



# COMMANDO

AUSTRALIAN COMMANDO ASSN INC.

Registered by Australia Post ~ Publication No PP100016240

*News*

Edition 12 ~ 2018



From the shadows  
Australia's Special Forces  
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The Australian Commando Association's membership consists of Servicemen who have served with Independent Companies, Commando Squadrons, "M" and "Z" Special units and Special Forces during and since the Second World War.

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Official Publishers:  
**Statewide Publishing P/L**  
 ABN 65 116 985 187

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Printed by **RABS PRINT & DESIGN**  
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# CONTENTS

NSW President & Editor's Report .....	<b>3</b>
From the Prolific Pen of Harry Bell.....	<b>5</b>
MV <i>Krait</i> Restoration .....	<b>7</b>
The KA-BAR & The Fairbairn-Sykes two fighting children of different philosophies .....	<b>9</b>
Maj-Gen Michael Clifford Award.....	<b>14</b>
Events Calendar 2018 .....	<b>15</b>
Out of the Shadows .....	<b>18</b>
Book Review: No Front Line .....	<b>22</b>
Vale .....	<b>25</b>
Why No Transgender in the Military.....	<b>25</b>
Aust Cdo Assn NSW "Q" Store.....	<b>27</b>
Mefloquine.....	<b>29</b>
Aust Cdo Assn VIC .....	<b>35</b>
Aust Cdo Assn QLD .....	<b>45</b>
Membership Application Form .....	<b>51</b>
State Incorporated Associations.....	<b>52</b>



**Deadline for next edition (Issue 13):**  
**FRIDAY, 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2018**  
 All news on members and interesting articles accepted.  
 (Subject to editors' approval.)  
 Barry G

**Front Cover:**  
 A Special Forces soldier searches a *Kajaki* cave system for drugs and hidden insurgent caches. Australian Special Forces have partnered with the Afghan National Interdiction Unit (NIU) to combat the drug networks that fund insurgent activities. Members of the Special Operations Task Group (SOTG) commenced operations with the NIU in May to help sever the link between the insurgency and the narcotics trade. NIU operations reduce the Afghan narcotics trade and the threat it poses to the long term security, development and governance of Afghanistan. Combined effort has resulted in hundreds of kilograms of drugs destroyed or confiscated as evidence and several individuals detained to face prosecution.



From the shadows  
 Australia's Special Forces  
 Photo courtesy AFHQ



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# Australian Commando Association NSW Inc.

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## NSW President & Editor's Report

Members attended the funeral of MAJ Richard (Dick) Brownlow recently.

Dick was a much loved Officer in the 1st Commando Company, and was one of the first to receive his Green Beret in 1956.

He enlisted in June 1955 when the post war unit was formed and served as an officer until transferring out in February 1969.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Whilst not focusing too much on funerals, a large contingent from 2 Commando Regt and 1 Commando Regt, were present for the interment of CPL Ian Turner's ashes in Sydney, Ian passed away in July 2017.

Ian's father and mother travelled from Tasmania for the service.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Later this year there will be another Timor Awakening Tour.

The expressions of interest will be posted on the Commando Association websites, and will be open to financial members of the associations.

Maybe a good reason to renew or join up.

Membership forms are included in this newsletter.



**Barry Grant**



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**BLAST FROM THE PAST:** Changing of the Colours circa 1960's



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# From the Prolific Pen of Harry Bell



Dear Editors,

It was a Thursday night, 7.12.1944. The fights were on at 8 Squadron - that's 8 Squadron RAAF, not 2/8 Commando Squadron who were in Bougainville. These were Beaufort lads and at their Aitape base in North western New Guinea (that's PNG now; back then it was the Mandated Territory of New Guinea) they had a very fine boxing ring of commercial standard. It was well lit and seats were provided, so there was no need to bring a biscuit-tin to sit on. It was hot, of course, but there was a gentle sea breeze. All comers were welcomed and volunteers were asked to step up to be weighed-in and matched. There was no need for a big drum or a Jimmy Sharman spiel for there were always plenty of starters. One who donned the gloves that night was a former 6 Div Cav Dispatch-rider ("Don-R"); a fair-headed, rather stocky welterweight with a very upright, orthodox stance: "the last of the straight-backs". I can't remember whom he fought or who won; it could have been a draw. I remember he took a fair bit of punishment but he never took a backward step and he gave as good as he got with a jabbing left hand. I didn't know him then - I had been in the Regiment for only a couple of months - and it was my first sighting of NX117081, Trooper (later Corporal) Keith Ramsay Johnston, (2/10) 1923-2017. Our friendship dates from after the war really but I have never forgotten that first sighting or the atmosphere, in both senses of the word, of the occasion. 73 years on, I can still picture him.

SX19975, Jim ("Joe") Stacey (2/9) took part in the show as did WX26235, Tpr Bill Tyler, one of the 10th Light Horsemen, who had been on our draft to 2/9 Sqn. I had a go that night too (collecting 25 shillings as my share of the shower of coins) but it is Keith that I can see clearly in my mind's eye!

Good old Snowy! He had put his age up and enlisted at 16, only to be dragged home by his First War Digger father. He was back under arms in time for the Darwin air raids in February 1943 and was able to transfer to 6 Div Cav who were conveniently in the Territory, about to become 2/6 Cavalry (Commando) Regiment. He then trained and served throughout the Aitape-Wewak campaign with 2/10 Commando Squadron, distinguishing himself as a Bren Gunner, at Milak (see *To the Green Fields Beyond*). He was discharged in October 1945 but served on in the CMF for another four years, as a WO2 and then Lieutenant.

Keith was in fact New Zealand born but since he never stood for Parliament, that is not really relevant. He lived at Balmain (and as Neville Wran famously said: "Balmain boys don't cry"); was educated at Fort Street High and played Rugby for The Dirty Reds (Drumoyne). And he barracked for the Wallabies, not the All Blacks.

Soon after the war he married Margery Blewett and later they, with their sons Ian and Neil, moved to

Melbourne. There they prospered, Keith obtaining engineering qualifications and eventually becoming an associate director of a large mining and quarrying company (Jaques Ltd). Keith was a distinguished Freemason, being awarded a 70-year Jewel by Freemasons Victoria. Of even greater moment from or point of view, was his long service to the 2/6 Cav (Cdo) Regt Assn. He served a term as president of the Victorian branch in 1980-81; he was secretary for 20 years and treasurer for a decade. He was also a member of the NSW branch and frequently marched with it on Anzac Day. He held office, too, with the then Victorian Commando Association.

Keith succumbed to cancer in October 2017, aged 94. Margery, who had shared his ESO activities and was almost as well known to us all as Keith was, had predeceased him but he is survived by his two sons and their children as well as by his beloved niece, Margery. Our sympathy goes out to them all.

On the brighter side of Christmas, Ted MacMillan, (2/9) of Burra, S.A., Don MacPherson (2/9) of Bairnsdale, Vic and Eric Geldard (2/9) of Miles, Qld are all doing well. Ted has a bit of a balance problem, due partly to medication, and like any 92-year old, his heart is not quite as right as a ribstone pippin, but he is able to do heavy manual work in the garden. Don and Eric have similar problems (Don is a bit older still) but each looks after his property and each runs cattle with a little assistance. And neither is a sig!

Paula Hunting, widow of Harry (2/10) and sister of Sandy Williams (2/9, KIAP) still enjoys her solitary bush life and still hand-paints beautiful Christmas cards. She was intrigued by the article in the September Commando News about the various Special Forces. Her father, a 1914/18 digger, was back in khaki for WW2 and for some time was working on something unspecified at Airlie House. She would love to be able to learn what he was up to - perhaps the author of that article can help?

A few months ago, I had a note from Rose Masters of Morissett, addressed to me c/o the ACA and lamenting that photos and story of Jack Tyree (2/7) of Airlie Beach had not been published in Commando News. Rose is the widow of Stuart Masters, (2/7) and she and Stuart had been in touch with Jack for ever and a day. It seems that Jack turned 100 on Xmas Day, 2016 and had received the Royal congratulatory letter. Perhaps the omission will be remedied in the next edition of the journal.

The deadline for contributions to Commando News is 15th. May I quote from my letter home, dated 15.1.1945?

*Well, there's very little to write about but I'd better get this away in a day or so, just so you'll know that*

(Continued on page 7)





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# MV Krait Restoration



Barry Grant and The Director of the Australian National Maritime Museum, Mr. Kevin Sumption at Darling Harbour. Barry is presenting a donation for the restoration of the MV Krait.

## News from Harry Bell...

(Continued from page 5)

everything's OK. Spent Sis's birthday [the previous day] crawling up hills with about 2 tons on my back, in almost Canungra style only here we take it steadier and halt about 3 times as often.

... We did about 7 miles by middle of the morning and spent the rest of the day putting up doovers and scratching round through roots etc [trying to dig foxholes with a bayonet]. If the NSW coalminers could see us, they'd strike till we joined the union, then strike again till we were expelled. Still more hiking yesterday over some flaming alps whose only inhabitants were scrub turkeys (even then we saw only nests) and pigs (we saw tracks etc). . . Have just had a bath in the

creek (3 inches deep) - my first since Saturday (this is Wednesday) and we have to toil up a veritable Everest to bring our water, so there isn't much to spare for washing . . . the rain gave me a bit of a rinse yesterday . . . There's absolutely no news.

I seem to have got my days or dates muddled for January 15th, 1945 was a Monday. And "No news" meant "No news that I'm permitted to write about". In fact, on 15th January, in a long patrol over Nambut Ridge, Joe Olsen got the Squadron's first Nips and we saw our first cannibalised (Nip) corpses. On the following day we had our first man killed in action: Tony Hanly, MID from 5 Section. Had he not been killed, his MID would have been at least a MM. Such is life - and death. Here endeth the lesson.

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**NOTE FOR EDITORS:** Barry Higgins sent me some nice shots of Keith; I hope Barry Grant will publish one. I also have some taken by me of Keith in black Cavalry beret and will ask Kathie to send a couple to Robert for Cavalry News. Happy 2018.

Harry Bell  
2/9, Ding dong Mark





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# The KA-BAR and the Fairbairn-Sykes: two fighting children of different philosophies

Posted by Roger Norling



The knife is a silent and deadly weapon that is easily concealed and against which, in the hands of an expert, there is no sure defence, except firearms or running like hell.

-From the declassified Special Operations Executive Syllabus

When it comes to modern combat knives, the two most iconic knives of the Western world are undoubtedly the American "KA-BAR" and the British Fairbairn-Sykes Fighting Knife. These two knives represent completely different philosophies with the KA-BAR being a very strong and sturdy fighting knife of utilitarian design, and the Fairbairn-Sykes representing a more elegant design for more delicate use in clandestine operations.

To really understand these knives, however, we have to look back at the contexts for which they were designed and what needs they were intended to satisfy.

## Fairbairn & Sykes

So, stepping back in history...

Famous British Lt. Col. W.E. Fairbairn joined the British Marines at the age of 15, using faked documents stating that he was of legal age, *i.e.* 18. He was deployed to serve in Japanese-occupied Korea already in 1903, then at the real age of 18. Here he spent much of his time practicing various forms of martial arts with Japanese and Korean fighters, practiced drilling with the Royal Marines and fighting Japanese Army troops with bayonet.



