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AUSTRALIAN COMMANDO ASSN INC.

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News

Edition 15 ~ 2019

2019 ANZAC DAY EDITION





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WEBSITE/MEDIA MANAGER: Mr John Roxburgh
WEBSITE: www.commando.org.au
FACEBOOK: Australian Commando Association
EDITORS: Mr Nick Hill
 Mrs Marilou Carceller

The Australian Commando Association's membership consists of Servicemen & women who have served with WW2 Independent Companies, Commando Squadrons & Regiments, "M" and "Z" Special units, 1st & 2nd Commando Company's, 1st Commando Regiment, 4 RAR Commando & the 2nd Commando Regiment. The Association also consists of Associate Members who have served in units who directly supported Commando units in time of war and peace and Social members who's direct family member was either Killed In Action, Died In Service or Killed in Training or a member of the ACA who has passed.

DISCLAIMER: Opinions expressed within this publication are those of the authors, and are not necessarily those of the Editor, Publisher, Committee Members or Members of our Association. We welcome any input as long as it is not offensive or abusive but if any member has a problem with a printed article we would like to be informed in order that the author may be contacted. We do encourage your opinion.

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PO BOX 682, SURFERS PARADISE QLD 4217
PHONE: 0432 042 060

EMAIL: russell@commandonews.com.au

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 Phone: 0438 881 854

Email: mike@rabsprint.com.au



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Deadline for next edition (Issue 16):

SUNDAY, 7TH JULY 2019

All news on members and interesting articles accepted.
 (Subject to editors' approval.)

Nick Hill



FRONT COVER... LCPL J. Marks KIA 27 Apr 2008
 PTE B. Chuck KIA 21 Jun 2010
 CPL C. Baird VC. MG. KIA 22 Jun 2013
 LCPL T. Chidgey DOW 01 Jul 2014
 SGT B. Wood MG. DSM. KIA 23 May 2011
 LCPL M. McDonald KIA 30 Aug 2012
 PTE N. Gallagher KIA 30 Aug 2012
 LT M. Fussell KIA 27 Nov 2008
 PTE S. Palmer KIA 21 Jun 2010
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 SGT T. Langley KIA 04 Jul 2011
 PTE G. Sher KIA 04 Jan 2009
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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to Edition #15 April - July 2019. All of us at Commando News trust you had a wonderful Xmas and New Year break and hopefully 2019 has been very generous and prosperous for you all thus far.

The year has kept us busy thus far and we can't believe it's April already.

There are some great articles in this edition as there always is and it is great to see people are very enthused about getting on board and providing input into our magazine.

Some people have contacted me about the amount of advertisements that are in the magazine, well to be honest this what pays for our magazine. If we didn't have these paid adverts in Commando News the ACA would be paying for it so let's not look a gift horse in the mouth.

Keep the articles coming and remember you can send the articles to me at any time to the email address below.

Commando For Life

Nick Hill

Editor

Commando News Magazine

E: editor_commandonews@commando.org.au



Australian Commando Association Inc



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Australian Commando Association Inc.

PRESIDENT – MAJGEN Greg Melik AO. RFD. SC.
aca_president@commando.org.au

VICE PRESIDENT – MAJ Steve Pilmore OAM. RFD. (Retd)
aca_vpresident@commando.org.au

SECRETARY – MAJ John Thurgar, SC. OAM. MBE. RFD. (Retd)
aca_secretary@commando.org.au

TREASURER – MAJ Bruce O'Conner, OAM. RFD. (Retd)
aca_treasurer@commando.org.au

PUBLIC OFFICER – MAJ Brian Liddy, OAM. (Retd)
aca_publicofficer@commando.org.au

Web Address – www.commando.org.au

Contact - aca_secretary@commando.org.au

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is my first communication to you as the National President of the Australian Commando Association.

I was honoured to be approached to fill the chair that had been unfortunately vacated due to the untimely death of MAJGEN Mike Clifford at the end of 2017. I knew Mike well and I will work to both honour his memory and progress the aims of our association.

Having just concluded a 50 plus year career in the ADF I have some insights into what needs to be done and, hopefully how to do it.

If the ACA is to truly be an effective national welfare body representing all Commandos and supporting elements within Special Operations Command, there needs to be some evolutionary changes.

We need to ensure we welcome the current Commando veterans into the fold and indeed create an environment that makes them want to join our ranks. You will be well aware that there are fewer tasks more important than the support of many who have returned suffering from a range of the effects of many tours to various overseas theatres.

At the same time none of us are getting any younger, and the most successful ex-service organisations are the ones that keep refreshing themselves as far as their membership goes.

There will always be room for our ACA elder statesmen but it may be time we allowed them to put their feet up and look on in a strategic manner at what they have created. We can see where this renewal is already taking place as it must, but there is more to do.

Finally, just a few words on the role of the National Committee and its relationship with the State Associations. The structure of the National Committee is the best indicator of the way the relationship works. There are only four National Committee Members who do not directly represent one of the State Associations – President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. There are currently two further National Executive members from each of the East Coast states and a further one from each of Tasmania and West Australia. The ACA Public Officer is also on the Executive.

So you can see that the National Committee is run by the States, for the States with the National Committee emphasis being one of “up and out”, and with the States looking after the entire gamut of membership, welfare and social aspects of the day to day running of the events that most members see as the activities of the ACA.

By necessity, the National Executive will deal with all and any initiatives that involve the unit HQs, SOCOMD and the wider ADF, as well as DVA and other Government Departments. This ensures that a common theme forms the basis of all ACA communications to and from any external organisations hence it is critical that approaches are made at the national level.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as I can at the various functions and events that appear on the busy schedules of all the elements of the Australian Commando Association.

Sincerely,

MAJGEN Greg Melik AO. RFD. SC
President
Australian Commando Association





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SIGNIFICANT COMMANDO DATES

APRIL to JULY

APRIL

1942

Detachment 1st Independent Company under the command of Captain Roy Howard (later the first Qld Cdo Assoc President), was moved to Kudjeru, in New Guinea, to guard against possible Japanese movement south of Wau along the Bulldog Track. In the process they became the first Australian Army unit to cross the Owen Stanley Range.

17th of April 1942

2/5 Cdo Coy arrives in Port Moresby, New Guinea during an air raid.

19th/20th April 1942

Members of the 2/2 Cdo Coy were able to make contact with Darwin from the mountains of Timor for the first time since beginning the guerrilla campaign, using a wireless transmitter nicknamed *Winnie the War Winner*.

April 1943

2/4 Cdo Coy reforms as the 2/4 Cdo Sqn at the Jungle Warfare School at Canungra, Qld after returning from Portuguese Timor.

Special Operations Australia (SOA) was formed. To avoid confusion in the names between SOA & Special Operations Europe (SOE), from May the cover name Special Reconnaissance Department (SRD) was used instead.

25th of April 2001

4 RAR Cdo (4 Cdo) officially commences a six month operational deployment to East Timor as part of the United Nations Transitional Administration East Timor (UNTAET). The Bn deploys to SECTOR WEST as the Australian Battalion (AUSBAT) and monitors the Northern region against the West Timor border. This is the first time Australian Commandos have deployed to Timor as a complete unit since the 2/2 & 2/4 Cdo Coys in 1942.

MAY

1941

No1 Independent Company was raised and trained at Wilsons Promontory Victoria, the home and birthplace of Australian Commando.

May 1942

2/6 & 2/7 Cdo Coy's formed at Wilsons Promontory, Victoria.

May 1943

53 men of 2/3 Cdo Sqn conducts an attack on Ambush Knoll in New Guinea against the Japanese Imperial Army (JIA) and takes the position. The JIA attempts several counter attacks over several days, but are repelled each time.

2/5 Cdo Coy reforms as the 2/5 Cdo Sqn of the 2/7 Cdo Regt at the Jungle Warfare School at Canungra, Qld after returning from New Guinea.

2/7 Cdo Coy conducts combat operations in Bena Bena, New Guinea as part of Bena Force.

2/4 Cdo Sqn conducts combat operations against the Japanese on Tarakan Island off Borneo.

2/9 Cdo Sqn lands at Dove Bay, Wewak and established the beachhead.

3rd of May 1945

2/4 Cdo Sqn squadron is involved in one of the last campaigns of WW2 when it landed on Tarakan Island in May 1945 and took part in the Borneo campaign.

13th - 19th of May 1945

2/10 Cdo Sqn is surrounded by Japanese troops in the Wewak area and fights off numerous attacks.



Significant Commando Dates...

(Continued from previous page)

06th of May 1969

WO2 Ray Simpson DCM is awarded the Victoria Cross for Valour in South Vietnam. Ray was attached to AATTV from 1 Commando Company.

