthday in wintry November was considered a bad time, weatherwise, for public celebrations — so they moved it to summer.

The UK celebrated the official Queen's Birthday on the second Saturday of June, when the centuries-old Trooping the Colour parade is held.

While (most of) Australia observes the Queen's Birthday on the second Monday of June, it's on the first Monday of June in New Zealand, and the second-last Monday in May in Canada.

In Australia, the occasion is marked by the release of the Queen's Birthday honours list, which announces new members to the Order of Australia and commends those of exceptional service.



Sources - Photo of Queen by HelloMagazine;
Red Arrows from getreading.co.uk and
getsurrey.co.uk
Trooping the Colour and March Past from March
21 from technotrenz.com and getsurrey.co.uk

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MA'AM June 12 2021



Credit: Department of Defence. Photographer: Gavin Conroy



A World War Two Lockheed Hudson was scheduled to fly over Sydney's Government House to mark the Queen's Birthday.

A Lockheed Hudson aircraft was due to undertake a flyover of Government House to mark the Queen's Birthday the Department of Defence has confirmed.

The flyover took place at 11:00am on Saturday, 12 June 2021 and was viewed in areas surrounding Sydney's Government House.

However, Defence has warned that due to air traffic control, there remains a risk of cancellation.

The Lockheed Hudson was used during the Second World War by the Royal Australian Air Force as a bomber and reconnaissance aircraft, and is also remembered by some as "the Old Boomerang".

Just last year, Canberra Airport introduced a new virtual memorial for the Lockheed Hudson.

"For most people, this is the closest they will ever get to being inside a Hudson bomber. Pop-up icons let the user see photos, watch videos, hear recordings and uncover the stories behind a plane that has played such an important role in Australia's experience of the Second World War," Major General (Ret'd) Brian Dawson said of the experience last year.

Source - Defence Connect May 2021 article and photo of Lockheed Hudson by Gavin Conroy; Trooping the Colour photos by technotrenz.com news Windsor; Photos of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II by fr24news.com (left above) and lbc.co.uk (right)

VETERANS

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Black Hawk disaster, 25 years on

"Sorry guys, we're dead."

Captain David Burke offered this apology to his crew as the Black Hawk helicopter he was piloting, callsign Black 2, pitched forward and began a sickening flat spin. In one quarter of one second, his helicopter's tail boom, tail rotor and port fuel tank had been shredded by the rotor blades of Black 1, another helicopter in the formation, resulting in a fiery mid-air explosion.

Both Black Hawks were part of a group of six helicopters from the army's 5th Aviation Regiment, which on the night of June 12, 1996 were participating in an anti-terrorism exercise at the High Range training area near Townsville.

Four of the Black Hawks, including Black 1 and Black 2, were flying in close formation and carrying members of the Special Air Service Regiment (SAS). To make the exercise as realistic as possible, all the helicopters had their lights extinguished and were being flown using night vision goggles, and all weapons were loaded with live ammunition.

Contemplating Captain Burke's grim announcement, Black 2's Lefthand Loadmaster, Sergeant Bill Mark, had time to think to himself "don't quit on us now!" Captain Burke certainly did not. He landed what was left of their crippled, burning helicopter hard, but upright. The fire burning in the helicopter's severed tail boom then began spreading forward into the cabin.

Black 2's situation was dire. Black 1's fate was far worse. Drenched in burning aviation fuel with its rotor blades torn off, Black 1 had fallen from the sky, crashed onto its roof and exploded in flames.

Black 4, the helicopter in the rear of the formation, was piloted by Captain Matthew Barker who witnessed the collision unfold literally before his eyes. In a 2016 interview he recalled how after the two helicopters had crashed, and as he was landing his own Black Hawk, all the SAS soldiers he was carrying had already jumped to the ground from three to five metres in the air, so determined they were to assist in the rescue.

Similarly, survivors from Black 2 had scrambled from their burning helicopter, with several returning to rescue their comrades.

These efforts were joined by army staff on the ground involved in the exercise. As the two helicopters burned, men were being pulled from the wrecks by their comrades, with live ammunition detonating around them from the heat of the fires.

A triage area was set up at High Range in the headlights of vehicles, where casualties were assessed and loaded onto helicopters to be flown to Townsville. The RAAF control tower at Townsville's airbase closed the city's airspace to all but essential traffic and notified Townsville General Hospital, which activated its plan for dealing with a large-scale medical emergency.