Lt. Col. W.E. Fairbairn

Fairbairn left the military in 1907 and instead joined the *Shanghai Municipal Police*, serving in one of the red light districts, then considered to be one of the most dangerous places in the world. Shanghai was a

one of the most important centres for the opium trade, the precursor of today's heroin and cocaine trade and just about as sinister, with related crime and well-armed gang activity. This increased dramatically after opium trade once again became illegal in 1906, after having been forced upon and "legalized" in China by the British Empire. (For more on this see the 1st Opium War & the 2nd Opium War). Of course as with any city, and in particular port cities, gambling and prostitution was also common and it was by some called the vice capital of the world. Around this time more than 10% of the Chinese were smoking opium. About 15% of China's crop acreage was dedicated to opium while 20 years later twice as much, a change which would greatly diminish the need for British export of opium to China.

As a result of the initiative taken a year earlier, the Shanghai Municipal Council stopped issuing licenses to opium dens in 1907, the very year of Fairbairn's arrival. The same year he was stabbed a dozen times by members of a Chinese separatist gang and left to die in the back streets of Shanghai, but luckily he managed to survive this brutal experience.

Ten years later, in 1917, the last legal opium shop was closed. Opium trade didn't disappear though. Quite the contrary. This was a golden age for the Green Gang triad, collaborating with the senior Chinese officer in the French gendarmerie Huang Jinrong in taking over the whole opium trade which now made more money than ever.



The Green Gang Triad, led by 'Big Ears' Du Yuesheng (far right).  
Photo from [tony-henderson.com](http://tony-henderson.com)



As if this wasn't enough, Shanghai was also haunted by increased Chinese nationalist activity, an increasing amount of armed robberies. Terrorist kidnappings & bombings and rioting and large-scale conflict was also very common. The Green Gang was often hired by Chinese Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang for political violence and they, along with other criminal gangs took part in the White Terror massacre where some 5,000 pro-communist strikers in Shanghai were slaughtered in April 1927.

It was a huge boiling pot of vicious violence and Fairbairn was right in the middle of it at quite young age, something which would shape the rest of his life, laying the foundation of a very pragmatic and ruthless perspective on violence and martial arts.

Sikh, Chinese and British members of the SMP



Eric A. Sykes

Later, after the war, Fairbairn would create and train a special anti-riot squad for the SMP and many of the tactics and techniques developed here are still in use today.

It is here, in 1919 in Shanghai, that he met Eric A. Sykes, while Sykes was still working with weapons import/export at a British Secret Service-run company. Sykes was an expert marksman and came to

form and oversee a team of civilian & police snipers for the SMP and naturally he also became the head of this unit in 1937. In 1939 Sykes would properly join the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS-MI6).

Based on their experiences and training the two designed their own martial arts system for specific use for the Shanghai Municipal Police called *Defendu*. For hand-to-hand combat Fairbairn mixed *Savate*, *Jujitsu*, *early Judo*, *Chinese martial arts* (he had studied Kung-Fu with the Empress' former bodyguard), *wrestling* and *boxing*, all of it reflected against his own experience of raw and brutal street fighting as a police.

The system emphasized *pragmatical* rather than *gentlemanly* and *honourable* fighting, teaching rapid disabling of the opponent with potentially lethal force. Fairbairn declared:

*Get tough, get down in the gutter, win at all costs... I teach what is called 'Gutter Fighting.' There's no fair play, no rules except one: kill or be killed.*

The techniques of the system were brutal and quick, which can be exemplified by the following quote from the SOE syllabus:

The Queensberry rules enumerate, under the heading of 'fouls', some good targets which the boxer is not trained to defend. This, however, is WAR, not sport. Your aim is to kill your opponent as quickly as possible. ... So forget the Queensberry rules; forget the

term 'foul methods'. That may sound cruel, but it is still more cruel to take longer than necessary to kill your opponent. 'Foul methods', so-called, help you to kill more quickly... Don't just stop because an opponent is crippled. If you have broken his arm, for instance, that is only of value because it is then easier to kill.

During his 30 years of service in Shanghai Fairbairn reportedly engaged in at least 600 actual fights. Large parts of his body, with arms, legs, torso and even the palms of his hands are said to have been covered with scars from knife wounds sustained during those years.

The *Defendu* system was designed to be easy to learn and to provide effective results. It included unarmed fighting as well as gun combat & point shooting, use of knives, clubs and improvised weapons such as chairs or table legs. As such it fulfilled the needs of the military quite well too. Consequently, Fairbairn's and Sykes' teachings were adopted by the Allies in 1941 and first taught at the British Commando School in Scotland, although in a militarized form called British Close Quarters Combat. Much of Fairbairn's and Sykes' pioneering work in close combat, riot control, clandestine operations and trained instinctive fighting with guns and knives is still in use by military and police around the world today.

### The Fairbairn-Sykes Fighting Knife

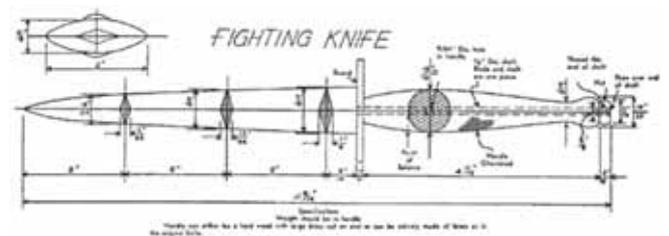
Already in Shanghai Fairbairn was working on designing a combat knife for their martial arts system, together with Sykes and a young US Marines officer; *2nd Lt. Samuel Sylvester Yeaton*.



A rare believed genuine Shanghai Knife, designed to be carried hanging upside-down and used by the SMP.

Photo courtesy of Gota Vapen

The work continued back in England in November 1940, then with the less commonly known, *Col. Leslie Wood R.E* and *Jack Wilkinson Latham* of manufacturer *Wilkinson Sword Ltd*. And this is the actual birth of the now quite *iconic* knife, the *British commando knife*, commonly called the *Fairbairn-Sykes*.



F-S fighting knife blueprint from FMFRP 12-80, *Kill or Get Killed*, by Rex Applegate. Image from Wikipedia



Possibly some inspiration was taken from the simple 17th and 18th cent. "plug" bayonets such as the one depicted below, but the design is also similar to many other classical dagger and stiletto designs of the preceding centuries. Regardless, the final result was a very carefully designed and engineered fighting knife.



Plug bayonet from early 1700s

Fairbairn's philosophy for the design was naturally based on his experience of close quarters combat during the preceding decades, although in military version made longer to reach vital organs through thick military garments.

In close-quarters fighting there is no more deadly weapon than the knife. In choosing a knife there are two important factors to bear in mind: balance and keenness. The hilt should fit easily in your hand, and the blade should not be so heavy that it tends to drag the hilt from your fingers in a loose grip. It is essential that the blade have a sharp stabbing point and good cutting edges, because an artery torn through (as against a clean cut) tends to contract and stop the bleeding. If a main artery is cleanly severed, the wounded man will quickly lose consciousness and die.

This knife was designed primarily for *quick, ruthless and silent disposal of enemies*, preferably from behind, and was soon issued to *British Commandos, the Airborne Forces, the SAS* and many other troops. The knife came in many different versions; fully black, half-black, plain steel and also with a nickel-plated hilt. The latter followed Fairbairn's philosophy of;

*I believe that a knife should be bright and highly polished for the reason that 20% of the fight is lost by not striking awe in the mind of the victim that a flashing knife gives.*

Almost two million of these British fighting knives are estimated to have been produced.

In June 1942 The two partners split ways on less than friendly terms with Sykes claiming that Fairbairn had treated him as an inferior. Fairbairn was borrowed to the US military and the OSS, to teach close combat techniques at Camp X in Canada and later at US Camp B (now Camp David). Maj. Eric A. Sykes stayed in Great Britain, training Special Operations Executive agents at their various training centres.

### The OSS stiletto

Col. Rex Applegate, friend of John Wayne and at one time bodyguard of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Said to have been the role model for several characters of the James Bond books.

One of Fairbairn's American students, *Col. Rex Applegate* con-



tinued working on spreading and developing the teachings of Fairbairn and Sykes in his own teaching of OSS operatives at Camp X. Quite naturally this also led to the OSS's own version of the Fairbairn-Sykes combat knife, the *OSS Stiletto*, a knife also used in Applegate's 1943 manual "*Kill or get killed*".

The knife was manufactured by several companies including *Pasadena Firearms* and *Landers, Frary & Clark*. The latter had manufactured pancake flappers before the war which is quite apparent from the design of the scabbard. Consequently that was also the name that was given to it, *the pancake flapper*. Reportedly it was Fairbairn's personal favourite scabbard type.



US Made Fairbairn-Sykes Model 2, the "OSS Stiletto", with "pancake flapper" scabbard. Photo courtesy of Gota Vapen

Some 10,000 of these knives were produced until August 1943.

### The US V-42 Stiletto

Meanwhile, US Lt. Colonel Robert T. Frederick, who had seen the Fairbairn-Sykes dagger while on duty in England, had come to wish for an American version of this knife and initiated the making of an improved version of it that would come to be designated the V-42 Stiletto.

This was designed for use by the American-Canadian elite commando; the *1st Special Service Force (FSSF)*, the so called Devil's Brigade, and had a pointy pommel designed for cracking skulls, a blade with a double hollow-ground bevel and a ricasso designed specifically to promote thumbing the blade in a side-grip.



The US V-42 Stiletto of the Devil's Brigade. Photo from Wikipedia

The V-42 Stiletto was first issued in 1942 to the FSSF as their standard fighting knife. The knife is said to have had great piercing capacities, even capable of piercing a steel helmet with liner, but also prone to breaking if used for prying. It also commonly got stuck in bone, making it difficult to withdraw and some soldiers are said to have ground down the tip because of this. Only 3000 V-42 Stilettoes were manufactured with only one shipment of 1,750 knives delivered.



## The US Marine Raider Stiletto



U.S. Marine Raider Stiletto. Photo from Wikipedia

Following this the US military decided to design a more official copy of the Fairbairn-Sykes knife, albeit with some changes to the design due to financial concerns. The knife was manufactured by Camillus Cutlery Co and was in standard delivery decorated on the blade with the letters "USMC" framed by leaves. Some 15,000 were manufactured, although only ca 6,000 marines served as Raiders.

However, the changes to this version of the fighting knife had turned out to be serious flaws. The hilt was a zinc-aluminum one-piece die-cast directly onto the tang and with time, the zinc ions leaked out, leaving the hilt very brittle and weak. Furthermore, for economical reasons the blade had been made thinner and as the tempering was also inferior the whole knife was rather fragile, if still deadly when used correctly. A retired USMC commented on it in the following words:

It was pointed out that it should never be thrown, as it was designed as a hand-held weapon to be used only in combat. It was also pointed out that it was brittle and would break even if just dropped, particularly the point.