JUNE

28th /29th June 1942

Salamaua Raid conducted by 2nd/5th Commando Company

June 1943

Z Special Unit was raised

05 June 1945

2nd/10th Commando Squadron in action against Japanese bunker system South of the main Australian position in Mandi during the Aitape - Wewak Campaign

25th of June 1955

1st Commando Company (Sydney) Birthday

19th of June 2009

2nd Commando Regiment Birthday

10th – 14th June 2010

Battle Of Eastern Shah Wali Kot, Afghanistan Alpha Cdo Coy Group, 2nd Commando Regiment

22nd of June 2013

CPL Cameron Stuart Baird, MG. is Killed In Action and subsequently he is Posthumously Awarded the Victoria Cross (VC) for Valour whilst serving as a Commando Section Commander with Bravo Commando Company, 2nd Commando Regiment in Afghanistan.

JULY

1st of July 1942

133 men of 1st Independent Commando Company drowned when the MV Montevideo Maru sank after being torpedoed by USS Sturgeon off the coast of the Philippines.

July 1942

2nd/8th Commando Company was raised in Wilsons Promontory, Victoria

22nd of July 1943

2nd/8th Commando Squadron sailed for Lea New Guinea via Milne Bay on board the SS Orimston

1st of July 1945

2nd/3rd & 2nd/5th Commando Squadrons landed on Green Beach in Balikpapan

7th of July 1945

10 remaining Z Special Unit members of Operation Rimau Executed in Singapore

July – August 1945

2nd/6th Commando Regiment in action defending Bandi Plantation during the Aitape - Wewak Campaign

7th of July 1955

2nd Commando Company (Melbourne) Birthday

8th of July 2002

Tactical Assault Group – East (TAG-E) of 4th Cdo Bn becomes operational and is now responsible for Domestic Counter Terrorism Incidents on the East Coast of Australia.





Australian Commando Association New South Wales Inc.

PRESIDENT – Mr Wayne Havenaar
acansw_president@commando.org.au

SECRETARY – Mr Bruce Poulter
paulstan@optusnet.com.au

TREASURER – Mr Ivan Kelly
ikelly@bigpond.net.au

Web Address – www.commando.org.au **Contact** - paulstan@optusnet.com.au

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello and NSW members wherever you may be. Following the AGM and having the support of the membership at the AGM and my great friend Tony Marsden, I have become your

next President. This my first address in the magazine following the path led by Immediate Past President Barry Grant who must be recognised as going above and beyond for many years in his support of the NSW

association as President and this magazine as editor. My job here is to fill the boots of this extraordinary man and serve the membership into the future.

On the great man Barry Grant himself, he is still part of the committee and providing guidance and mentoring to your new President and Vice President. He has an enormous and priceless knowledge of the membership, the association workings, and Commando history and has contacts and networks that have kept the association and its membership represented in many key areas and activities over the years.

Barry stays on in the committee not only as a mentor but as the membership and protocol officer and will be busy for years to come but has been happy to step down and take a rest from the President position. Please go out of your way to personally express your personal thanks to him in any and every way possible, I am sure the NSW Association would have collapsed without his love for the membership, the brotherhood and commando history.

Yes, you have a Vice President, not having someone in the position prior to the AGM we are blessed with this position being filled, please welcome Tony Marsden, also supported by the members at the AGM. A long-time good friend of mine who gained his green beret in the same push

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and who has a great heart and love of Commandos and has energy to burn on association matters. He has proven himself as a worthy Vice in this short time since the AGM and we should forward to him being around in the association committee for many years and seeing great things from him.

Committee members, other than Barry stepping down and taking on a new role, Tony becoming Vice President, and my appointment as president your committee is still the same. Two I would like to mention today are Bruce Poulter as Secretary and, Ivan who as Treasurer who has been invaluable in committee organisational and constitutional matters. These guys have been members of your committee for many years and lately have been helping Tony and I settle in our new posts. These two gentlemen have been wonderful support to your president both past and present for a long time and are looking to have someone take over their roles in the near future so if you have some skills and or keen to be part of the leading Commando Association please let us know who you are.

On becoming President, I have met and talked with many people. Some I already knew, some new to me, some members, some not members and it has been enlightening and it has also been most wonderful and humbling receiving the encouragement from you all.

I have listened to many stories from you and heard the wishes for the association and hopefully we can see some of these through. Please don't hesitate and call or message me anytime for I am available for a cup of tea or a beer to chat about a problem or project you think we should be involved in.

I believe my role is to support and serve the membership, the membership is the association and the association has members, however the association is for all members and non-members with commando and special operations links no matter who they are. From what I have seen, heard and felt over the past months it is where we as an association should be showing our efforts. It must be understood we are an individual organisation by law, a legal entity on our own, even though we share a common name to other association and prescribe to a "National" association as a member we also have the ability to choose our own path and direction as group under our own banner and I look forward to hearing from our members where they want the association to direct its energy in the future.

Unfortunately, we have seen a few former Commandos pass away over the last few months and my thoughts and prayers

go out the family and friends of our fallen brothers. We are happy we could provide support to the families and Barry Grant, once again, was leading services, and with the aid of others was working with family and friends in providing support and representing Commando brotherhood and on behalf of the association membership as a whole. I was able to attend a few funerals and the support from former and current Cdo and SAS members was a wonderful sight and incredibly stirring.

Less We forget.

There is much to say and more to follow, however watch out for information on the following items in the mail, email, Facebook, or next magazine:

- ANZAC Day
- Commando Association NSW - Web Site
- Commando Association NSW - On line shop
- Story on Rite of Passage support by your association
- Information on our own association building
- Commando Museum Holsworthy committee
- Supporting Army Cadets
- Information about National Association activities
- Timor Awakening
- Social Events

Wayne Havenaar

President

Aust. Cdo Assoc. NSW



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Australian Commando Association Queensland Inc.

PRESIDENT – Mr Nick Hill

SECRETARY – Mr Graham Gough

TREASURER – Mr Rafael Torijos

acaql_d_president@commando.org.au

acaql_d_secretary@commando.org.au

acaql_d_treasurer@commando.org.au

Web Address – www.commando.org.au **Postal Address** – PO Box 185 Sherwood, QLD 4075

Contact - acaql_d_secretary@commando.org.au

PRESIDENT'S WORD

This year has started off with a bang already for both the ACA & ACA Qld. I attended the National AGM in Canberra on Saturday 9 February at the National RSL HQ in Fyshwick. Barry Grant and Bruce O'Conner both ACA NSW were made Life Members of the ACA. Congratulations to them for an outstanding effort to both NSW and the National Branch. I also had the honour of representing us at MAJGEN Malik's farewell from the army after serving 52 years. It was well attended by many dignitaries as well as the current and former CDFs, RSM-A and numerous Generals and big wigs.

We were unfortunately informed late last year of the passing of one of our WW2 members, Reg Ashford of 2/8 Cdo Sqn who passed away on 28 September 2018. We have also lost eight Commandos from our post WW2 Cdo Units, two - KIA, four - KIT & two - DIS whilst serving in those units. Pause a moment to remember the sacrifices they've made for the service of our great nation and to the service of our Association.

Sunday 24 February was our 2019 AGM & our first Cdo Family BBQ for 2019, held at the QMM in



Members @ the 2019 AGM

Southbank Brisbane and it was a great day and well attended by our members and their families. Your executive Committee has one new member and that is Rafael Torijos (ex 4 Cdo) who has volunteered to be your Treasurer as Wayne Douglas has stood down. I'd



Members & guests @ the 2019 AGM BBQ



like to thank all our outgoing ExCom members for the work you have done in the past year and I'd like to Congratulate all of the new Committee members on putting your hand up to keep the Assoc going forward. It's great to see so many of our younger Cdo members joining the ExCom. On another note I had the honour of presenting John Butler & Tony Mills their Life Memberships to the ACAQ for their long and dedicated service to our Association.



John Butler presented his Life Membership



Tony Mills presented his Life Membership

The first big event for us this year is the ANZAC Day March on Thursday 25th April in Brisbane City. The RV point will be the corner of George & Mary Streets, Brisbane City @ 1015 and step off is set for 1035ish. This year we will have six students from Muller Collage carrying our banner for us. Directly after the March we will be heading down to the Jade Buddha in Eagle Street to have lunch and drinks with the ASASAO. Final cost for the lunch will be known closer to the day however \$20pp is expected with the Assoc subsidising the remainder. Free parking for members is available at the QMM but first in first served as there is limited space on the day.

We are hoping for a great turn out this year as more and more younger members are coming on board and we are aiming for ANZAC Day to be the one of the two main days of the year (OP Rimau/Cdo Day being the other) where all the Association members can get together to celebrate our mates who have passed in times of war and peace and to get together and tell some stories and have some laughs.

Commando For Life

Nick Hill
President
ACA Qld

-----COMMANDO FOR LIFE-----

A graphic advertisement for the Heal For Life Foundation. It features a stylized tree logo with colorful leaves. The text reads: "HEAL FOR LIFE FOUNDATION", "Residential Healing Programs for survivors of childhood trauma", "Located in the Hunter Valley", "www.healforlife.com.au", and "Call us on (02)4998 6003". The background shows a scenic view of a building in a valley.



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A photograph of a muscular man wearing red NAKD shorts, holding a resistance band.