Right - a Black Hawk helicopter, **photo by Pheonix Australia**

Below - the 5th Aviation Regiment's memorial in Qld,

Photo left from Contact Magazine, Former Australian Army soldier Corporal Gary Proctor, a survivor of the 1996 Black Hawk helicopter crash, at a 20th anniversary commemoration service in Townsville on 12 June 2016. **Photo by Corporal Mark Doran**

Photo right from 9 news June 2020 5th Aviation Regt memorial



An area of parkland in the city became a makeshift landing pad for the helicopters, where they were met by emergency services and their injured taken the short distance to hospital. In total 18 men were killed in the disaster, and 12 were seriously injured. Had it not been for the bravery and professionalism of the rescuers and the efficiency of the subsequent evacuation, the death toll would almost certainly have been higher.

The subsequent Board of Inquiry into the disaster was exhaustive, hearing evidence from more than 140 witnesses over a three-month period to ascertain the cause of the accident.

The board determined that no individual or group was to blame. Rather, a chain of events, including deficiencies in planning and communication, made the collision "inevitable". The bravery and professionalism of those at the scene of the disaster was praised in the report, evidenced by the medals that were subsequently awarded to 14 men.

On that night in 1996, a news ticker across the bottom of Townsville television screens told the city that an accident involving at least one helicopter had occurred at High Range. In one of Australia's largest garrison cities, any accident involving the army was everyone's business.

The Australian Defence Force in Townsville is by no means insulated from everyday life. In addition to being husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, serving members are integrated into the life of their local community, with many supplementing their time in uniform with work as children's swim teachers, coaches of school sports teams and innumerable other roles.

Now 25 years on, many Townsville residents still recall the period of despondency following the accident, with one remarking, "It was like this black cloud was hanging over the city for weeks afterwards. Flags around the town were all at half-mast. It was a horrible time."

The memories of the Black Hawk disaster and of the men who died that night still resonate as far away as Canberra. In June 2014 two items were deposited anonymously at the Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier, and are now held in the collections of the Australian War Memorial.

They are two wall plaques, one bearing the insignia of the Australian Army's Corps of Aviation, the other the insignia of the SAS. The first has three red poppies secured to it with adhesive tape, the second has 15. We can presume that these were deposited in a private gesture of commemoration for the 18 men who died in the Black Hawk disaster.

They may have been left by a family member who lost someone that night, or a serving member paying tribute to their comrades, or a survivor of the disaster itself. We will probably never know.

But in the year of its 25th anniversary, this disaster remains a sobering reminder of the inherent dangers faced by Australia's armed forces as they train for the unthinkable, the communities who support them, and the terrible price that can be paid when things go wrong.



Right - The aftermath of the Black Hawk helicopter crash near Townsville. Picture: Mike Bowers/The Age

Above - The SAS Black Hawk memorial plaque at Palmetum Gardens, Townsville.(supplied: City of Townsville) *part of article by Lucy Carter, ABC News*

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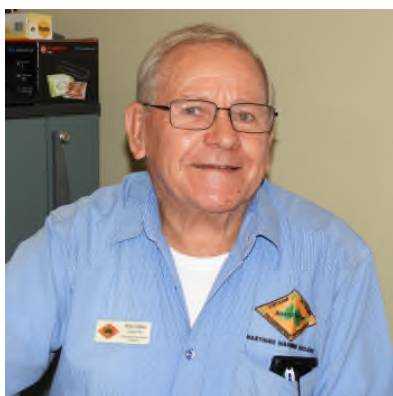
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Model: Barry Lynch



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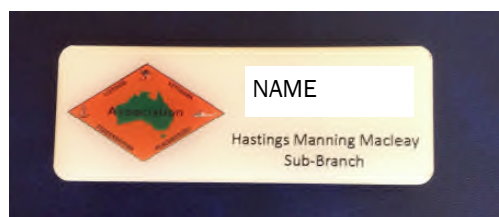
Model: Graeme Cox

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Two for the price of one: Why is Australia being charged double for Boxer MIVs?

The United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence has announced that it has committed to purchase over 500 Boxer Mechanised Infantry Vehicles for \$5.2 billion, with first delivery slated for 2023. The only issue is: that's the same price Australia is paying for just 211 of the vehicles.

The UK officially rejoined the Boxer program last year, announcing its intention to explore options to "modernise its vehicle fleet and meet the Army's Mechanised Infantry Vehicle requirement. Our men and women of the Armed Forces deserve to have the best equipment to do their job," said UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace. "The Boxer vehicle is a leader in its field and I look forward to it arriving in units from 2023."