— M.G. Oscar F. Peatross, USMC retired

Consequently, non-commando troops commonly found it lacking for fighting and their need for every day utility use wasn't nearly satisfied, with it's inherent weakness and completely round grip. They would much rather have a more versatile tool that would not just let them fight, but also let them hammer, pry open boxes and tins & cans, cut wire, split wood etc. Consequently, for some troops, the stiletto was thus for a brief period replaced by short machetes or even personal hunting knives, commonly of Bowie-like designs like the Randall Model 1 and the Marble's Ideal hunting knife, where the latter likely served as inspiration for what was to come.

### The Mark 1 Trench Knife & Mark 3 Fighting Knife

Still in WWII the old WWI Mark 1 Trench Knife (M1918) was reissued by the Army as a large stock remained from WWI. Most of these were issued to Army Rangers and Airborne troops, but some were reissued to Marines, in particular Raiders.



A replica of the M1918 Mk 1 Trench Knife with brass hilt. The American made variant used bronze.

Support for the knife was mixed but the expensive bronze knuckle hilt limited the gripping options and the somewhat weak blade had a tendency to break when prying things. As such it was not a success and in 1943 it was replaced by the M3 Fighting Knife. Some troops however, initially received the Raider Stiletto described above.

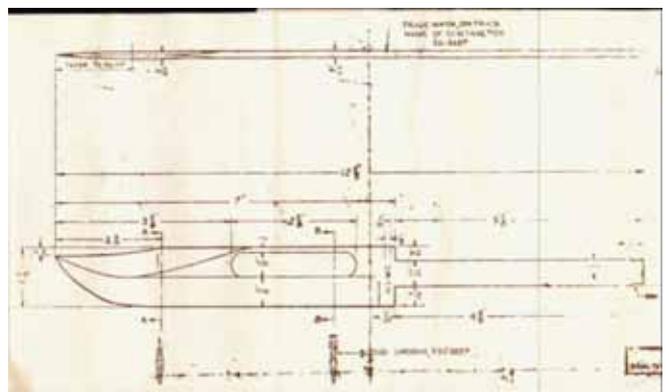


US Army M3 Fighting Knife with M8 scabbard. Private collection displayed at warrelics.eu

The M3 Fighting Knife in turn would be highly influential on military knives around the world and served as the role model for many, many military knives which more or less copied the design.

### The USMC Mark 2 Combat Knife

As a result of the issues with the Raider Stiletto and the Mark 1 Trench Knives, the USMC issued a specification for a request for a modern and more versatile fighting knife, sent to several military knife & tool suppliers in 1942. The starting point was to be the US Navy Mark 1 Utility knife and the Marble Ideal. Basic requirements included e.g. good strength and durability, reasonable cost and low enough weight for



Blueprint showing the blade and full hidden stick tang construction. The blueprint shows a bigger clip point than the Camillus depicted below, with the beveling extending all the way over the fuller.



comfortable hip carrying. USMC Col. John M. Davis and Maj. Howard E. America worked together with Union Cutlery and the result was the USMC Fighting Knife, first designated 1219C2, later redesignated as the USMC Mark 2 Combat Knife.



The original KA-BAR Combat Knife of 1942, manufactured by Camillus Cutlery Co. Image has been reversed to match the blueprint above. Photo courtesy of Gota vopen

It was adopted by the USMC on Nov 23 1942 and the first knives were shipped by the maker of the earlier USMC Raider Stiletto; Camillus Cutlery Co. on Jan 27 1943. In late 1943 it replaced the Raider Stiletto and it was subsequently also adopted by the US Navy, then marked as the US Navy Utility Knife Mark 2.

During WW2, the Mark 2 Combat knife was also contracted for manufacture by three more companies; Union Cutlery Co, Robeson Cutlery Co. and PAL Cutlery Co. The quality and design of the Mark 2 Combat Knife led to the knife becoming both popular and hugely successful in many different environments. Consequently it was eventually issued not just to Marines and Navy, but also Army, Coast Guard and Underwater Demolition teams.

### The KA-BAR

While Camillus Cutlery Co. was the biggest manufacturer of contracted combat knives Union Cutlery Co. produced nearly as many knives and was the only company to stamp their knives with the mark "KA-BAR". However, already in 1944 marines were referring to the knife type as "KA-BARs" and the name has stuck with it regardless of brand since then.

The name itself is said to come from a badly written letter from a fur trapper who wrote to Union Cutlery trying to describe an encounter he had had with a bear, where he had used the knife to kill it. The maker only just managed to make out a few of the letters of the phrase "K(ill) a b(e)ar". Already in 1923 Union Cutlery was using the name to market their knives, but after the success of the Mark 2 combat knife Union Cutlery Co. renamed itself in 1952 to KA-BAR Cutlery Inc.

At first the KA-BAR received criticism for its dual-purpose, since it was believed that it would be lacking as a fighting knife. However, returning veterans and field reports quickly dispelled any such doubts. A fellow HEMA-fencer and ex-soldier recently commented on the practical difference between the Fairbairn-Sykes and the KA-BAR, based on his 30 years of Special Forces instructing in three different armies:

What special forces like most is a nice wide non-slip grip, and these had that! We didnt care too much

about the blade as long as it was over 4 inches long an inch wide at least, and thick enough up the tang not to snap off when cranked about inside a human body. You could soak this grip in water or blood and still keep a good working grip on it.

We hated the Sykes-Fairbairn as the blade tips snapped off in bone and the grip was designed by a surgeon who thought he was doing brain surgery. We had to tape the grips but would mostly use "throwaways" (blades cut from plate steel with the grips taped) as they could be left behind without issue loss, and you could carry several on your webbing.

-Robert Loki Thornton  
Former SAS regiment NCO  
and Special Force consultant

### A change in philosophy with far-reaching effects

This radical change in philosophy for combat knives still lives strong in the market for both military and survival knives, especially in the US, where knives are commonly expected to be able to handle any need & abuse you submit them to, be it skinning game, clean fish, splitting wood, cutting wire & fabric, pry open cans, open beer bottles, disassemble a tank etc, etc.



More is not less. A fullered Full-Tang-Rambo-Karambit-Tanto-HALO-knife with thumb grooves on the saw-shaped back edge and with holes on the hilt so you can strap it to a stick and use it as a spearhead.

This came to its extreme with the over-the-top Rambo Survival Knives so popular among chairborn rangers in the 80s, but it still exists although in upgraded shape and is currently having a bit of a revival among prepper larpers endlessly debating the virtues of full tang, different types of exotic steel and the evils of stainless steel, dreaming of a super-knife that will survive the cockroaches and be capable of killing 10 zombies in one single cut and still never need to be sharpened.

However, the same philosophy can also be seen in much more sensible application in various proper military survival knives around the world, and certainly in the knife in focus here; the KA-BAR Fighting/Utility Knife.

### After WWII

Moving onwards, after WWII other knives also became popular, among them the famous Randall Model 14 Attack Knife designed by Bo Randall in the 1950s, and the Gerber Mark 2, a knife first issued in 1967 and clearly derived from the Fairbairn-Sykes knife.

(Continued on page 14)



## The University of New South Wales Canberra (UNSW Canberra) has awarded an honorary doctorate to the late Major General Michael Clifford AM CSC.

The University of New South Wales Canberra (UNSW Canberra) awarded an honorary doctorate to the late Major General Michael Clifford AM CSC at a recent degree conferral ceremony.

At an event held on Monday, the University Council noted Major General Clifford's eminent service to the community and resolved to confer the degree of Doctor of the University honoris causa – the university's highest honour – to him.

At the time of his death in November 2017, Major General Clifford was the senior advisor to the UNSW Canberra Rector Professor Michael Frater.

"He was an energetic advocate, not only for the roles of education and research in Defence, but UNSW Canberra's central role in them," says Professor Frater. "The great growth in UNSW Canberra's Space and Cyber Security activities and national leadership in these areas is due in no small part to his mentoring, leadership and advocacy."

Major General Clifford served more than 30 years in the military and held senior appointments during his career, including Chief of Staff to the Chief of the Defence Force during Australia's operations in East Timor in 1999, the Sydney Olympics in 2000 and Director-General Preparedness and Plans-Army in 2003-2004.



Over his career, the Major General was a key leader in the development of education and training in Defence. His final appointment in Defence was as Head of Information Capability Management within the Chief Information Officer Group, with responsibility for the conduct of both current military operations and preparing for future operations.

On leaving the Army, he moved on to senior leadership roles in the defence industry, with General Dynamics and IBM. He was the foundation chair of the UNSW Canberra Advisory Council, and later moved to the role of senior advisor at UNSW Canberra.

## The KA-BAR knife...

(Continued from page 13)



Gerber Mark II fighting knife. Photo from Wikipedia

Although not officially a US Military fighting knife for the Korea and Vietnam Wars, many troops still carried the KA-BARs and some old WWII KA-BARs were even given by war veterans to their sons serving in these wars.

The KA-BAR Cutlery brand still exists though, although it has been sold several times e.g. in 1960, -61, -66 and -82, ending up sold to Alcas Co, now renamed to Cutco Co, in 1996. The company still manufactures very good knives for a wide array of uses, including bushcraft, military and tactical.

Camillus Cutlery Co, the first military contractor for this knife, filed for bankruptcy in 2007 and Acme United Co purchased the brand and relaunched it as Camillus Cutlery in 2009. More and more old designs are added to the product range but currently no Mark 2 Combat Knife type or other military/tactical knives.

Ontario Knife Company bought Robeson Cutlery Co, one of the original manufacturers of the WWII KA-BARs in 1971. They have had contract with the US military for making KA-BARs ever since 1980 and is currently the only contract holder.

Reports of 30 year old KA-BARs that still hold up magnificently despite constant use are not uncommon, which certainly says something, not just about their quality, but also about the love and care they are given.

Today still, many US soldiers choose to carry a classical KA-BAR with them into the field, trusting in it to keep them safe. In that, it really is a timeless piece of great design.