Australian Commando Association Victoria Inc.

PRESIDENT – COL Doug Knight (Retd)
dougknight88@gmail.com

SECRETARY – Mr Glenn MacDonald
acavic_secretary@commando.org.au

TREASURER – Mr Chris James
ceejay7@bigpond.com

Web Address – www.commando.org.au **Contact** - acansw_secretary@commando.org.au

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

AUSTRALIAN COMMANDOS RETURN TO THEIR BIRTHPLACE TO ASSIST WITH MAINTAINING THE COMMANDO HERITAGE

In late 2018 ACAVIC became engaged as part of a community reference group with the development of the Open Space Plan for Tidal River which incorporates two components being a rest and recreation area adjacent to the Commando Memorial, which ACAV looks after and the establishment of a walking track from the vicinity of the Commando Memorial to the top of Mount Oberon via Telegraph saddle.

To date there have been several meetings of this community reference group along with Parks Victoria (PV) and People in Parks (PiP) considering a

range of options for the acquisition of funds to support this project. It is anticipated that a significant portion of the funds will be sourced from state and federal agencies and supplemented this by limited appeal to the public and also known philanthropists and relevant ex-service organisations.

Engagement in this project is just one of several components of the three-year ACAVIC Tidal River Engagement Plan, which was recently endorsed by the Committee. In summary, the contents of the plan as follows:

(Continued next page)

Wilsons Promontory National Park Mt Oberon Summit - Tidal River alignment



- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|-------------|------------------|--------|----------|---------------------|---------|-------------------------|------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|------------------------|
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Disclaimer: Parks Victoria does not guarantee that this data is without error and therefore declines all liability which may arise from proceeding on this information. Cartography by Parks Victoria March 2018.



Proposed new Telegraph Saddle Walking Track



1. **Rest Stops on Telegraph Saddle Walk** - with the development of the Telegraph Saddle Walk. There is a requirement for rest stops and ACAV will actively support the creation of these in memory of fallen commandos who came from Victoria. The proposal is to erect a bench seat in the clear area with a Memorial brass plate affixed to a large rock which details the fallen commando and his service. Possible names this time are Corporal Cameron Baird, VC, MG and Private Greg Sher with a World War II following commander yet to be identified.
2. **Audios Visual Education Project** - The development of an audio-visual presentation, supported by teaching aids and materials, which is targeted at primary and secondary school groups that visit Wilsons Promontory and focuses on the military use of the Wilsons Promontory area since the establishment of the National Park. The emphasis will be on the time when Wilson's Promontory was used for the initial training of Australian New Zealand Independent Companies, later renamed Commandos during World War II. This will also entail an updating of the small booklet produced by ACAVIC which is currently made available through the Education Centre at Tidal River to the teachers are visiting school groups. This

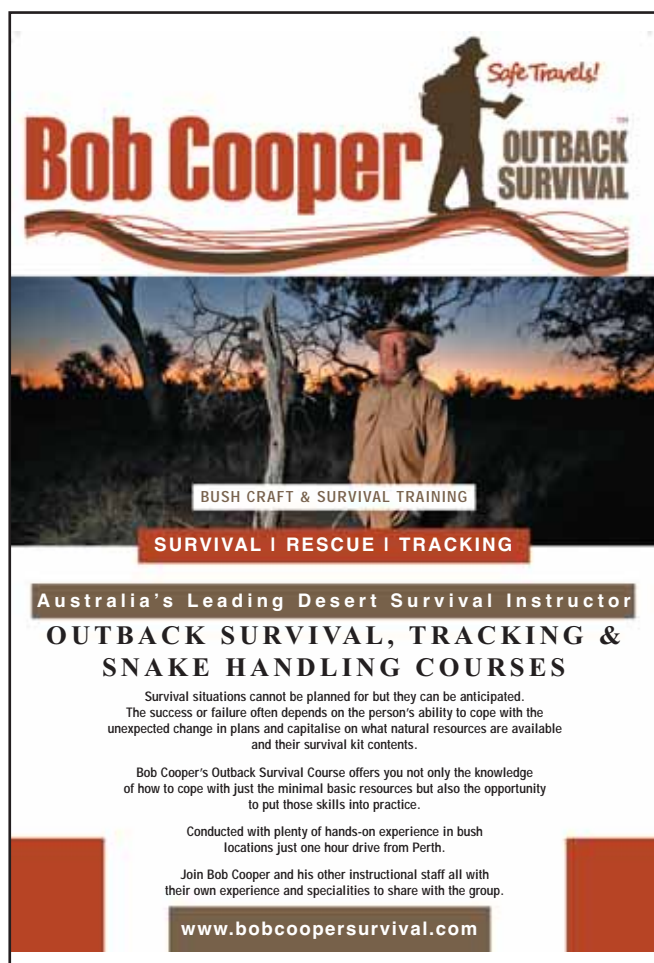
project will also entail production of a short audio-visual sequence addressing the military history of Tidal River, complete with several international language subtitles, which would be used by Parks Victoria in the information centre.

3. **Digitisation of Historical Materials** - The digitisation of a large collection of audio-visual material (approximately 28 hours of oral history interviews) currently held by the ACAVIC as well as a complete collection of the M& Z Commando Association periodic newsletter 'Double Diamonds' as in many cases this is the sole publication where former Commandos told their individual stories and provided their photos following the cessation of the thirty-year security restrictions.
4. **Junior Commando Program** - The establishment of a Junior Commando Program which is essentially an orienteering activity around the Tidal River National Park wherein participating children would receive their orienteering card from the Parks Office and over the duration of their stay at Tidal River they would need to visit all of the locations where commando training had been undertaken, and collect the three letter trigram and include this on their orienteering card, which they would then return to ACAV who would then forward their Certificate of Achievement and a Junior Commando Badge (double diamonds with a dagger through the centre similar to that on the top of the Commando Memorial). It is intended that once the walking track to Telegraph Saddle has been completed that this also would be included in the Junior Commando activity.

To support these activities over the forthcoming years ACA VIC will be engaging in some fundraising activities and seeking some financial support and we look forward to working with members of the Commando community to see these projects realise and the memory of our forefathers at tidal River suitably commemorated

Commando For Life

Doug Knight
President
Aust. Cdo Assoc. Vic.



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The annual Commando pilgrimage to Tidal River

Sunday 18 November 2018

A small number of World War 2 veterans, with family members and friends, attended the annual remembrance service at Tidal River last November. Current serving members and officers of the present day Commando Regiments, and many former post-WW2 Commandos from the Australian Commando Association supported the veterans. It was wonderful to see so many interstate members, both serving and former serving soldiers and officers.

On the Saturday evening prior an 'early' contingent of Victorian and interstate members enjoyed the hospitality of the Foster RSL at their annual dinner. Our President, Doug Knight, and Queensland ACA President, Nick Hill, both spoke and presented items to the Sub-Branch.

The following day the annual service was conducted with its warmth, respectful acknowledgement of those who had gone before us, and the now usual good-humoured informality, following the formal program.

Members formed up and marched behind the banner to the memorial, under the steely gaze and thunderous bark of former 2 Company CSM, Keith "Ughs" Hughes.



The banner party marches behind the banner to the Commando memorial. Photo Trevor Bergman.

Some of the Commando and Special Forces 'family' who attended included Jim Burrowes, 'Dixie' Lee and Mem, Felix and Yvonne Sher, Barry and Pam Schaefer (Con Bell's daughter), Con Bell junior, and the extended family of 'Don' Duncan Dennis, 2/5th, and possibly other family members of departed WW2 and post-WW2 men – sincere apologies to those we didn't catch up with.

After the formalities, family and friends inspected the evocative plaques on the memorial, now surrounded by freshly placed wreaths, and enjoyed afternoon tea in pleasant sunshine.

With the bus from Melbourne, generously provided by the Unit, and the afternoon tea after the service creating the opportunity to catch up with old friends, the day, as always, was a well organised and friendly event.



Victorian President Doug Knight addresses the gathering.

The Association is grateful for the support of the Parks Victoria staff at Tidal River. Thanks also to piper Iain Townsley (former 2 Cdo Coy and 22 SAS) and to 2 Company for their support, including the provision of transport. And we do appreciate the work of our 'unsung heroes' – our Association colleagues who organised the day so efficiently and pleasantly.



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Australian Commando Association Western Australia Inc.

PRESIDENT/SECRETARY – Mr Paul Shearer
acawa_president@commando.org.au

VICE PRESIDENT – Mr Rob Murray
acawa_vpresident@commando.org.au

TREASURER – Mr Darren Freeman
acawa_treasurer@commando.org.au

Web Address – www.commando.org.au **Postal Address** – PO Box 297 Bassendean, WA 6054

Contact - acawa_secretary@commando.org.au

PRESIDENT'S WORD

Our AGM is to be held at Kings Park on April the 7th at 2pm.