The expensive backflip will see the UK receive over 500 of the 8x8 high mobility, network enabled armoured vehicles within four years' time.

"I am delighted that we have committed to delivering the Mechanised Infantry capability through the purchase of around 500 battle-winning Boxer vehicles for the British Army," Major General Simon Hamilton, Mechanised Infantry Vehicle Programme lead for the British Army, said about the announcement. "Boxer completes the suite of platforms to equip our new state-of-the-art STRIKE brigade where, alongside Ajax, Boxer's low logistic need, extended reach, high mobility, and advanced digitisation will ensure STRIKE is ready for any global scenario."

Australia chose the Rheinmetall-built vehicle early last year (2018) as the recipient of the Land 400 Phase 2 Project tender, with first delivery taking place just over a month ago in Brisbane.

Defence Minister Linda Reynolds said that the new vehicles, with their high levels of protection, firepower and mobility, will provide a world-class capability to the Australian Army. "These new vehicles are part of the government's \$200 billion investment in our defence capability to ensure the Australian Defence Force is equipped to succeed in our challenging strategic environment," Minister Reynolds said at a ceremony at Enoggera Barracks in Brisbane in late September.

The federal government estimates that Australian industry will secure about \$10.2 billion in acquiring and maintaining the fleet over the 30-year life of the vehicles. Under the company's offering to the Commonwealth, Rheinmetall will build a majority of the vehicles at the company's specialised Military Vehicle Centre of Excellence in Queensland. A total of 12 small businesses across Australia will contribute to the Boxer program, which defence said is "ensuring the delivery of these vehicles is a national enterprise".

While the acquisition of the Boxers is a positive for both the ADF and Australian industry, both in advancing capability and boosting the local economy, questions have been asked about the price Australia is shelling out for the MIVs, compared to the UK. On the face of their announcement, the UK is paying around \$10 million per Boxer vehicle, while Australia is paying closer to \$25 million a unit. So why is there such a difference in price?

According to Defence, the simple of it is that the UK's acquisition is going to cost a lot more than the \$5.2 billion they've announced. "Australia's total acquisition project investment of over \$5 billion reflects whole of life costs in addition to each vehicle unit purchase price," Defence Connect was told by a Defence spokesperson. "These whole of life costs include facilities, training, support and other project sustainment costs over the full life of the project."

Assuming the unit price is lowered to the same "aroundabout" cost of \$10 million that the United Kingdom is paying, does it really cost more double, per unit, to support the Boxer program? Well, yes. Defence has advised in the past that sustainment costs for complex capabilities are usually two to two-and-a-half times the cost of the acquisition, which puts that pricing pretty spot on by itself.

However, Australia's decision to build the majority of the vehicles locally will also see costs rise, rather than just importing the Boxers. "The more 'sovereign' the support model, the higher the cost," the Australian Strategic Policy Institute commented (in regards to the F-35 program, but it still holds true for the Boxers).



Boxer Combat Reconnaissance Vehicle - Boxer configured for Australia's Land 400 Phase 2 for which the type was selected in March 2018. The Boxer Combat Reconnaissance Vehicle is a wheeled, eight wheel drive (8x8) combat vehicle that has been optimised to meet current and future threats and harsh environments. **Wikipedia**

Photo above left - **Army.gov.au**

Photo above right - "British is Best" Boxer image from DoD UK

Two for the price of one: Why is Australia being charged double for Boxer MIVs?

So just how much will the UK actually pay for the Boxer?

In early 2018, the British Minister for Defence Procurement Guto Bebb said that the program would cost around \$8.2 billion for procurement and the first 10 years of support costs.

Applying the same level of price across the 30-year estimated lifespan of the Boxer, that figure rises beyond the \$10 billion mark, at least. Suddenly, the costs begin to align a little more fairly between Australia and the UK. Digging a little deeper into the UK's announcement of the purchase, and the reasons for the misleading figures become pretty apparent.

"This contract was signed ahead of the pre-election period due to the strong value-for-money agreement reached with industry and other OCCAR nations, which expires on December 31st 2019, and announced today due to expected market implications. It would be possible for a new government to take a different position," the release from the British Ministry of Defence read.

"The MOD Permanent Secretary, as the Accounting Officer, considered the value for money implications and, on this basis, determined the most appropriate course of action is to proceed with the contract award ahead of the election."