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Australian Commando Association							
EVENTS CALENDAR - 2018							
Date	ACA Branch	Event	Time	Cost per Person	Pre Booking Required	Pre Booking Deadline	Payment / Comments
Fri 26 Jan - Sun 28 Jan 2018	VIC	Wilson's Promontory Walk	11:00	Parks Vic Rates	Yes - Camping Permit	As early as possible	Contact Peter Beasley directly for details on 0413382533
Sun 18 Feb 2018	VIC	RIP Memorial Service Shortlands Bluff Queenscliff	11:30	Meal & Drinks	Yes - Lunch at Bowling Club	12/02/2018	Meal booking to be made at Bowling Club Contact: Keith Hughes 03 8364 0557 or 0466 960 334
Fri 2 Mar - Sun 4 Mar 2018	VIC	Family Weekend Retreat - Buchan	16:00	TBA	Yes - Attendance	26/02/2018	Numbers required for interested persons Contact: Keith Hughes 03 8364 0557 or 0466 960 334
Sat 17 Mar 2018	VIC	Annual General Meeting Box Hill RSL	10:30	Own lunch	Yes - Attendance	26/02/2018	Advise Secretary if attending or if an apology/proxy 03 9885 9924 or 0414 311 093
Wed 25 Apr 2018	VIC	Anzac Day - Dawn Service Fort Gellibrand	5:30	\$0	No		
Wed 25 Apr 2018	VIC	Anzac Day - March Form up Flinders Street West (North side - next to Young & Jackson's hotel)	9:30	\$0	No		Contact : Glenn MacDonald 03 9885 9924 or 0414 311 093
Wed 25 Apr 2018	VIC	Anzac Day - Lunch at Bayview Eden	12:00	\$50	Yes - Attendance	18/04/2018	Contact : Glenn MacDonald 03 9885 9924 or 0414 311 093
Sat 19 May 2018	VIC	Annual Reunion Dinner Box Hill RSL	19:00	\$50	Yes - Attendance	16/05/2018	Contact : Glenn MacDonald 03 9885 9924 or 0414 311 093
Sun 10 Jun 2018	VIC	Archery Family Day	10:00	Cost of Arranged Activity	Yes - Attendance	as early as possible	Contact : Keith Hughes 03 8364 0557 or 0466 960 334
Sun 1 Jul 2018	VIC	Reserve Forces Day March Melbourne Shrine	10:00	\$0	Yes - Attendance	26/06/2018	Contact : Keith Hughes 03 8364 0557 or 0466 960 334
Sun 8 Jul 2018	QLD	RIMAU Memorial Service	10:30	\$0	Yes - Attendance	6/07/2016	Contact : Tony Mills 0419 136 772 or tony@evoheat.com.au
Sun 30 Sep 2018	VIC	Shrine of Remembrance Tour (prior to Memorial Service)	11:00	\$0	Yes - Attendance		Contact : Keith Hughes 03 8364 0557 or 0466 960 334
Sun 30 Sep 2018	VIC	Commando Memorial Service - Shrine of Remembrance	12:30	Morning Tea \$2	No		Payment on the day Contact : Keith Hughes 03 8364 0557 or 0466 960 334
Sun 14 Oct 2018	VIC	Presidents Shield Pistol Shoot Yarra Valley Pistol Club Lysterfield	10:30	\$20	No		Payment on the day Contact : Keith Hughes 03 8364 0557 or 0466 960 334
Fri 18 Nov 2018	VIC	Observance Ceremony for Remembrance Day Heidelberg Gardens	10:45	\$0	No		There is a plaque for all Special Force members in the gardens Contact : Keith Hughes 03 8364 0557 or 0466 960 334
Sun 18 Nov 2018	VIC	Commando Memorial Service - Tidal River Cairn	12:45	\$0	Yes - Attendance via Bus	14/11/2018	Names required for travel on the Bus Contact : Keith Hughes 03 8364 0557 or 0466 960 334

Each event will be publicized in the previous Magazine or Newsletter as well as on our website (<http://www.austcdoassocvic.com/>), but in the meantime please mark the dates in your diary. Any ideas, suggestions for social events are always welcome. Please contact any of your committee members if you have suggestions or can help conduct an event.

Below is the official prayer of the operators of the South African Special Forces:



**Heavenly Father, King of the world,  
I know that all things are in Your hands,  
whatever happens to me.**

**As a Special Forces Operator, I am prepared to suffer hardship.  
I am ready to endure danger, unrest, pain and hurt.  
I am going to be hungry and thirsty.**

**I am prepared to face the enemy fearlessly, Lord.  
I am weak. I cannot depend upon my own strength;  
I do not want to trust in my own abilities.**

**Lord, my God, let me trust in You alone.  
And, above all, faith to do my work fearlessly - always.**

**Amen**



A close-up photograph of a woman, likely a firefighter, wearing a tan and dark blue uniform with reflective yellow and silver stripes. She is looking down and adjusting the collar of her jacket with both hands. The background is blurred, showing red and yellow elements, possibly from a fire truck.

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# Leaving the ADF



At some point in their career, all ADF members will leave the military and transition to civilian life. It's a significant decision that can involve your family. Planning early will make sure you're informed and ready to enter the next phase of your life.

You must complete your transition with ADF Transition Support Services so you understand the process, your administrative requirements, and the support available to you. We encourage you to involve your family throughout your transition experience.

### Transition support network

Transitioning to civilian life is a shared responsibility. When you decide to leave the ADF you should engage with your family, your Unit, and ADF Transition Support Services.

Your Unit can speak to you about the transition process and connect you with your local ADF Transition Centre. Your Centre will introduce you to a Transition Support Officer who will help you and your family through the transition process and:

- provide you with an individual transition plan
- offer career coaching during your transition and up to 12 months afterwards
- help you meet your administrative requirements
- help you leave with all documentation like service, medical, and training records
- facilitate connections to Defence and government support services

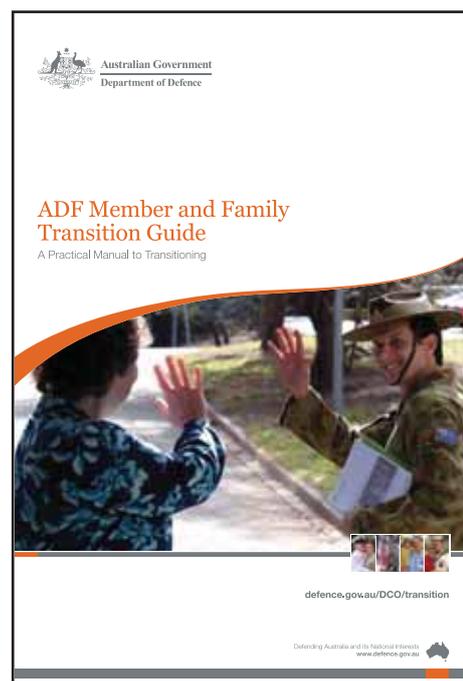
### ADF Transition Seminar

You and your family can attend an ADF Transition Seminar at any time during your ADF career to help you prepare for your transition. Seminars are held

nationally throughout the year. You'll receive information from Defence and other organisations on topics like finance and superannuation, health, relocating, employment, and ex-service organisation support.

### ADF Member and Family Transition Guide

The ADF Member and Family Transition Guide – A Practical Manual to Transitioning contains detailed information on the transition process for ADF members. The Guide includes information on support services and administrative requirement. It includes checklists to help you navigate transition process.



# 'OUT OF THE SHADOWS' AUSTRALIA'S SPECIAL FORCES



*Peter Beesley (ACA Victoria) viewing the VC collection with Brendan Nelson Director of the Australian War Memorial.*

Last year the Australian War Memorial launched a very special exhibition on our Special Forces.

Special Forces soldiers were at the forefront of Australia's war in Afghanistan for 16 years, and yet little is publicly known about the work they did there.

Developed in partnership with Special Operations Command, this exhibition casts a rare light on those men and women who operate in the shadows. It will display over 600 objects, most of which have never been seen before by the Australian public.

There are displays of equipment from the Commandos of WW2, such as the canoes similar to the ones used in the raid on Singapore Harbour in 1943 right through to the more modern equipment used in Afghanistan.

The collection was assembled over 12 months from various museums and History Centres from Special Forces units throughout Australia.

AWM director Brendan Nelson said while it was hard to tell the special forces story because of the secrecy surrounding their work, it was important.

Australian Special Forces include the Special Air Service Regiment, the 1st and 2nd Commando Regiments and the Special Operations Engineer Regiment.

The exhibition continues until October 2018.



*Vehicles in use in Afghanistan.*





Barry Grant and Ben Roberts Smith VC MG viewing some of the exhibits.



Weapons on display



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# The Positive Relationship between Physical Activity and PTSD

Exercise has a positive clinical effect on depressive symptoms and may be as effective as psychological or pharmaceutical therapies for some individuals with PTSD. Rosebaum et al, 2014 suggests Physical activity/exercise is a highly effective method in reducing symptoms of depression and for people experiencing other mental health disorders.

Evidence demonstrates that an appropriate exercise intervention can achieve significant benefits to symptoms, depression, anxiety and stress, changes in body shape and sedentary time associated with PTSD, and non-significant trends for sleep quality improvement according to Rosenbaum, 2013.

The associated symptoms and the improvements may be related to psychosocial benefits of the intervention, rather than functional capacity, but there is also a strong empirical (observational) link between improvements in functional capacity and psychological status according to the author, 2016.

People with PTSD are four times as likely to have type 2 diabetes (Lukashek et al, 2013) and rates of overweight and obesity are as high as 92%. To add to these statistics, sufferers of PTSD are shown to be less physically active due to a number of factors including pain, dysfunctional and general lack of desire or both, according to Boscarino et al, 2004.

Adding some form of regular physical activity can have a significant effect on a sufferer of PTSD. It's important to note, the type of activity doesn't matter, what matters is that the person is moving and also having fun doing it. If you would like to become physically active again and help to combat some of your PTSD related symptoms then please consult your GP and discuss your options for referral to another health care professional (exercise physiologist or physiotherapist) for help with your other associated or co-morbid conditions ie lower back pain, arthritis and or obesity.



# No Front Line, Australia's Special Forces at War in Afghanistan

Chris Masters, Allen & Unwin, Sydney 2017

Reviewed by Jim Truscott with Rick Moor and Robert Kilsby

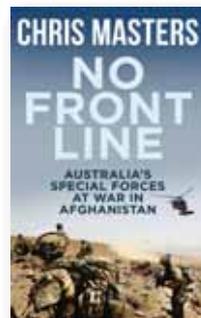
This book about Australia's Special Forces in action through their longest and most recent campaign, is a masterful and well researched piece of work by an investigative journalist covering the 12-year period from October 2001 to December 2013. In particular it illuminates the leadership of many combat commanders by detailed description of their field operations. There are rolling stories of fierce combat, command tunnel vision, fleeting glimpses of success, and one near death moment turning into another at the Battle of Shah Wali Kot in 2010 resulting in the award of the first Australian Army battle honour since Vietnam. An earlier month-long battle in the Chora Valley in 2006 was to be the largest combined mission involving Australians since Vietnam, and with incredibly so few casualties. Rarely since WWI have Australians engaged in such an intense and sustained conflict; through about 10 years of deployments there was to be about 3,000 contacts within a force totaling not much more than 150 operators at any one time. Many of the significant actions are detailed from year to year from the first three Contingents October 2001 to December 2002, and then on redeployment from September 2005 across the treadmill of 20 almost consecutive deployment 'Rotations'. Indeed it was a major sustained effort for a comparatively few in number Special Forces community over a long period. The author quite rightly says that the twin peaks of Australia's known story in Afghanistan were courage, and sacrifice.

The reportage style following the small unit direct action missions approach by Special Forces to warfare, has produced a complex series of stories covering the strategic to the tactical with many detailed descriptions of often very intense engagements. The accounts describe the increasing sophistication of targeted missions supported by US technology and the gradual build-up of an intelligence data base and methodology over many years. There is a great deal of well researched detail, and presented in an objective, reporting way. To put many of the individual actions in a Rotation by Rotation account into an overall operational and strategic context is not the aim of the book, and that outcome awaits an official history.