Our Membership is slowly getting bigger and is as follows:

- 1 Honorary member
Myrna Toling Walker (mother of LCPL Merv McDonald)
- 15 Full members
13 1 CDO REGT
2 4 RAR CDO
- 3 Associate members

We are also planning a couple of social activities based on our combined skill sets:

- Range shoot (TBC)
- Abseiling / climbing day (TBC)

Fund raising activities:

- Bunnings sausage sizzle event

We have also commenced planning of an annual commemoration event with two options including:

- Exmouth, Potshot memorial; successful return of Jaywick (1200kms north of Perth) for October.
- Rockingham, Garden Island; Commemoration of Operations Jaywick, Rimau for October.

Logistically Garden Island would be a one-day event. Exmouth (Potshot) would be a holiday event around the commemoration with other activities such as touring military facilities, RAAF Learmonth, NW Cape comms facility, diving, fishing, swim with the whales etc. (5 days). Annual pilgrimage event for Commando family holiday.

Idea at this stage but expressions of interest for the Potshot commemoration would be appreciated.

We have two members participating on the Commando Return 3 this year.

Commando For Life

Paul Shearer
President

How Surfing Helps with PTSD

Military veterans are turning to the waves to help them deal with the traumatic legacy of war. They say it gives them a wonderful "freeing" feeling and helps them manage the psychological turmoil of their everyday lives. Our research is among the first to document the positive influence surfing can have for veterans struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

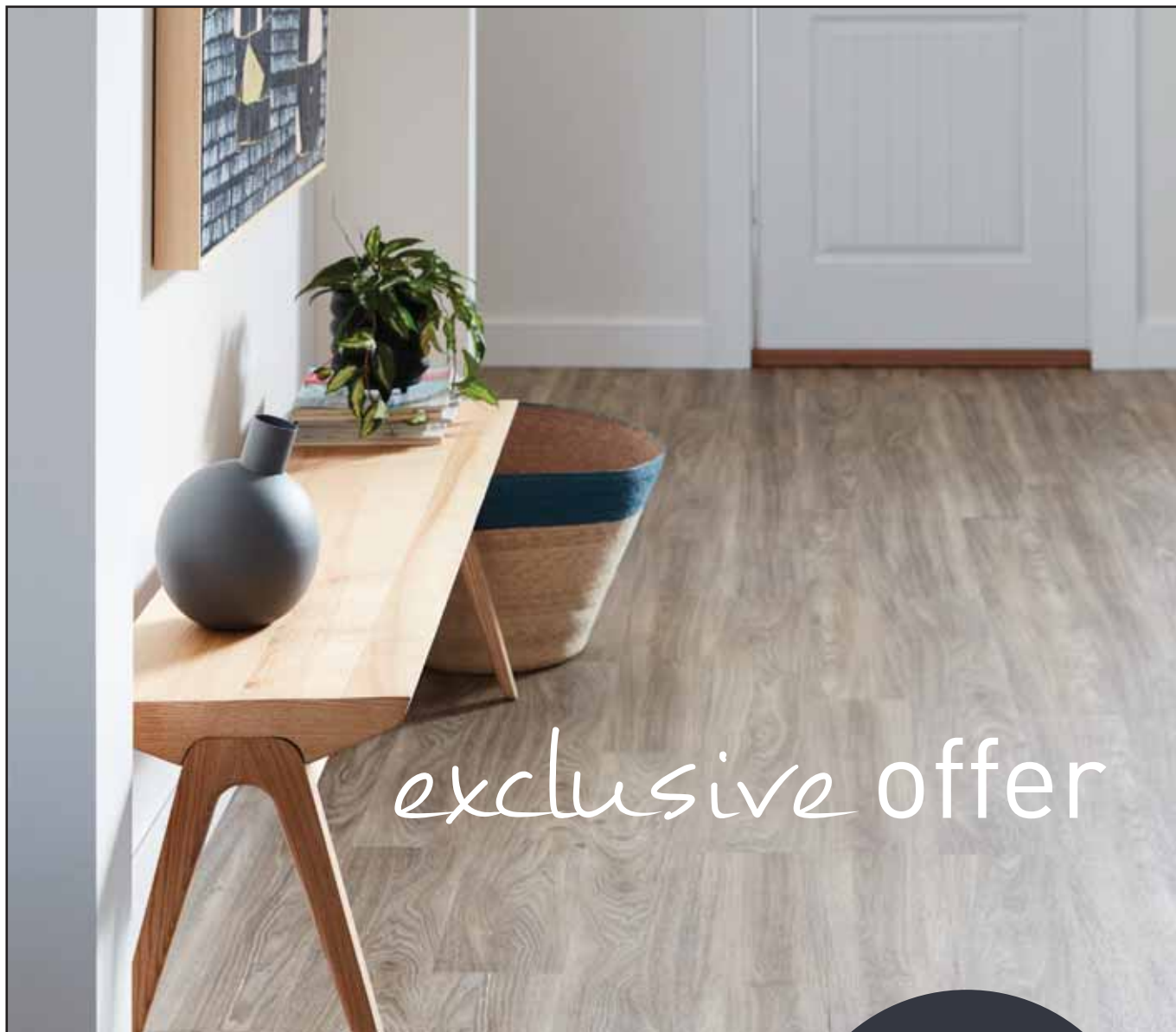
PTSD is a debilitating psychological condition that some veterans experience in the aftermath of combat. The symptoms can include flashbacks, vivid nightmares, traumatic memories, and a profound and enduring sense of sadness. There are other symptoms of PTSD too, including hypervigilance (such as scanning rooftops for concealed snipers) and hyperarousal (the classic example of jumping when a car backfires).

You could be forgiven for believing that all soldiers inevitably come home from war damaged by their experiences and that a "tidal wave" of PTSD

cases are flooding out of the military. But research from Kings College London suggests that the rate of combat veterans being diagnosed with PTSD is around 7 percent.

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COMMANDO HERITAGE PROJECT AT TIDAL RIVER

by Meredith Lamb

People and Parks Foundation

Approximately 3000 men, representing Australia's and New Zealand's first Commandos, trained at Wilsons Promontory during World War Two. Tidal River, the heart of Wilsons Promontory, is known and remembered as the birth-place of today's Australian Special Forces.

In the pre-dawn light, trainee Commandos would leave Tidal River in full kit and run up Mount Oberon. The run was a critical benchmark of physical endurance and mental fortitude – those who couldn't meet the standard were sent back to Melbourne, their dreams of being a Commando dashed.



The view from Mount Oberon. Little has changed since 1942

The Commando memorial (The Cairn) at Tidal River commemorates the bravery, commitment and sacrifice of all Australian Commandos, past, present and future. It is an important place of pilgrimage for many today, particularly during the annual commemorative ceremony conducted by ACAV in November.

The People and Parks Foundation (PPF) is raising funds for two key infrastructure projects at Tidal River – Tidal River Open Space and Telegraph Saddle Walking

Track. The projects are inextricably linked through location and objective, with the aim to engage park visitors in the environmental, cultural and historical significance of Wilsons Promontory.

Tidal River Open Space:

In the heart of Tidal River, the central visitor precinct at Wilsons Promontory, you'll find a bare expanse of patchy grass adjacent to the main campgrounds. In its current state, the space does little to convey the natural splendour of the surrounding environment. It's probably most notable for its neighbour, The Cairn, which stands as a poignant reminder of Tidal River's multifaceted history.



The Open Space next to the Commando Memorial

Local community, represented by the Tidal River Open Space Committee, is leading the design, development and delivery of Tidal River Open Space. The Committee has partnered with PPF, and land manager Parks Victoria, to construct a beautiful, natural setting where adults can gather, and children can explore and play. The space will reflect many of the natural, historical and cultural elements that make Wilsons Promontory so special.

Telegraph Saddle Walking Track:

Tidal River to Telegraph Saddle is approximately 3km, but no track links the two places, so day hikes in the park's southern circuit cannot be accessed on foot from Tidal River. A shuttle bus currently transports walkers to the Telegraph Saddle trailhead during peak periods, denying visitors an end-to-end walking experience. Telegraph Saddle walking track will bridge this gap and enable walkers to ascend Mount Oberon on foot directly from Tidal River, taking the same route the first Commandos ran during training. This will give visitors the opportunity to physically engage with the

(Continued next page)



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As Seen On A Current Affair

Product Review


be relieved

by Russell Maddocks
Publisher of The Commando News

"I was fortunate enough to sample BE RELIEVED for my shoulder, which has a habit of becoming inflamed every now and again. I was a bit suspect at first as I have tried quite a few creams, gels and oils to get some relief but to my surprise this product actually works so I put it to the test on other parts of my body.

I had a headache so I massaged a small portion on my temples and found that it even relieved that. I also asked my friend who has bouts of arthritis and she found that it was great.

At the end of the day this product works great and I know what to get when my shoulder plays up again, it actually does what it says and I was RELIEVED."



COMMANDO HERITAGE PROJECT

(Continued from previous page)

Commando legacy, pitting themselves against the legendary Commando standard.

The track will be an enduring, interactive memorial. PPF will work with the Australian Commando Association Victoria, to incorporate meaningful layers of interpretation along the track, giving insight into the Commando experience and dedicating rest stops to Commandos who have died during operations.