Source - Land and Amphibious magazine 2019



Trials took place in Australia in 2020



One of 25 delivered in Australia June 2021

The Australian Army is one step closer to having world-class combat reconnaissance capability, Minister for Defence Linda Reynolds has said after the commencement of Boxer 8x8 CRV training.

The Australian Army has commenced training on the new Boxer 8x8 combat reconnaissance vehicles (CRV), built by Rheinmetall Defence Australia (RDA), which will soon replace the Australian Light Armoured Vehicles (ASLAV)

Defence has thus far accepted delivery of five of the 211 Boxer vehicles, with an additional vehicle expected by the end this week.

Rheinmetall is expected to build a majority of the vehicles at the company's specialised Military Vehicle Centre of Excellence (MILVEHCOE) in Queensland, with the first 25 vehicles to be built in Germany as part of the technology transfer process.

Currently, more than a dozen BOXER vehicles are either in production at the MILVEHCOE.

According to Minister for Defence Linda Reynolds, the new Boxer 8x8 CRVs, delivered as part of the federal government's \$5.2 billion LAND 400 Phase 2 program, brings the Army a step closer to having world-class combat reconnaissance capability.

"These vehicles will provide our soldiers with increased protection, lethality, connectivity and mobility for the next 30 years," Minister Reynolds said.

Source - Dept of Defence Australia site

Rheinmetall announced on June 2 the delivery of the first 25 Boxer 8x8 Combat Reconnaissance Vehicles (CRV) to the Australian Army under the \$5.2 billion LAND 400 Phase 2 Mounted Combat Reconnaissance Capability project. Minister for Defence Peter Dutton MP visited Rheinmetall Defence Australia's Military Vehicle Centre of Excellence (MILVEHCOE) in Redbank, Queensland, to review the Boxer vehicles.

Source - Army Recognition, Defense News USA

Source - Main article - Land and Amphibious Magazine Nov 2019 by Louis Dillon, also Wikipedia definition of CRV



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Chinese spy ship returns to waters off Queensland ahead of Defence's largest war-fighting exercise



The Chinese auxiliary general intelligence vessel Tianwangxing has been spotted heading towards Australia.



The Tianwangxing is expected to remain outside Australia's territorial waters.

The Australian military is closely tracking a high-tech Chinese surveillance ship making its way towards Queensland ahead of large-scale military exercises which begin this week.

Similar Chinese spy vessels watched Australia's war games in 2017 and 2019

Defence sources have told the ABC the auxiliary general intelligence (AGI) vessel Tianwangxing (which translates as "Uranus") is scheduled to arrive on Friday.

The vessel is then expected to monitor the Talisman Sabre 2021 war games involving Australia and the United States, which will be officially opened today.

Defence Minister Peter Dutton confirmed Australian Defence Force (ADF) assets had been closely monitoring the Chinese military vessel for "several days".

"We are aware that the People's Liberation Army (Navy) general intelligence ship Tianwangxing is approaching Australia's east coast via the Torres Strait," he said.

"We have been monitoring its approach to Australia for several days as part of Australia's broader surveillance effort."

In 2019, the same Type 815 vessel was also tracked by the ADF as it travelled to Australia to monitor the biennial Talisman Sabre war games. **SEE NEXT 2 PAGES**

The Tianwangxing is fitted with advanced communications systems including several clearly visible spherical domes, which shield dish antennas that collect and intercept radio signals and give it a distinct profile.

"We fully expected a ship of this class to arrive in our region during the exercise and have planned for its presence, as we do for every iteration," Mr Dutton said.

"The presence of similar vessels did not detract from Talisman Sabre 2017 or Talisman Sabre 2019, and we are confident that it will not impede this year," he added.

A military official, who spoke to the ABC on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to comment publicly, said the Tianwangxing was keeping a deliberately low profile.

"The ship is in full EMCON (emissions control) at the moment, only broadcasting signals it absolutely has to," the official said.

"[It is only] responding to calls and hails by insisting that it is operating in accordance with international maritime law".

In a veiled reference to Beijing's activities in the South China Sea, Mr Dutton said Australia "respects the right of all states to exercise freedom of navigation and overflight in international waters and airspace, just as we expect others to respect our right to do the same".

Talisman Sabre is described as "Australia's largest war-fighting exercise", but this year the number of international participants has been scaled back due to COVID-19.

Along with forces from the United States and Japan, this year the activity will also include military personnel from Canada, South Korea, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

The Chinese Type 815 ship is expected to remain outside Australian territorial waters but within Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone in the Coral Sea as it monitors the fortnight-long war games.