In such a book about operations and leadership in Special Forces, the author duly reports the inherent ongoing tenseness observed from time to time between the SAS and Commando Force Elements. The SAS versus Commando tensions (described as 'beret wars') which occurred were inevitable, and were at times counter-productive, when two extremely tribal and stressed organisations are competing for 'mission pro-file' and limited resources on the same battlefield. The SAS mostly got first call on helicopters in counter leadership missions while Commandos met the ever present and increasingly sophisticated threat and deployment of IEDs against vehicles and greater vulnerability to ambushes as the enemy adapted to their tactics on disruption tasks and dangerous counter

narcotic missions. Apart from some first-hand opinions from the interviewed operators from both units, the reader is left to surmise any theory of why such occurred and perhaps wonder of the potentially missed opportunities for the SAS to move on into another information battle space.

The historical reality was that the initial Australian strategy was just to contribute and from 2001 to 2009 there was no other strategy than to support the US in the first three Contingents and in the next ten



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Rotations. The US themselves would seem to have no strategy other than retribution, if that can be deemed a strategy. In the absence of a more discerning strategy the metrics become that of attrition and significantly about the kill count. It was to become obvious that the wholly kinetic approach could not kill a way out of Afghanistan. Unfortunately, the introduction of a counter insurgency (COIN) approach in 2009 was too late to secure victory. Even when the counter in-surgency mantra of 'Clear, Hold and Rebuild' at Provincial level evolved to 'Shield, Build and Shape', the role of the deployed Reconstruction Task Force to rebuild war torn Afghanistan was arguably also too little and too late. The observation by Major General Ash Power that coalitions are easy to form but hard to manage and that as consequence it had no unity of purpose, speaks for itself. It demonstrated the diabolical difficulty of setting Australian strategy which was ultimately watered down to continue to help where we could.

The Special Forces targeting definitively weakened the Taliban but strategically it made no difference as the Afghan Government had no legitimacy and the Taliban's sanctuaries in Pakistan were off limits. In 2008 Imran Khan said on Pakistan TV that "you can't kill your way to victory, as there are a million armed Pashtun on this side of the border just waiting to cross". Defeating an insurgency constantly refueled by a neighbouring sanctuary was next to impossible. The US-led industrial, high technology approach to prosecuting war was not enough in itself as while the coalition may have had the watch, the Taliban had the time. Eventually there was recognition of a sense of urgency to directly develop self-reliance in the Afghan Security Force otherwise the mission would not be achieved. There were some partnering ratios achieved of more than 50:50 towards the end, however the Afghan Army which might have worked well with it did not exist. It is hard to run a country and ensure a civil society with virtually no funds. In 2008 the total Afghan Govern-

ment budget was US\$5 billion with about US\$2.4 billion of that in tied aid. By quantity comparison, the current Australian Army budget is about US\$18 billion. In the light of this dilemma it is somewhat fascinating that discussion of protecting the community with infantry was all but a one liner in the book.

While there is an imperative to capture disparate Special Operations history before it is lost on classified Information Technology, there is the question of the logic in al-owing this book to be published before the war is well over; and even then? Some people may like the 'truth' no matter the national security consequences, but some understand we are still effectively at war with the Taliban and would prefer vigilance and containment of any incidental propaganda losses to the enemy. The Taliban always knew that they could outlast the opposition. Their life is so hard they had nothing to lose and their entire Afghani history is replete with the theme of expelling the invader. Hence its (probably premature) publication is at worst, poor consolidation psychological operations, and at best a Special Force recruiting book. The Department of Defence should have made some careful consideration regarding at least the timing of the book. Some would say at least in Defence circles, we should still be fighting the war psychologically rather than admitting to the enemy via this book that we are evidently incapable of winning.

It was wistful reading knowing many of the combat commanders personally as it is a potential counter intelligence victory for the enemy akin to Paladin Press publishing hard won patrolling tactics from SE Asia. It is not the fault of Chris Masters, he has done an excellent job of reporting Australia's Special Forces at War in Afghanistan. In fact it did need to be written by a third party, but not externally published. None the less, it forms a solid basis for the official history yet to be written.



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## VALE

LAYTON Dorothy Alison

Dorothy Layton (nee Carver) was the wife of Captain Keith Layton, an early 2 Commando Company Medical Officer. Keith was appointed in November 1958 to replace Dr Bruce Fox as RMO. He took part in the 1959 annual camp, initially at Point Addis, near Anglesea, then from Geelong on a small-scale raids exercise into the Werribee area, from an RAN corvette. Keith ceased his attachment a year later, in November 1959, but not before completing his basic parachute course. Keith died in December 2013 of pancreatic cancer after a short illness, aged 88.

All members of the Association offer their sympathy and kind thoughts to Dorothy and Keith's children Susie, Bill, Peter and David and all of their families.

---

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2nd Commando Regiment

## Why No Transgender in the Military?

This article has been attributed to an officer in answer to a reporter from a major US Network. And he nails it!

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Can't run the required course in the required time? Can't do the required number of pushups? Not really a "morning person" and refuse to get out of bed before noon? All can be reasons for denial.

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Did someone just scream "That isn't Fair"? War is VERY unfair, there are no exceptions made for being special or challenged or socially wonderful.

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# MEFLOQUINE

## Concerns have been raised about links between mefloquine and mental health conditions

### ***What is malaria?***

- Malaria is a deadly disease which in 2016 killed over 400,000 people worldwide, and affected more than 200 million people.
- The Australian Defence Force (ADF) has a duty of care to ensure its people deploying to malaria prone areas are protected.

### ***What is mefloquine?***

- Mefloquine (also known by the trade name Lariam) is one of three anti-malarial medications approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for malaria prevention in our region. The ADF uses mefloquine as a third line agent and it is only used when members are unable to tolerate the alternatives.
- Mefloquine may not be suitable for individuals with particular medical conditions or those taking some other medications. In particular, mefloquine should not be taken for malaria prevention by people who have, or have had, a psychiatric condition, seizures, kidney disease or liver disease.
- For these reasons, Defence health policy requires ADF members be properly informed of the potential side-effects of mefloquine and the drug may only be prescribed by a qualified medical practitioner after the member has provided their informed consent.
- Mefloquine can cause psychiatric symptoms in some people, including disturbed sleep, anxiety, paranoia, depression, hallucinations and psychosis. Dizziness and loss of balance have also been reported as side effects from the use of mefloquine. For this reason, the medication is not used in ADF aircrew.
- Mefloquine is commonly used in the broader Australian community for the prevention of malaria in travellers. Mefloquine is also included on the World Health Organisation List of Essential Medicines for both the prevention and treatment of malaria.
- Further information about malaria and anti-malarial medications is available on the 'Malaria, mefloquine and the ADF' website, [www.defence.gov.au/Health/HealthPortal/Malaria/](http://www.defence.gov.au/Health/HealthPortal/Malaria/).

### ***How many people have been given mefloquine?***

- The ADF's use of mefloquine is conservative compared to its use in other militaries around the world and in the civilian population.
- The vast majority of ADF members have never been prescribed mefloquine.
- Records show that between July 2000 and January 2018, less than 2,000 ADF personnel were prescribed mefloquine. Most of these prescriptions were as part of the ADF trials in East Timor from 2000-2002 (a total of 1,319 soldiers).
- It is far more commonly prescribed across the general community, with an estimated 11,457 civilian prescriptions for mefloquine in 2016 alone.
- Statistics are available from the 'Malaria, mefloquine and the ADF' website.

### ***What concerns have been raised?***

- Concerns have been raised about the conduct of the ADF trials of mefloquine in East Timor. The Inspector General ADF (IGADF), an independent and impartial statutory authority, examined a number of allegations relating to this matter.
- The IGADF report found that the trials were conducted ethically and in compliance with National Health and Medical Research Council Guidelines for the conduct of human research. It also found that the trials were voluntary and participants were informed about possible side effects. This was consistent with relevant product and consumer medicine information available at the time.
- Further information is available at [www.defence.gov.au/Health/HealthPortal/Malaria/AMI\\_research/](http://www.defence.gov.au/Health/HealthPortal/Malaria/AMI_research/).
- Concerns have also been raised that taking mefloquine causes chemically-acquired brain injury.

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**What is the Repatriation Medical Authority (RMA)?**

- The RMA is an independent statutory authority which is entirely separate from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA).
- The RMA is responsible for determining Statements of Principles (SoPs) for any disease, injury or death that could be related to military service, based on sound medical-scientific evidence.
- Further information is available on the RMA website, [www.rma.gov.au](http://www.rma.gov.au).

**What are Statements of Principles (SoPs)?**

- Serving and ex-serving ADF members can claim compensation at any time for medical conditions they believe are related to their service.
- For DVA to accept liability for compensation there has to be causal link determined between the person's service and their medical condition.
- Under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* and the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*, the potential link between a medical condition and service is assessed using SoPs.
- Together, mefloquine and tafenoquine are included as a potential causal factor in SoPs for 15 conditions. Of these, mefloquine is covered by 14 SoPs and tafenoquine is covered by six SoPs.

**What conditions are covered?**

Condition	Anti-malarial Medication
1. Anxiety disorder	Mefloquine
2. Bipolar disorder	Mefloquine
3. Depressive disorder	Mefloquine
4. Heart block	Mefloquine
5. Myasthenia gravis	Mefloquine
6. Peripheral neuropathy	Mefloquine
7. Schizophrenia	Mefloquine
8. Suicide and attempted suicide	Mefloquine
9. Trigeminal neuropathy	Mefloquine
10. Epileptic seizure	Mefloquine and Tafenoquine
11. Acquired cataract	Mefloquine and Tafenoquine
12. Sensorineural hearing loss	Mefloquine and Tafenoquine
13. Tinnitus	Mefloquine and Tafenoquine
14. Psoriasis	Mefloquine and Tafenoquine
15. Methaemoglobinaemia	Tafenoquine



### ***What did the RMA investigate?***

- The RMA investigated whether SoPs may be determined in respect of ‘chemically-acquired brain injury caused by mefloquine, tafenoquine or primaquine.’
- Mefloquine, tafenoquine and primaquine belong to the chemical class of drugs known as quinolines.
- The RMA decided that there is insufficient sound medical scientific evidence that exposure to these pharmaceuticals causes acquired brain injury.
- For these reasons, the RMA decided that it does not propose to make SoPs in relation to chemically-acquired brain injury caused by mefloquine, tafenoquine and primaquine.
- The report can be accessed at [www.rma.gov.au/assets/Other/RMA-Statement-of-reasons-chemically-acquired-brain-injury-29-August-2017.pdf](http://www.rma.gov.au/assets/Other/RMA-Statement-of-reasons-chemically-acquired-brain-injury-29-August-2017.pdf).
- This decision means that DVA will not be able to accept claims for this specific condition, or the same condition described differently. However, it is important to note that DVA claims staff will still investigate to determine whether another diagnosis may be appropriate and whether it is possible to accept the claim in accordance with that diagnosis.

### ***What is the Specialist Medical Review Council (SMRC)?***

- The SMRC is an independent statutory body responsible to the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs.
- On request from an eligible person or organisation, the SMRC can review decisions of the RMA.
- The SMRC is conducting an independent review into the RMA’s decision not to issue SoPs for chemically-acquired brain injury. Submissions to the SMRC review closed on 9 February 2018. The SMRC will review the submissions and the materials that were considered by the RMA, to determine whether the sound medical-scientific evidence supports or does not support developing SoPs for this condition.
- Further information on the SMRC is available from [www.smrc.gov.au](http://www.smrc.gov.au). Information on the SMRC’s review process is available at [www.smrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/documents/handbook.pdf](http://www.smrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/documents/handbook.pdf).