PPF is working closely with the Australian Commando Association Victoria, the project partners and other like-minded individuals and organisations to deliver these transformative projects.

If you would like to learn more, or show your support, please contact PPF's Managing Director, Alison Hill at Alison.hill@peopleandparks.org

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AUSTRALIA DAY AT WILSONS PROMONTORY

Association members head north

A number of members again enjoyed the Association's traditional Australia Day weekend hiking and camping trip at Wilsons Prom. Unfortunately that number was again only three. More comments on this later.

We met for the now almost traditional Friday evening meal at the Fish Creek Hotel – excellent food and service! This year we stayed at the Vic Parks Yanakie caravan and camping ground, a few kilometres beyond Yanakie township, toward the Prom. With a three-day Australia Holiday weekend Tidal River was booked out, and the Yanakie Park was also very full.

Because of our location we decided to do things differently this year. Over the previous 30-plus years we always hiked the delightful southern section of the Prom. As we were not greatly familiar with the northern Prom, a less popular area, we thought we would check it out just for once. We were pleasantly surprised!

On Saturday morning we stopped for a coffee at the Tidal River Store before walking almost to Sealers Cove. On a rest break at Windy Saddle two people in a family group reminded us we had met and talked with them last year – a small world!

We located our mission target – a large cave just short of Sealers, with a hard-to-locate tiny tunnel in its dark inner region that leads through to another 'main chamber'. Having located the cave, on information from an old friend, Mick Bridle, we resolved to bring our caving gear next trip and explore the entire cave complex.

Back at Tidal River the Vic Parks staff generously allowed us to inspect the storage tanks located above the Information Centre, that provided a gravity fed water supply to the WW2 Commando camps. The staff were surprised to learn that was the purpose of the tanks.

On Sunday we walked in to Millers Landing from

the Five Mile Road car park. It was a hot but enjoyable walk through Banksia woodlands to the mangrove flats that overlook Corner Inlet, with dramatic views. We then cut across to the Vereker Outlook track, and did a fairly steep (and rugged) climb to the top of the Outlook, with views in all directions across the Prom.

From the car park and back again we had the company of a young Vietnamese international student who tagged on to us – we didn't mind, and he was pleasant company.

We then visited the Stockyard Camp – again, extremely busy - with the tiny pioneer cemetery nearby telling some interesting but sad stories of the early days. After this we wandered along the track past Cotters Lake to the beach, with views of Shellback Island, wind-blown sand, March flies and tame seagulls – and warm sunshine.

All walking tracks and destinations were busy, with numerous overseas visitors. Peter B displayed his typical Aussie friendliness to many of the tourists. Back at camp we also enjoyed three very social evenings.

On Monday morning we visited an old friend, Michael Heal, at his Yanakie General Store. He is an expert on the military history of the Prom and Tidal River, and is generous in sharing his knowledge. We continued home, replenished by a tasty lunch at Moo's at Meeniyah.

Only three members have attended this 'traditional' Association weekend for the last few years, and after some discussion we suggested that perhaps next January we could stay at Tidal River village in cabins or a lodge, and do some of the short walks around the area. There are some delightful walks, and some great WW2 Commando history – still being revealed – around Tidal River and Darby River. Perhaps this is something for the committee to consider, as more of a family weekend?



On the way to Sealers Cove.



Keith emerges from the cave.





Commando Magazine Product Review

BLACKROLL®
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The german made BLACKROLL Booster is a vibrating foam roller that gives great pain relief to all parts of the body and can help with the recovery from injuries. It is simply an upgraded version of the trusty old foam roller, enhanced by the centre vibration tube that can be inserted.

It has a more intense massage effect as a result of the controlled vibra - motion technology. The vibration supports and intensifies the massage effect on multiple levels compared to a classic roller. On one hand, the vibration 'distracts' the pain receptors, so that a targeted treatment of trigger points is experienced to be less painful. This allows the targeted tissue to stay relaxed despite the pressure and therefore the massage can reach into deeper tissue layers. A further advantage of the vibration is that it supports better blood flow. For people with back injuries, it may take a little getting used to as the roller has quite a hard density. This makes it a very effective tool but it might feel initially a bit uncomfortable if you go straight to the pain effected areas. We figured if you start using it first on the lower parts of your body, like calves or glutes to get used to the vibration and massage effect, and only go towards the back and shoulder areas in the second step, then it is a nice progression.

The intensity and frequency is adjusted by two buttons on the top of the roller, lower frequencies are good to relax and recover your muscles, whereas the higher frequency levels are good for use during a warm up to enhance fluid circulation and to get your neural system firing. The device turns off automatically after ten minutes so it does not drain it's battery in case it gets switched on accidentally in a suitcase while travelling. When you turn it on for use, then it starts only after a couple of seconds, so you can get yourself into place. I suggest trying the roller on a soft surface to start with as it jumps around and can make some noise.

I found much relief on my lower limb injuries, and it is great for sore muscles. Great for calves, achilles tendons, glutes, upper leg and backside. Lower and thoracic back can be a little tricky to get it in the right place, especially if you are experiencing pain. I suggest laying on a bed or lounge to get used to the roller or even use it on a wall to be able to regulate the pressure. On quads, hamstrings, IT band and lats you can get a great relief by releasing tension and targeting typical injuries and it definitely does a much better job than a normal roller. It is compact and light enough to come travelling with you and the battery lasts for a few hours. If it does go flat, then you can just charge it up via a USB cable just like your phone.

So, in summary it is a great product and well worth a try. It helps relief pain in several areas and with the different settings can be good for recovery and rehabilitation.





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CORPORAL CAMERON STEWART BAIRD, VC. MG. 2nd Commando Regiment

Cameron Stewart Baird VC, MG (7 June 1981 – 22 June 2013) was a member of the 2nd Commando Regiment who was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for Australia, the highest award in the Australian honours system. Baird is the fourth Australian to receive the Victoria Cross for Australia and the 100th Australian to receive a Victoria Cross since the award was first created by Queen Victoria in 1856.

Early Life

Cam was born in Burnie, Tasmania in 1981, the son of Kaye and Doug Baird, a former Carlton Football Club player who, at the time, was coaching the Cooee Football Club. In 1984, Cameron, his parents and older brother Brendan, moved to Victoria and grew up in Gladstone Park, a north western suburb of Melbourne. Baird was educated in Gladstone Views Primary School before completing his Victorian Certificate of Education at Gladstone Park Secondary College. Cameron (Cam) joined Little Athletics at around 8 years of age. Of all the various genres of athletics, he had just one rival who was the best of all amongst the many clubs. It took one year for Cameron to get better at each discipline to be the 1st in all. Cam was an Australian Champion Discus thrower and a Victorian Champion Shot Putter. His mother Kaye was well known for yelling "Go Cam, Go Cam".

Cam was a talented junior Australian rules footballer that played with the Calder Cannons and one game for Geelong in the Victorian Football League. He nominated for the 1999 AFL draft, but suffered a shoulder injury late in the 1999 season, and was not selected by any AFL teams. He joined the army shortly after.

Military Career

Cam joined the Army in January 2000 and upon completion of his initial employment training was posted to the then 4th Battalion (Commando), Royal Australian Regiment, now the 2nd Commando Regiment, in February 2000. After being discharged in 2004, he re-enlisted in 2006 and in both periods of service, he was assigned to the 4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (Commando). During his service in



both units Cam deployed to East Timor in 2001, Iraq in 2003, Afghanistan in 2007/8, 2009, 2011/12 and 2013. Cam also deployed on CT Duty with TAG-E in 2010.

Cam has been awarded the Victoria Cross, Medal for Gallantry, the Australian Active Service Medal with East Timor, Iraq 2003 & ICAT Clasps, Afghan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Australian Service Medal with CT/SR Clasp, Australian Defence Medal, UN Medal for East Timor, NATO Meritorious Service Medal, NATO Medal with ISAF Clasp, The Infantry Combat Badge, The Returned from Active Service Badge and the Meritorious Unit Citation for SOTG (TF66) Rotations IV - XX.

Medal For Gallantry

In 2007, Cam was awarded the Medal for Gallantry for his actions in a search and clearance operation of a Taliban stronghold in which PTE Luke Worsley was KIA.

For gallantry in action during close quarters combat in Afghanistan on Operation SLIPPER.

Lance Corporal Cameron Stewart Baird was part of a Commando Company mission assigned for clearance and search of a Taliban stronghold in November 2007. During the initial phase of the clearance, Lance Corporal Baird's Platoon came under heavy fire and during the ensuing close-range firefight; a member of his team was mortally wounded. Displaying complete disregard for his own safety, Lance Corporal Baird led other members of his team forward under heavy fire from machine guns and assault rifles to recover the wounded team member back to a position of cover.