Exclusive by defence correspondent Andrew Greene, ABC news 14 July 2021
Photographs supplied by Department of Defence

Chinese spy ship staying just outside Australia's territorial waters ahead of Talisman Sabre war games - 2019



The spherical domes on the Auxiliary General Intelligence ship "hoover up" massive amounts of data and intelligence. (Supplied)

A Chinese spy ship that has been closely tracked by the Australian Defence Force has now arrived off the coast of Queensland to monitor joint military exercises.

Spy ship is equipped with advanced communications systems for eavesdropping

Late last week the Chinese surveillance vessel began making its way south towards Australia ahead of the start of Exercise Talisman Sabre involving Australian, US and Japanese militaries.

Sources have told the ABC the spy ship has now reached Australia's "exclusive economic zone" in the Coral Sea, but is staying outside territorial waters.

The Defence Department says it is expecting international interest in Exercise Talisman Sabre, but has referred questions about movements of Chinese vessels to Beijing.



The Chinese ship had reached Australia's exclusive economic zone but was staying just outside territorial waters. (Australian Government: Geoscience Australia)

The Auxiliary General Intelligence (AGI) is fitted with advanced communications systems designed to eavesdrop on other militaries, and is the same class of vessel that the ABC revealed had been monitoring the 2017 Talisman Sabre war games.

The ABC has been told the surveillance vessel is the Tianwangxing, which translates as "Uranus".

The Dongdiao-class vessel belongs to the People's Liberation Army's East Sea Fleet which is based in Zhejiang Province, and was commissioned in late 2010.

On board the Dongdiao AGI 853, are several clearly visible spherical domes, which shield dish antennas that collect and intercept radio signals and give it a distinct profile.

Defence experts say the extremely powerful antennas "hoover up" massive amounts of valuable data and intelligence where ever the ship travels.



2019

High-tech Chinese
spy ship makes its
way towards
Australia

Up to 25,000 military personnel, mainly from the United States and Australia, are taking part in this year's war games, which are focused on planning and conducting mid-intensity "high-end" warfighting. Defence sources believe the Chinese are particularly interested in how its Maritime Self-Defence Force operates with the ADF and the United States.



A joint exercise
between the US Navy
and Australian military
to take part in
Queensland and the
Northern Territory,
2019

"This year's Talisman Sabre involves the Japanese Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade, which was created last year primarily as a response option for potential Chinese incursion in the Senkaku Islands", a military official told the ABC, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

"Their capability and interoperability with Australia and the United States will be of interest to Beijing."

Lieutenant General Greg Bilton would not comment on exactly how the ADF would respond to the presence of the ship.

"I'm not going to go into operational details, but we'll just take appropriate actions in regards to that vessel," he said.

"It's a vessel that collects information, so it's not a great threat but we'll take appropriate action."

Just last month three Chinese warships caught locals by surprise after arriving in Sydney Harbour for a visit which was not publicly announced in advance by the Australian Government.



Chinese warships
made a surprise visit to
Sydney Harbour in June
2019

In May, the ABC revealed the Australian Navy had been closely followed by the Chinese military during a recent transit of the South China Sea, near islands controversially claimed by Beijing. The Defence Force later confirmed that Australian Navy pilots had been targeted by laser attacks in the disputed waters, with Chinese maritime militia vessels believed to be responsible.



Source - Pinterest, anon sites, humor.com - also pg 4 images

Come on - you've gotta laugh at some of them !!

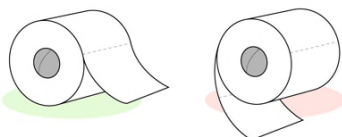


On March 18, 2050, Tim opened the last package of toilet paper bought by his parents in 2020.



Thomas Crapper (left) (baptised 28 September 1836; died 27 January 1910) was an English businessman and plumber. He founded Thomas Crapper & Co in London, a sanitary equipment company. Crapper held nine patents, three of them for water closet improvements such as the floating ballcock. He improved the S-bend plumbing trap in 1880 by inventing the U bend. The firm's lavatorial equipment was manufactured at premises in nearby Marlborough Road (now Draycott Avenue). The company owned the world's first bath, toilet and sink showroom in King's Road.. Crapper was noted for the quality of his products and received several royal warrants. Manhole covers with Crapper's company's name on them in Westminster Abbey have become one of London's minor tourist attractions.

The Debate



Reality



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