## **The Government is acting on the health concerns raised**

### ***What has been, or is being, done?***

- DVA and Defence provide information and support to those who are concerned about mefloquine use.
- Defence has established a dedicated email address ([adf.malaria@defence.gov.au](mailto:adf.malaria@defence.gov.au)) and the ‘Malaria, mefloquine and the ADF’ information portal, [www.defence.gov.au/Health/HealthPortal/Malaria/](http://www.defence.gov.au/Health/HealthPortal/Malaria/).
- Defence has released specific clinical guidelines to assist Defence health practitioners and these have been published on the Defence website.
- DVA has established a dedicated support team to help with mefloquine-related claims, and provides information about health and support services and how to access them on its website.
- DVA, in collaboration with the RMA and the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS), ran an outreach program in Townsville in December 2016. The program provided serving and ex-serving ADF members who were prescribed mefloquine with easy access to information and face-to-face assistance. Information sessions covered DVA services, non-liability health care, claims processing, VVCS, and mental health resources. The material presented at the Townsville outreach program is available on the DVA website, [www.dva.gov.au/mefloquine](http://www.dva.gov.au/mefloquine).
- DVA’s Principal Medical Adviser wrote to general practitioners to bring their attention to information that may assist their patients who have taken mefloquine.
- DVA and Defence are currently considering whether there is scope for research that will build on the body of evidence already established in relation to the effects of anti-malarial medications.



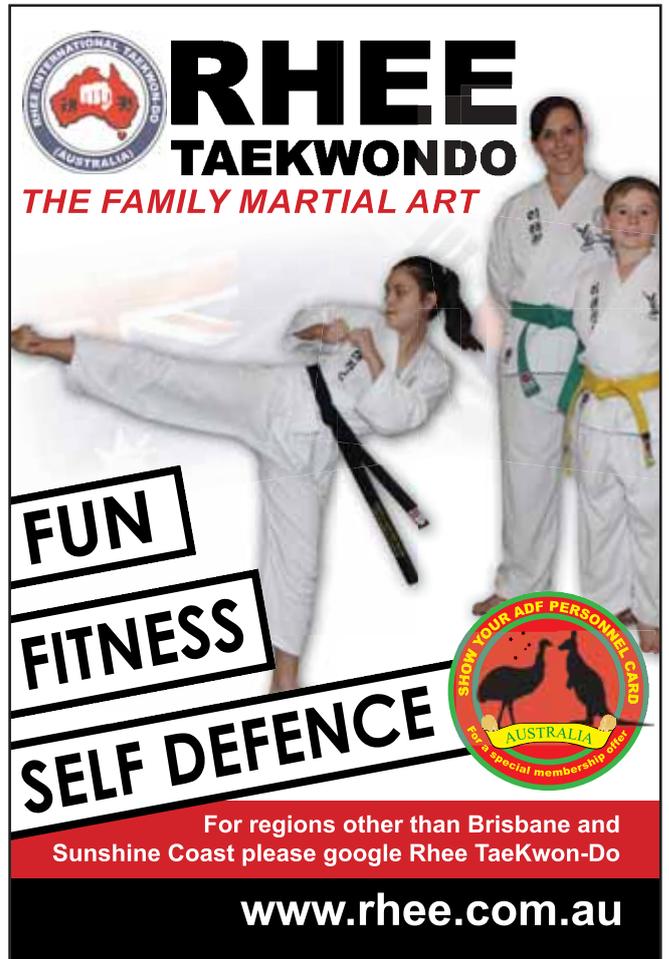
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<b>Anti-malarial medications</b>	<p>'Malaria, mefloquine and the ADF' provides information on malaria, types of anti-malarial medications and their use in the ADF, research and clinical trials.</p> <p>A dedicated email address is available for concerned individuals seeking further information.</p> <p>The DVA website provides information on anti-malarial medications and support. Handouts, factsheets and PowerPoint presentations from the Townsville Outreach Program are also available.</p> <p>DVA's mental health portal, <i>At Ease</i>, provides information and self-help resources to help people recognise the symptoms of poor mental health, manage their wellbeing and build resilience, learn about treatment options, and access professional support. Families can find advice on how to keep their family healthy while caring for someone with a mental health condition, including information on mental health first aid.</p>
<b>Mental health</b>	
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<b>1800 IMSICK</b>	<p> 1800 467425 (1800 IMSICK – 24/7)</p>
<b>Dedicated DVA Support Team</b>	<p> 1800 555 254 (DVA)</p> <p>Ask to be put in touch with the dedicated support team for assistance</p>
<b>Submitting a claim</b>	<p> 1800 555 254 (DVA)</p> <p> <a href="mailto:GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au">GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au</a></p>
<b>Non-liability health care</b>	<p> 1800 555 254 (DVA)</p> <p> <a href="mailto:nlhc@dva.gov.au">nlhc@dva.gov.au</a></p> <p> <a href="http://www.dva.gov.au/non-liability-health-care">www.dva.gov.au/non-liability-health-care</a></p>
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## THE LAST COASTWATCHER

Former Sergeant Jim Burrowes, VX136343, served as a Coastwatcher in the South Pacific during World War II. He was always interested to tell the history of the Coastwatchers, the forerunner of M Special Unit, because their secretive and specialist operations were 'hush hush' during the war and unknown until many years later. Jim decided to publish the story, including some of his experiences during the war, so that the vital role that Coastwatchers played in winning the war in the Pacific was not lost to posterity.

A member of the Australian Commando Association Victoria, Jim gave a compelling address as the speaker at the 2015 Tidal River memorial service, where he also spoke of the origins of the WW2 Commando units. Jim has tremendous knowledge of the Coastwatcher operations in the South Pacific area, and of the many tragic incidents that were part of the toll in the war against the Japanese.

Jim believes he may be the last Coastwatcher around to tell the history of his organization. See [thelastcoastwatcher.wordpress.com](http://thelastcoastwatcher.wordpress.com). Readers are also welcome to contact Jim by email, [jim@starbiz.com](mailto:jim@starbiz.com).



Jim Burrowes OAM at the 2016 WW2 Commando service at Tidal River



Con Bell, Peter Beasley, Jim Burrowes, Glenn MacDonald and Ronald 'Dixie' Lee on Anzac Day 2013.

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# ACROSS THE TIMOR SEA

Report by Jan Roberts

Jan Roberts first went to Timor Leste in 2010, to fulfill a promise she had made to her uncle Norman Nicolay, a 2/4th Commando who was based in the remote village of Ailalec during WW2. It was a very dangerous time for both the Australians there and also the Timorese helping them, but the Ailalec villagers remained loyal. Norm befriended a young Timorese boy, Nicolof, who became his *criado* – his 'eyes and ears'. Nearly 70 years later Jan Roberts located Nicolof (Domingos Baretto) at Ailalec. Sadly both Domingos and Jan's Uncle Norman passed away not long after this first contact was made.

Norman had valued 'learning' and Jan realized that supporting education in Timor Leste would be a way to recognise the special bond formed during WW2. The 'Baretto/Nicolay Scholarship' supports students (a boy and girl each year) in attending high school. Hopefully after six years this will see twelve Ailalec students attending the school.

Jan recently reported: "2018 will see me return to Timor Leste for the eighth year. In that time, there has been a steady growth in the programs for Across the Timor Sea. Thanks to the many generous people along



The Ailalec villagers constructed the new school buildings.



Seven of the eight 2017 scholarship students at the secondary school.



The new three-room school, which replaces the dilapidated old building.

the way, in 2018 there will be ten children in the sponsorship program. This is well on the way to the target of twelve students attending St. Francis of Assisi (two in each of the six levels)."

"With sponsorship, two students (from Ailalec Village Primary School) who have been identified as worthy recipients will be chosen each year to receive support for their Secondary education. It is hoped the program will build to twelve children every year. It must be noted that students need to maintain their work ethic to continue with their scholarship. Any students who show potential and wish to further their studies post-secondary, and are endorsed by their Headmaster, will need support to do so, as this would necessitate them leaving the village and living in Dili. This would be a wonderful outcome for future consideration and support."

"Another exciting project will see the building of a Pre-Primary and Headmaster's rooms, commencing in February 2018, after a long but positive wait. The Sangora Foundation donated the materials for this building and the villagers (who are excellent tradesmen) constructed it."

"The Ailalec Village now has nine water pumps installed due to the co-operation between the Timor Leste Government and Besik Australia. These have



resulted in a proliferation of vegetable gardens around the homes, which the villagers take great pride in. The Timor government has also provided the materials for the village to build a new three-room school, which replaces the dilapidated old one."

"Across the Timor Sea, with the valuable assistance of the Rotary International Donations In Kind project has shipped 148 boxes and bags of donated goods, as well as 79 desks/chairs and school/office equipment. Many people have contributed to this project and their efforts are greatly appreciated."

"The plaque, which was erected in 2012 to honour the friendship between Capt. Norman Nicolay of the 2/4th Commandos and his WW2 Timorese Creado and friend Domingos Baretto is treated with reverence and is considered sacred. It is positioned in a beautiful site, looking over a deep valley with mountains all around, untouched, exactly as our boys would have encountered it those many years ago. The roads in have been upgraded and Ailalec Village is well worth a visit. Commando families would be welcomed, and can see



The local people revere the memorial plaque at Ailalec.

where our Commandos were sheltered and kept safe until they left East Timor in 1943," Jan concluded.

See [acrossthetimorsea.com](http://acrossthetimorsea.com). If you wish to learn more, please contact Jan Roberts by e-mail at [acrossthetimorsea@gmail.com](mailto:acrossthetimorsea@gmail.com) or by mobile on 0468 328 585.

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Dad got quiet. Then, in a soft voice, he said, "Probably. I was the cook."

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Australian Commando Association-Victoria

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**Cost** - \$100 per person and wine, beer and spirits will be available on a pay-as-you-go basis. Port for toasts is

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# Cyber Security Enrolments increase 270%

*IT Graduates studying for Masters degrees looking to cash in on booming demand for cyber security skills.*



**MELBOURNE: Thursday, 1 February 2018** - IT Masters, an industry-based organisation that partners with Charles Sturt University (CSU) to provide online Masters degrees to IT professionals has experienced a 270 per cent increase year-on-year in enrolments for its Cyber Security course.

According to Martin Hale, director of IT Masters, enrolments for CSU's "Masters degree in Cyber Security" course continue to climb daily as its Session One intake closing date (February 16) looms.

"By the time 2018 enrolments are closed, we may well have more than four times the number of Cyber security applicants than we had last year," Hale said. "We have not seen this sort of focused interest in a specific aspect of the IT industry since the Dot Com boom of the late 1990s.

"As was the case back then, demand is being driven by the tremendous employment opportunities that are available at present for graduates with skills in cyber security."

Hale said that the skills shortage in this area well-documented. Cisco estimates there are more than 1 million unfilled jobs worldwide.