He then re-entered the compound and continued to engage the enemy. Even though under constant fire, Lance Corporal Baird continually moved amongst his team members coordinating their fire, and throwing grenades to neutralise the enemy machine gun positions. Once the close quarter battle had been won, Lance Corporal Baird again led his team forward and began room-to-room clearance, where he was again engaged by several enemies. Lance Corporal Baird continued to lead the fight, killing several enemies and successfully completing the clearance.



Throughout the action, Lance Corporal Baird displayed conspicuous gallantry, composure and superior leadership under fire. He was personally responsible for killing several enemy combatants during the clearance, ensuring the momentum of the assault was maintained, and undoubtedly preventing further members of his section from becoming casualties. His performance and his actions were of the highest order and were in the finest traditions of the Australian Army and the Australian Defence Force.

Victoria Cross for Australia

In February 2014, Baird was awarded the Victoria Cross for Australia. CPL Baird was killed in operations in Afghanistan on 22 June 2013.

The citation for his Victoria Cross reads:

For the most conspicuous acts of valour, extreme devotion to duty and ultimate self-sacrifice at Ghawchak village, Uruzgan province, Afghanistan, as a Commando Team Commander in Special Operations Task Group on Operation SLIPPER.

On 22 June 2013, a commando platoon of the Special Operations Task Group, with partners from the Afghan National Security Forces, conducted a helicopter assault into Ghawchak village, Uruzgan province, in order to attack an insurgent network deep within enemy-held territory. Shortly after insertion, Corporal Baird's team was engaged by small arms fire from several enemy positions. Corporal Baird quickly seized the initiative, leading his team to neutralise the positions, killing six enemy combatants and enabling the assault to continue.

Soon afterwards, an adjacent Special Operations Task Group team came under heavy enemy fire, resulting in its commander being seriously wounded. Without hesitation, Corporal Baird led his team to provide support. En route, he and his team were engaged by rifle and machine gun fire from prepared enemy positions. With complete disregard for his own safety, Corporal Baird charged towards the enemy positions, supported by his team. On nearing the positions, he and his team were engaged by additional enemy on their flank. Instinctively, Corporal Baird neutralised the new threat with grenades and rifle fire, enabling his team to close with the prepared position. With the prepared position now isolated, Corporal Baird manoeuvred and was engaged by enemy machine gun fire, the bullets striking the ground

around him. Displaying great valour, he drew the fire, moved to cover, and suppressed the enemy machine gun position. This action enabled his team to close on the entrance to the prepared position, thus regaining the initiative.

On three separate occasions Corporal Baird charged an enemy-held building within the prepared compound. On the first occasion he charged the door to the building, followed by another team member. Despite being totally exposed and immediately engaged by enemy fire, Corporal Baird pushed forward while firing into the building. Now in the closest proximity to the enemy, he was forced to withdraw when his rifle ceased to function. On rectifying his rifle stoppage, and reallocating remaining ammunition within his team, Corporal Baird again advanced towards the door of the building, once

more under heavy fire. He engaged the enemy through the door but was unable to suppress the position and took cover to reload. For a third time, Corporal Baird selflessly drew enemy fire away from his team and assaulted the doorway. Enemy fire was seen to strike the ground and compound walls around Corporal Baird, before visibility was obscured by dust and smoke. In this third attempt, the enemy was neutralised and the advantage was regained, but Corporal Baird was killed in the effort.

Corporal Baird's acts of valour and self-sacrifice regained the initiative and preserved the lives of his team members. His actions were of the highest order

and in keeping with the finest traditions of the Australian Army and the Australian Defence Force.



CPL Cameron Baird, VC. MG. medals on display at the AWM

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ALEXANDER SPENCE, DSO

2nd/2nd Independent Company & 2nd/12th Commando Squadron

Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Spence, DSO was born on the 5th of February 1906, in Bundaberg, Queensland and was an Australian Army officer during World War II. Between 24 May and 11 November 1942, Spence commanded Allied forces during their guerrilla campaign in Timor. Spence, who had been a journalist and had served in the Militia before the war, volunteered for overseas duty with the Second Australian Imperial Force on 25 June 1940, at Miowera, Queensland. A major, he was originally posted to the 2/26th Battalion, but was posted away from the unit to the commandos before the battalion embarked on its ill-fated deployment to Singapore. He was later appointed commander of the 2nd/2nd Independent Company, a commando unit, and went with it as part of Sparrow Force to Dutch Timor in 1941. The 2nd/2nd and Dutch forces were dispatched to occupy Portuguese Timor in December 1941, when it was anticipated that Japanese forces would invade. Spence and his men enjoyed good relations with most of the local population, and prepared for a prolonged guerrilla campaign.

Timor Campaign

Although the Japanese had the element of surprise, when they invaded on 19 February 1942, the Allied garrison began an orderly retreat, covered by an 18-strong Australian section stationed at Dili airfield. The section managed to kill an estimated 200 Japanese in the first hours of the battle. Another section was less fortunate, driving by chance into a Japanese road-block. Although they surrendered, it is believed that all but one was massacred. Spence and his men succeeded in evading the Japanese in the mountains of Timor. The 2/2nd commenced raids on the Japanese. Allied forces were scattered in various areas of Timor, but were able to use the local telephone system to communicate among themselves and to gather intelligence on Japanese movements. However, they could not contact the outside world, due to a lack of functioning radio equipment. This situation would not be rectified until 18 April after signallers from the company managed to build a wireless transmitter and were subsequently able to contact Darwin. The Japanese commander, Colonel Sadashichi Doi, sent the Australian honorary consul in Dili, David Ross (who was also the local Qantas agent), to find the commandos and pass on a demand to surrender. Spence is reputed to have responded incredulously, stating that the company was still a formed unit and would continue to fight. Ross then gave the commandos information on the disposition of Japanese



Lt Col Spence then Major (far left) with other members of the 2nd/2nd ICC in Timor December 1942.

forces and also provided a note in Portuguese, stating that the Australian government would later reimburse anyone supplying them. On 8 March 1942, Spence was reunited with his immediate commander, Brigadier William Veale, who had retreated on foot from West Timor. When Veale was evacuated in May, Spence was appointed an acting lieutenant colonel, and became Allied commander. Doi sent Ross with another message, complimenting Sparrow Force on its campaign, and again asking that it surrender. The Japanese commander said that he realised it would take a force 10 times that of the Allies to win, that he was receiving reinforcements, and would eventually assemble the necessary units. This time Ross did not return to Dili, and he was evacuated to Australia on 16 July.

During August, Japanese forces began to burn and/or bomb villages believed to have assisted the Allies, with huge civilian casualties. The commander of the Japanese 48th Division, Lieutenant General Yuitsu Tsuchihashi arrived, to assume control of operations on Timor. Strong Japanese columns moved south — two from Dili and one from Manatuto on the north-east coast. Another moved eastward from Netherlands Timor to attack Dutch positions in the central south of the island. The offensive ended on 19 August, having secured the central town of Maubisse and the southern port of Beco.

In late August, matters were complicated when a rebellion against the Portuguese broke among the indigenous population, and a parallel conflict began. The Japanese were also recruiting significant numbers of Timorese civilians, who provided intelligence on Allied movements.



During September the main body of the Japanese 48th Division began arriving to take over the campaign. The Australians also sent reinforcements, in the form of the 450-strong 2/4th Independent Company—to be known as Lancer Force—on 23 September.

By October, the Japanese had succeeded in recruiting significant numbers of Timorese civilians, who suffered severe casualties when used in frontal assaults against the Allies. The Portuguese were also being pressured to assist the Japanese, and at least 26 Portuguese civilians were killed in the first six months of the occupation, including local officials and a Catholic priest. On 1 November, the Allied high command approved the issuing of weapons to Portuguese officials, a policy which had previously been carried out on an informal basis. At around the same time, the Japanese ordered all Portuguese civilians to move to a "neutral zone" by 15 November. Those who failed to comply were to be considered accomplices of the Allies. This succeeded only in encouraging the Portuguese to cooperate with the Allies, whom they lobbied to evacuate some women and children.

Spence was evacuated to Australia on 11 November, handing over command to Major Bernard Callinan. He was later re-united with the 2/2nd Independent Company, and remained with them until later in the war when he became the commanding officer of the 2/12th Commando Squadron and then later the 2/9th Cavalry Commando Regiment in 1944–45.

Spence was discharged from the army on 28 February 1945.



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THE TIGER MAN OF VIETNAM

LTCOL Barry Peterson, MC. MiD. (AATTV)

1935 - 28 February 2019

By Frank Walker, author of the Book The Tiger Man of Vietnam

Barry Petersen was an Australian army Captain who led top secret CIA operations in the highlands during the Vietnam War until, like Marlon Brando's character Colonel Kurtz in the movie *Apocalypse Now*, he got too close to the natives and the CIA wanted him out, dead or alive.

Petersen was sent to Vietnam in 1963 as part of the elite Australian Army Training Team to train the South Vietnamese army in tackling guerrilla tactics used by Viet Cong insurgents.

Like most of the AATTV, Petersen had served in the Malayan Emergency, training Malays to counter guerrilla tactics of the communists. His easy rapport with the Malays was noticed and he was seconded to the CIA to set up and lead a militia of highland Montagnard natives to fight the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese army coming down the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Petersen got on well with the Montagnard, particularly the Rade tribe who lived around the highland city of Ban Me Thuot. He learnt their language, honoured their customs and traditions, including drinking the potent rice wine. He paid them well with CIA money and armed them with CIA-supplied guns.

Even though he was operating alone in the mountains, Petersen was so successful that within a year he had more than 1000 Montagnard militia fighters using the same guerrilla tactics as the Viet Cong – ambush the enemy, hit hard and disappear into the jungle.

The communists learnt to go around Petersen's territory rather than take him on. They put a price on Petersen's head, but his militia kept a close guard on him.

He was extremely popular with his men. They declared the Australian officer a demi-god, and showered him with honoured brass armbands denoting him a tribal chief.

At his home he kept a pet sun bear and a baby leopard he'd been given by one of his men. Petersen's



LTCOL Barry Peterson, MC at Hellfire Pass,
Remembrance Day 2008

militia became known as the Tiger Men because of the striped jungle camouflage uniforms he'd obtained from the CIA warehouse. He had snarling tiger head badges made for their berets to make the various Montagnard tribes in his units feel united.

But after almost two years in the highlands with the Montagnard tribesmen, Petersen's relations with the CIA soured. Some CIA agents thought Petersen was becoming too successful, and getting too close to the Montagnard.

The Montagnard had been suppressed and abused by the Vietnamese for hundreds of years, and South Vietnamese generals feared a well-armed and trained Montagnard militia could rise up against them.

In late 1964, the Montagnard did rebel against the South Vietnamese regime, taking over several military camps, executing Vietnamese troops, and demanded autonomy. Petersen confronted his angry Tiger Men and convinced them to stay out of the fighting. He was awarded the Military Cross for his action. The rebellion was quickly crushed by American forces.

But Petersen's sympathies for the Montagnard were treated with suspicion by the Americans, and downright hostility by South Vietnamese regional commanders. His CIA handler derisively called him 'Lawrence of the Highlands' as, like Lawrence of Arabia, he was seen as having gone native.

The crunch came when the CIA told Petersen to train his men as brutal and deadly assassins, to use the same Viet Cong tactics of terrorism to win the fight for the rural villages. It was called the Phoenix Program, a controversial attempt to destroy the Viet Cong through torture, summary execution and terror.

Petersen refused to have anything to do with it. Not because he was averse to killing or assassination. He felt the Montagnard might use the training to turn on the South Vietnamese army. He also felt it breached Australian military rules of engagement.



Petersen in the Highlands of Vietnam in 1964



As Petersen told me for my 2009 book, *The Tiger Man of Vietnam*: "If I trained them to act like assassins they could turn on the South Vietnamese and use it on them. They hated all Vietnamese, be they from the north or south. They had to be a properly regimented militia or we could lose control of them."

It was the final straw for the CIA. They wanted Petersen out of the highlands by whatever method necessary. When Petersen protested, asking why remove him when he was doing a good job, some in the CIA warned he could meet with an accident and leave in a body bag.

Petersen obeyed orders from the Australian commander, and left the Montagnard with a heavy

heart. They gave him a remarkable tribal farewell ceremony. He dressed in tribal clothing, wore dozens of brass armbands and reclined to accept gifts like a chief. It confirmed for many in the US and Australian military that the young captain had gone native.

Petersen remained ostracised by many of his military colleagues. He did a second tour to Vietnam as a major and was mentioned in dispatches for his bravery. But he was told he'd never rise far in the army, and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel.

He always felt most comfortable in Asia and settled in Bangkok where he established a firm that assisted foreign businesses to set up in Thailand.

In 1988 he published his autobiography *Tiger Men*. He used his skills behind the scenes to help Montagnard's who fled Vietnam, and remained an international man of mystery, with contacts deep inside the foggy world of spies and secret agents.

Former governor-general and one-time commander of the elite SAS unit, Major-General Michael Jeffery, said for a documentary: "Barry Petersen was one of the very best of the Australian military profession because he took on such a difficult and unique task."

Arthur Barry Petersen ("never call me Arthur"), born in Sarina, Queensland, died aged 84 in Bangkok on February 28 after a long battle with cancer he believes was caused by Agent Orange. Petersen never married, but regarded the staff of his Bangkok firm as his family. He is survived by two sisters.



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News from Harry Bell (Ding Dong Mk 2)



Bill Justo (2/9) has just lost the aptly nicknamed "Bubbles", his wife, friend and other self for 72 years. Her death was sudden and unexpected; the family had only a few weeks notice of her illness. Bill is about to turn 96 and has had to leave Burpengarry for a nursing home in Brisbane. I have been unable to contact him but have now spoken to his grandson and to his son, both living in Tasmania (the grandson, Will Justo, is President of the Law Society of Tassie) and I hope to be able to speak to Bill soon. If I do, I shall add a postscript to this note. PS, Bill has phoned me from a nursing home at Nudgee, Qld. He is still pretty devastated, but coming to terms with his new situation.

May I, at this stage, add a clarifying note: when I refer to a Vet's unit, e.g. (2/9) I am listing his squadron, not his regiment. Commando Squadrons were an odd invention; they – or rather, the first 8 – began life as "Independent Companies." Each had its own colour-patch and although of the approximate size of a rifle company in an Infantry battalion, they were not part of any larger unit. Each was led by an Officer Commanding (OC), NOT by a Commanding Officer (CO). Later, all those Independent Companies (except 2/1) became Commando Squadrons, but retained their independence. Eventually, all but 2/1, which had ceased to exist, and 2/2 and 2/8, which retained their full independence, were merged into Cavalry (Commando) Regiments. They were still led by an OC who was subordinate to the CO of the Regiment and they were required to wear their Regimental colour-patch (though as soon as they were out of sight of RHQ they sewed their old ones over the top.) To the rest of the Division – 6 Div, at least – they were still known, collectively, as "The Cav" with little distinction between one squadron and another. But amongst themselves, the distinctions were clear; even, for example, between 2/9 and 2/10, who had never worn any other patch than the brown, red and green. And the Army recognised this somewhat anomalous position: our postal addresses made no mention of the regiment (except, of course, for those in HQ Squadron). And after discharge, our Discharge Certificates bore the name of Unit as "2/X Commando Squadron", with no reference to a regiment. This contrasts with a vet who left the Army on return from the Middle East. His Discharge Certificate would refer to the Regiment, not to "A" or "B" Squadron.

2/3, 2/5 and 2/6 Squadrons all became part of 2/7 Cavalry (Commando) Regime, but when I refer to Ted Byrne MC (2/7), any old soldier would know that Ted was in 2/7 Commando Squadron, which was part of 2/6 Cav. Cdo Regt. If I had mistakenly typed (2/6), he would assume that Ted was ex-2/6 Sqn, part of 2/7 Cav. Cdo. Regt, known to all as 7 Div Cav. All clear??

Having got that off my chest let me move on to Ted Workman (2/10). Ted's wife, Lola, who was almost as much Secretary of the NSW Branch of our Society as Ted was, for a large of those many years that Ted held that

office, had a severe stroke shortly before Christmas. For some years now, Ted has needed proportion constant care and Lola provided it. She is no longer physically capable of doing this, 24/7, so Ted is now being cared for at the RSL Village at Narrabeen. Fortunately, Lola has made a good recovery – but not quite good enough. So our sympathy to them both and congratulations to Lola.

Don MacPherson (2/9) is another to have been forced to give up a measure of independence but is happy in what sounds like an ideal nursing home near Bairnsdale. He even takes the odd glass at Happy Hour.

Ted MacMillan (2/9) has had to take a turn at being Carer instead of Cared-for: Barbara has been in the hands of the surgeons in Adelaide. As a long-time Theatre Sister, I expect she keeps them up to the mark! All was going well when last we spoke.

STOP PRESS. After typing the foregoing, I received a tearful phone call from my god-daughter, Kate, Ted and Barbara's eldest. Barbara has suddenly and unexpectedly perished, to the grief of three daughters and their husbands, numerous grandchildren and a large number of great-grandchildren.

Barbara was something special. When I introduced them – in 1948, on a blind date, she was training as a mothercraft nurse at Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children. During their 70-year marriage, she obtained every possible nursing qualification; she taught their four children by correspondence while assisting Ted in the management of a large sheep station; she served terms as Theatre Sister and Matron in hospitals large and small as well as being for some years the Director of the Aboriginal Nursing service, based on Dubbo. I have never known her equal.

Also doing well were Eric Geldard (2/9) of Miles in Queensland, Paula Hunting of Victoria, and Rex Davidson (2/9) of Glenorchy, Tas. Grace Brodie of Taroom Qld doesn't spend as much time in the saddle as she used to do but is still actively involved in running the stock at "Riverview" with the assistance of one of her very capable daughters.

Graham Dolton (2/9) is more of a matelot than an old soldier these days; he can't stay at home for more than a few months without going to sea again on a luxury cruise. He speaks so enthusiastically about a trip up the Sepik that I can hardly resist doing likewise.