"IT professionals looking to take their careers to the next level are targeting cyber security as a fast-track to vocational advancement and it makes sense too," Hale said. "Data from the 2016 Census showed that while average wage growth across the community has been very slow, ICT Security Specialists have benefited greatly from an undersupply of skilled workers with an impressive 31 per cent rise in the five years from 2011 to 2016.

"The latest Census survey showed average wages in this category have risen to \$111,124 and, in the current state of undersupply for cyber security skills, it is fair to assume that those income growth figures are being exceeded in the present."

A recent report from the Australian Cyber Security Growth Network projects that over the next decade the Australian cyber security industry could triple in size, with revenues rising to \$6 billion by 2026, from just over \$2 billion today.

Hale said that the dramatic increase in demand for cyber security skills and experience has been good for CSU cyber security graduates most of whom are existing IT professionals and law enforcement officers.

"Demand for suitable skilled and certified cyber security operatives is rampant," Hale said. "We are hearing reports of our students winning cyber Security appointments while they are still doing their courses.

"Meanwhile, according to a recently published ESG/ISSA research report titled The Life and Times of Cybersecurity Professionals, 49 per cent of cybersecurity professionals are solicited to consider other cybersecurity jobs by various types of recruiters at least once per week.

"CSU has attracted high quality cyber security lecturers such as world renowned terrorism expert Richard Steinon and major investigations leader, Graham Sunderland to ensure that students will get the best possible outcomes from their studies."

CSU's cyber security courses are conducted via the university's award-winning distance learning platform with a combination of webcast lectures, interactive online courseware, and collaborative community engagement. Session One intakes close on February 16 with the course beginning shortly thereafter.

An information webinar on the CSU Cyber Security course is available on YouTube.

For more information:

Gerard Norsa - Schmooze Communications - [gerard@schmooze.com.au](mailto:gerard@schmooze.com.au) - 0427 563 442

Martin Hale - IT Masters - [martin.hale@itmasters.com.au](mailto:martin.hale@itmasters.com.au) - 0419 322 844



## ABOUT IT MASTERS:

IT Masters is an industry-based training organisation that has partnered with Charles Sturt University to:

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- Research and identify opportunities to further expand the range of Masters programs.

Their first combined Master degree was launched in 2002. Since 2009 Charles Sturt University has had the largest number of domestic postgraduate IT students of any Australian university with over 7,000 enrolments so far.

**Contact:** Martin Hale

**Phone:** 1300 885 685

**Email:** [martin.hale@itmasters.edu.au](mailto:martin.hale@itmasters.edu.au)

**Website:** [www.itmasters.edu.au](http://www.itmasters.edu.au)



# Rip memorial service remembers lost Commandos

A low-key but solemn service at Shortlands Bluff on Sunday, February 18 remembered three soldiers who drowned crossing the Rip at Port Phillip Heads during a training exercise 58 years ago.

President of the Australian Commando Association - Victoria, Colonel Doug Knight, said post-WW2 commandos and Amphibious Platoon veterans, with families and friends, attended the service to honour their lost mates.

"On the evening of February 17, 1960, an 'attack' flotilla of kayaks, three-man and 10-man inflatable Zodiacs and various safety craft set off at 6pm from the Port Lonsdale Bight beach. Their plan was to cross the bay and launch a tactical raid on the Officer Cadet School at Portsea", he said.

"The men of 2 Commando Company had been based at Point Lonsdale for 16 days of training and military exercises and were fit highly trained young men."

A couple of hours into the exercise a fierce eight-knot ebb tide caught the raiding party and swept it out to sea through the Rip. The turning tide was met head-on by the prevailing south-westerly wind, and huge waves, later estimated at about 10 metres in height, pushed the craft backwards and capsized many of them.

Colonel Knight said many of the two-man crews were picked up by larger safety craft, leaving their abandoned kayaks to drift away, only to have their rescue vessels also overturned or swamped by the huge seas.

"As the night wore on men were rescued by passing ships and a small flotilla of local vessels. A few paddlers made the Portsea shore in their kayaks, but many were picked up from the water or from their capsized boats many kilometres out to sea."

"Eight of the commandos were rescued in Bass Strait by the Italian liner Toscana, but Private Roger Wood was dashed from the Toscana's rope ladder by a giant wave after he had helped his mates to safety. His body was never found. Those rescued by the Toscana were taken on to Adelaide", Knight said.

Warrant Officer George 'Taffy' Drakopoulos of 2 Commando Company, who had only been promoted 11 days before, and the driver of an amphibious DUKW, Pte Eddie Meyer, from 41 Amphibious Platoon, drowned when their vessel sank. WO2 Drakopoulos's widow Rita Drakopoulos, now aged 91, along with her extended family, attended the memorial service.

2 Commando Company officer Captain Keith Wolahan gave an inspiring speech to those present, including families and friends, former colleagues of Eddie Meyer and many interested onlookers. He said while Anzac Day focused on our war dead, as it should, the tragedy of peacetime deaths was no less meaningful.

"I think we owe an even greater duty to remember our peacetime fallen," he said. "These tragedies



Rita Drakopoulos and her family are regular attendees at the service. (Photo Anne Mavric)

probably invite families of the fallen to ask 'why?' "

"While we can never truly answer that question, remembering events like this is our chance to tell them that they also died serving their country."

Then 2 Commando Company adjutant Captain Jack Fletcher was later awarded the George Medal for his bravery and leadership, shepherding a group of men clinging around a lifebuoy for desperate hours, after his DUKW sank. The men, including Drakopoulos and Meyer, were located by the pilot vessel Akuna and taken on board.

This year one of the men rescued by the Akuna noticed the Rip to River Classic conducted by the Ocean Grove SLSC had been postponed to February 18 due to January's extreme heat. As he was attending the Rip service, he decided to enter. The event was the morning after the Rip service, the day 58 years earlier that he and his fellow soldiers had combed the same beachfront, from the Point Lonsdale lighthouse towards Ocean Grove, searching for Roger Wood. The veteran ran the Rip to River in memory of his lost colleagues and of those who had been injured, both physically and mentally. (When he collected his race bib, he noticed his race number exactly matched his age, to the year and month! Perhaps a race official with a sense of humour had noticed the birth date on his entry form.)

The tragic exercise remains one of the Army's worst peacetime maritime disasters, yet one of the least known. In 2000, the Australian Commando Association - Victoria established a memorial to the three soldiers on Shortlands Bluff overlooking the Rip, where the annual service is conducted.

The Association expressed its appreciation to the Queenscliff Bowling Club for providing lunch for around 90 people after the service.

Submitted by Barry Higgins



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## COMMANDOS RETURN 15 to 25 OCTOBER 2017

*By Nick Hill, President ACA Qld*

### BACKGROUND

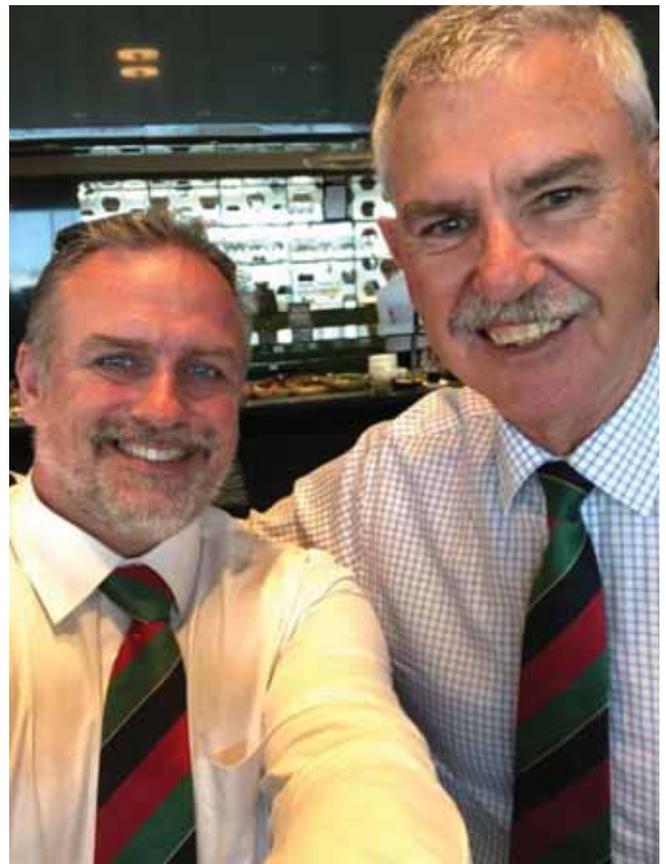
In September 2016 I attended a 10-day mind, body and soul immersion program put together by the Veterans Care Australia Inc. (VCA) called Timor Awakening (TA) which was put together by a father and son team of Gary & Michael Stone. Gary is an ex RAINF LTCOL and now a padre and Michael is an Ex RAINF MAJ and the Co-ord for the above activity. RSL Qld & RSL Care now Bolton Clarke, provides majority of the funding for the TA program which is approx. \$80,000 for 20 people to attend with 4-6 VCA staff who attend as program managers providers and co-ord.

During my time on TA-2 (Second TA in 2016), Michael Stone and I spoke of the concept of making a Commando Specific TA in 2017 now known as Commandos Return 2017 (CR17), to follow the footsteps of the 2nd/2nd and 2nd/4th Commando Company's (2/2 & 2/4) who fought a prolonged guerilla campaign (counter insurgency in today's terms) against the Japanese Imperial Army from 20 February 1942 to the evacuation of the 2/4 in March 1943 and where 4 Cdo served in 2001 and 2006-09. The CR17 would follow the previous TA2 program with only slight modifications in locations by adding the town of Bazartete near Liquia where B PI 2/2 Cdo was located during the Japanese Imperial Army's invasion on night of 19th/20th February 1942.

### CONOPS & ATTENDEES

During the ACA National Council (ACA NC) call conference in February this year the CONOPS of CR17 was discussed. The ACA NC would in principle agree to the program at this time however would be officially voted on at the National AGM (AGM) in March.

During the ACA AGM it was agreed that we would conduct the immersion program as the No1 priority in our mental health program and strategy. The ACA NC agreed that the program be no more than 20 pers. attending and would consist of full members (regardless if deployed or not) and spouses or carers for those members attending and we (ACA) would fund half of the money being \$40,000 for no more than 20



*Nick Hill and Doug Baird*

attendees including partners and carers.

After some members could no longer attend the program and one members from ACAVIC joining late in build up, the break up of the attendees was finally at three from ACAVIC, three from ACA NSW, five from ACA QLD (which included a carer), four from ACA WA (which included a mother of one of the fallen from 2 Cdo Regt) and one from 1st Cdo Regt.

### SPONSORSHIP & FUNDING

PLATATAC was approached to provide some merchandise for the attendees, which they were very happy to support. In all they provided 50x custom polo



shirts, 10x plaques and 200x lapel pins. NSW also provided 100 lapel pins. All merchandise items arrived three days prior to departure.

The Commando Welfare Trust (CWT) was approached to help support financially to the program. In quick return the CWT donated \$10,000 to help five members attend which was extremely appreciated by us. As a result all four WA members and one QLD member were able to attend the program.

Each State Association was tasked to fund each of their members attending and 1 Cdo Regt funded their member. In all the \$36,000 was paid to VCA Inc. for the 16 Assoc. members attending, which included two self-funded.

## THE PROGRAM IN BRIEF

All attendees arrived in Darwin on or before 15 Oct 17. Mick & Gary Stone briefed the group for our requirements for the first day once arrived in Dili. Due to late departure from Darwin the group arrived at Dili International Airport @ approx. 1700hrs local and were met by the some of the senior Timorese Veterans and the Assistant to the Prime Minister on Veteran Issues. Once we were formally welcomed we were informed that we had a meeting with the new TL PM, Mr Mari Alkatiri, the next morning. Transportation was organised from the airport to the Hotel Dili Plaza. Once checked in a briefing was given and dinner was held in the outdoor dining area.

Day 2 in Dili is a pretty heavy day with meeting the PM, visiting the Resistance and Chega (Portuguese for 'that's enough') museums, Santa Cruz Cemetery (location of the 1991 massacre of Timorese students by Indonesian troops). Lunch at the East Timorese Development Agency (ETDA) which was set up two 2/2 members to educate and train the Timorese orphans from WW2 and now in 2014 had over 1800 students registered for education in computers, financial management, management, office skills & admin, tourism & hospitality and the English language. The majority of the program ran IOW the General Info Brief first discussed in March with a couple of exceptions being not being able to stop at Gleno, Railco and 3 Spurs due to time constraints from roadwork's and vehicle breakdowns when heading to Liquicia from Samé.

Accommodation was provided at the Hotel Dili Plaza in Dili 15-17, Hotel Uma Liurai in Samé 17-19, Caimeo Beach Hotel in Liquicia 19-21, the Balibo Fort Hotel in Balibo 21-23 and again the Hotel Dili Plaza 23-25 Oct. All the accommodation was exceptional and well suited for the program. In Dili and Same, attendees shared a double room or had a single room. In Liquicia there were four bungalows and three luxury tents with two or three occupants in each, and in Balibo the rooms were either doubles or triple occupancy.

Traditional Timorese welcoming ceremonies which included presentation of Timorese ties from Timorese veterans to the CR attendees, followed by several

speeches by the area administration and veteran communities and a luncheon prepared by the people of the area. These ceremonies were conducted in Betano (location of the wreck of HMAS Voyager), Bazartete (location of B PI 2/2 in Feb '42 and Bobonaro, location of CHQ 2/2 in '42 & B Cdo Coy 4 Cdo in 2001.

Transportation was provided by Hotel Dili Plaza whilst in Dili. A 4WD tourism group provided 4WDs and drivers for the time in districts. Most of the drivers spoke English considerably well and were a great asset to the group.

Meals were provided through out the trip in either established Hotels or whilst on the road. Local food was sought in several locations including Aileu and Balibo. Some attendees did have belly bugs, which is to be expected when travelling through Asia. No one was ill for the entire trip.

## SIGNIFICANT LOCATIONS

The Dare Memorial was visited on the way to Samé. The Memorial is dedicated to those KIA of the 2/2 and 2/4. The memorial is in a poor state of repair and is not well known of its location. The Defence Cooperation Program - Timor Leste (DPC-TL) conducts a Remembrance Day Service at the site each year.

Maubisse is the location of the Attack By Fire (ABF) by 7 Sect C PI, 2/2 in October '42 against a Japanese unit camped at the Chinese markets. The markets are located directly below and west of the Maubisse Posada, which was the location of the Portuguese district commander during the WW2.

Betano is the site of the disastrous attempted to Relieve In Place (RIP) 2/2 with 2/4 in August '42 in which HMAS Voyager became grounded on the beach just West of the town and was unable to be refloated. All that remains of the ship is the engine block and parts of the hull. Betano was used to resupply the Cdo Coys and eventual evacuation of both Coys in '42 and '43.

Samé Fort/Posada was the location where members of D Cdo Coy, 4 Cdo conducted the assault on the Petitioner Rebels commanded by Alfredo Reinado on 4 MAR 2007 where several rebels were killed.

Railaco and 3 Spurs were the locations of CHQ and C PI, 2/2 in Feb '42 when the Japanese landed.

Bazartete was used by B PI, 2/2 to cover the Western approaches to Dili from Kupang and the Border areas and is able to see into Dili and the port. B PI conducted a fighting withdrawal from the area with the loss of two men KIA. One of the Commandos conducted an extraordinary feat of mateship, courage and endurance to save the life of another Commando who had his jaw shot off in the contact by carrying him over his shoulder all the way to Hatu-Lia where he was treated by the Coy Doctor, a distance of some 20kms over the mountainous terrain.

Balibo Fort was the location of BHQ and support elements for 4 Cdo in 2001 during its UNTAET



deployment. Balibo is infamous for the location of the murder of the five Australian Journalists in 1975 by the Indonesians known as the Balibo 5. Balibo Fort is now a quite impressive Hotel.

Bobonaro was the location of the 2/2 Coy HQ later in 1942. Bobonaro was also the Forward Operating Base (FOB) of Bravo Cdo Coy, 4 Cdo in 2001 during its deployment to East Timor for six months. The FOB is now a high school.

## CONCLUSION

Commandos Return 2017 was an exceptionally successful immersion program being designed to help support our Commando Association members both physically and mentally. The VCA Inc. support staff was instrumental in the ability for the participants to receive the right amount of information for them to potentially begin self healing of the mind, body and soul without being intrusive and or making the participants feel uncomfortable.

The Common background of the participants made the interaction between each other and the VCA Inc.

staff one of the easiest for them to conduct. No one was trying to out do another member as over 50% of the CR participants have had similar or shared the same experiences. Even those who have not been exposed to the same situations whether they had deployed or not had found the discussions and the program to be extremely beneficial to them as well.

Overall the Commandos Return Immersion program in the participants and my personal opinions was a huge success and well worth the cost, time and effort to making it what it is. This program should remain and become an annual mental and physical wellbeing program on the ACA Calendar for our members and for the wider Commando community.

Respectfully,

**Nick Hill**  
President

Australian Commando Association Queensland  
Commando For Life  
W: [www.acaq.org.au](http://www.acaq.org.au)



## Vikings actor Travis Fimmel starring in Long Tan movie to be filmed in Queensland

A movie about the Vietnam War Battle of Long Tan will be made in southern Queensland, featuring Australian actor and Vikings star Travis Fimmel.

Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk made the announcement in Los Angeles at the end of her trade mission to the US.

Ms Palaszczuk said the movie, provisionally titled *Danger Close*, would be filmed from the end of April in Nerang and Kingaroy.

"So that's great news for regional Queensland, but also sends a really strong message that you don't have to be in the Gold Coast or Brisbane to film a great movie," she said.

"It's probably a medium-range film. This is one of many that will be filmed in Queensland over the next few years.

"I think many people will know Travis Fimmel from his work in *Vikings*, and can I tell you he's not scary in real life."

Ms Palaszczuk said the movie's producer Martin Walsh told her he would like to employ 100-200 Australian veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns as extras for the project.

"So we're going to put a call out to those veterans to see if they would be interested in participating," she said.



Australian actor Travis Fimmel with Anastacia Palaszczuk in Hollywood.

"I was moved to hear that Martin, himself a former Australian Special Forces commando, is planning a major Anzac Day event during the shoot — bringing Long Tan veterans, cast, crew and locals together for a special memorial service," Ms Palaszczuk said.

The Premier said production would employ an estimated 120 full-time Queensland crew members.

*Editor. It will be interesting to see if he is playing the part of LTCOL Harry Smith SG MC (Retd).*



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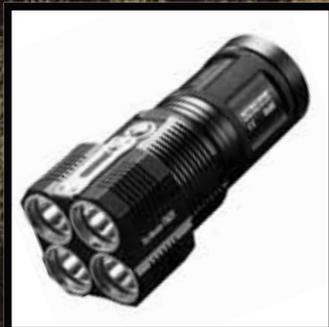
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AUSTRALIAN COMMANDO ASSOCIATION - INC.

Incorporated A.C.T A04607, ABN 93 194 911 542

"COMMANDO FOR LIFE"



**Membership is open to all serving and former members of Special Forces.  
The Committee will also consider applications for affiliate membership from other persons who identify with aims and objectives of the Association.**

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

SURNAME		RANK & GIVEN NAMES	
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Served With From ..... To .....	Signature	Position/contact details e.g RXO
Date	Signature of Applicant	Signature of verifying officer

*It is up to the individual to provide proof of their service and membership may be refused if the Committee are unable to verify this service vide Central Army Records Office (CARO) or other Government authorities.*

By Signing this Application you agree to be bound by the Constitution of the Australian Commando Association Inc. of the State Branch that you have nominated to join. (See Reverse side).

Note: The State Associations of the Australian Commando Association Incorporated are autonomous entities and comply with respective State Incorporations Act and Regulations. The President and Secretary of the State Branches are members of the National Committee of the Australian Commando Association Inc.



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State Incorporated Associations**

You are invited to join the Australian Commando Association Inc. family;  
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The State Associations details are as follows: Please tick the box of your choice

**Australian Commando Association New South Wales Inc. (INC1400078)**

The Secretary  
PO Box 1313  
Sutherland NSW 1499  
Telephone (02) 9644 8794  
0425 279 111  
email: [starlightcdo@gmail.com](mailto:starlightcdo@gmail.com)

Financial Year 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December  
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The Annual Fee is subject to review by the Committee

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Police Bank BSB 815 000 Account No. 41117 *Please state your name with Deposit.*

**Australian Commando Association Victoria Inc. (A00114983Z)**

The Secretary  
1/65 Ashburn Grove  
Ashburton, Vic 3147  
Telephone (03) 9886 9825 Mobile 0414 311 093  
email: [secretary@austcdoassocvic.com](mailto:secretary@austcdoassocvic.com)

Financial Year 1st January to 31st December  
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Banking:  
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**Australian Commando Association Queensland Inc. (IA40186)**

The Secretary PO Box 185  
Sherwood QLD 4075  
Mobile 0419 136 772  
email [info@austcdoassocqld.com](mailto:info@austcdoassocqld.com)

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The Secretary PO Box 297  
Bassendean WA 6934  
Mobile 0400 522 059  
Email: [shearerp56@gmail.com](mailto:shearerp56@gmail.com)

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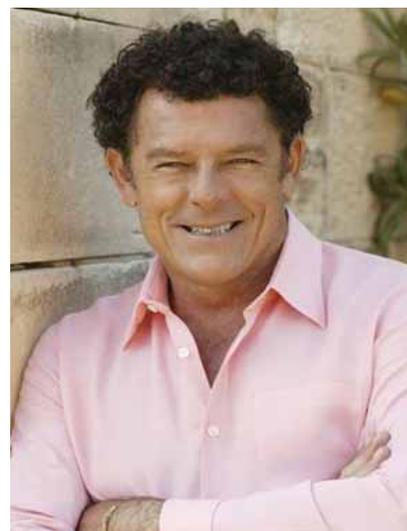
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- **Mike Whitney**,  
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“ The results have been very positive! ”

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