Talking of the Sepik, I spotted recently, in an email sent to me by the Commando Association of Australia - a photograph of a group of soldiers in Jungle Greens. Two were officers, the rest ORs. One, sporting a clipped, military moustache and black beret (with large hat-badge) was none other than our own Sgt Robin McKay, 6 Div Cav. The photo was included with an interview of the last surviving Z Special operative, Jim Burrowes. Apart from the names in the caption, there was nothing to indicate why it was there but I remembered learning,



at Robin's funeral in Ballina, that he had been a Moss Trooper. The Moss Troops were small parties, landed on the upper Sepik, by SRD ("Special Reconnaissance Division").

For the purpose of that exercise, Robin had been attached to Z Special. The exploits of the Moss Troops are described in "Silent Feet", the unit history written by Lt. Col. G.B. Courtney. Robin's party, consisting of a Major, 2 Lieutenants, 5 Sergeants, a Corporal and 6 native police, was inserted into the Upper Sepik region by Catalina in September 1943 – nearly a year before the USA captured Aitape. They eventually returned to civilisation after two months, during which they had many adventures – at least, that is what their experiences sound like, 76 years later, though the Boys' Own Paper would have been far from their minds as they ambushed parties of Nips and eventually traversed most rugged, inhospitable country to Mt Hagen whence they were airlifted to HQ. Robin was a leading light in the Queensland/Northern Rivers Branch of the 2/ Cav (Cdo) Regt Assn, but usually managed to make it to Sydney for Anzac Day with Gos Cory, another old Desert Rat, who was transferred from 6 Div Cav to 2/4 Armd. Regt.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Commando Association has recently undergone some big changes with a new set of Office Bearers. It is sad farewelling Barry Grant (NSW) but he is still active in the world of Ex Service Organisations - see below.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

VALE NX120218, Reginald Thomas Rudd Davis ("Tpr Davis RTR", 2/9) 14.4.1923 - 18.2.2019. Reg. perished, cheerful to the last, after some years of frequent trips to hospital – melanoma, following his days as a market gardener and a greenkeeper; golden staph, following a total hip replacement before that had become a routine operation and various other conditions.

After a short period in the CMF, Reg joined the AIF on 13.8.1942 and served in the latter stages of the Kokoda campaign with 6 Div Sigs, as a signaller. He volunteered for Commando training and joined B Troop, 2/9 Commando Squadron, sailing for Aitape from Townsville on 14.10.1944. He served throughout the Wewak campaign, including the Dove Bay landing (Farida Force.) He was discharged on 25.6.1946. His funeral took place at the Uniting Church, Beverley Hills, NSW, on 25.2.19. His death was not noted in the Obituaries page of either of the daily papers, but the church was full. Many Freemasons (he had been a prominent Mason), Committeemen and women from the now dissolved NSW Branch of the Regimental Association, sons and grandsons of Veterans and a large contingent of Post-WW2 Commandos, led by the immediate past president of the NSW Branch of the ACA, Barry Grant. More details of his wartime and postwar career can be found in the Eulogy which I delivered (following fine speeches by his two sons).

Harry Bell (2/9)

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"HIT AND RUN"

Tragedy and Triumph

By

Jim Truscott with Rick Moor and Bruce Parker as at 3 February 2019

The Background to the Most Successful NGO Aid Project in East Timor

On 21 December 2018, Rotary finally handed over the East Timor Roof and Training (ETRT) business to the Don Bosco College at Fatamaca as a working entity and it is now their Bacau Annex.

This social enterprise project had its genesis while the International Force was in East Timor (INTERFET) when Bruce Parker, a Rotarian and former 2 Commando Company Operator from Melbourne, and I as the Operations Officer in the SAS Response Force, got Xanana Gusmao and his wife to be, Kirsty Sword, out of bed at Aileu at 0630 hours on 26 November 1999. We were there to explain the merits of ETRT in aiding the demobilization of the Armed Forces for the Liberation of East Timor (Falintil).

The plan was to build a roll-former mill to convert flat metal strip to corrugated iron for roofing that would make many buildings habitable again and to use guerrillas as the initial worker pool to aid their demobilization and return to society. Almost 75% of all buildings were looted, then burnt, leaving walls standing but roofs caved in.

This early morning meeting is one of many powerful memories that I have from my very short time at the end of Falintil's twenty-four-year struggle to liberate East Timor from Indonesian oppression. I remember the burning stench of Dili on day one of INTERFET's stabilization operations where I witnessed the results of the scorched earth arson which had the same devastation as the killing of civilians. The feverish months that followed allowing me to do everything that I had ever hoped to do as a soldier and engineer at the tail end of my military career.

I vividly remember seeing Taur Matan Ruak, the Commander of Falintil, jump in excitement on the back of Lieutenant Colonel Tim McOwan, the Commander of the SAS Response Force as we waded across the stream towards a waiting Blackhawk helicopter at the Uaimori cantonment.

This gymnastic event was just after Major General Peter Cosgrove had agreed for Falintil to keep their weapons if they stayed within their cantonments. This approval was an act of exquisite victory in guerrilla warfare. It was laurels to the victor, and I was privileged to witness it. I vividly remember Xanana Gusmao strumming an M16 rifle like a guitar at the Dili heliport just after his release from seven years in captivity in a prison in Jakarta and his return to East Timor. I also vividly remember being called to the dais by Xanana Gusmao at the Falintil victory parade at Remixio.

In the few months that I got to know Taur Matan Ruak and some of his Regional Commanders very well in late

1999, he told me that there were about 1,400 fighters, although many had only joined when the prospect of autonomy loomed. He estimated that Falintil had lost some 3,000 fighters over the years and that there were now only about 150 fighters from the original Fretilin independence movement formed in 1975. He told me that it was very hard living like a guerrilla with no food and no ammunition.

Late at night on 31 October 1999 the last Indonesian troops quietly departed East Timor by ship. An Australian INTERFET soldier cast off the rope. There was no fanfare and we were glad to see them go. At long last their reign of lying, robbing and killing which had belittled East Timor for decades had come to an end.

In the following year during the Olympics in 2000, much to my joy Taur Matan Ruak and some of his guerrillas were invited by the Australian Government to visit Sydney and I was given the opportunity to accompany them on their tour of various military headquarters around the harbour. We initially went to Army's Training Command at Georges Heights to be briefed by a puffed-up general who had little time for us, the SAS, let alone guerrillas. Taur Matan Ruak simply nodded his head, and I could tell that all he wanted was some simple catch up training for his new army.

We motored across the harbour to Theatre Headquarters at Pott's Point to be given another boring brief on campaigning. By this time Taur Matan Ruak's fellow Commanders who could not understand English very well were about to fall asleep. The brief went well over their heads and Taur Matan Ruak remarked that indeed we, the Australian Army, had a complicated approach to operations.

The briefing at Army's Land Command at Paddington was a slight improvement although as Taur Matan Ruak simply remarked that up to now he had only been concerned about "hit and run!" In reality the Australian Army and we the SAS had much more to learn from these guerrillas about revolutionary warfare and resistance movements, than what we could teach them about dealing with terrorists in the bush or oppressive regimes.

Recording the History of Guerrilla Warfare by Falintil

Falintil had resisted and harassed the Indonesian Army and survived and operated in an area one-fifth of the size of the State of Victoria. The island of Timor is a rugged, narrow and crocodile-shaped country with dangerous coastlines and reefs on the north and south coasts.

East Timor had a hostile provincial border with West Timor which is part of Indonesia. There was no sanctuary and their victory was surely a military achievement



unprecedented in the history of guerrilla movements. When have so few resistors confronted so many oppressors, so effectively, and for so long?

That said, the Resistance movement was more akin to a struggle over twenty-four years and it was certainly no silver bullet to independence. The 'Silver Bullet', a simple and seemingly magical solution to a difficult problem, was actually also the nickname we gave to the United Nations Landrover that we (the SAS) spray painted and donated to Sabika, one of the Falintil Regional Commanders, and which then later required the Portuguese Infantry Battalion to cordon Aileu in order for the United Nations to get it back, after we has long gone!

Apart from the very comprehensive book by Ernie Chamberlain, why is there very little considered information on the effectiveness of the Resistance written by Australians who were there in INTERFET or other United Nations capacities. The title of Ernie Chamberlain's book, *The Struggle in Iliomar: Resistance in rural East Timor* which was published in 2008 is a misnomer as the book covers the Resistance more broadly but specifically in the Iliomar and Los Palos areas.

This lack of information is compounded, unfortunately, by the loss of all Taur Matan Ruak's early notes after Falintil was almost wiped out when escaping from encirclement by the Indonesia Army at Mount Matebian in 1978, and again after a fire in the early 1980s. Guerrillas write little down anyway for operational security reasons. Taur Matan Ruak has since written a book but there are only five copies in existence. So to really understand the reasons for their success we just have to go with the information that can be obtained from interviews with members of the Resistance of the time.

It should be noted that often the information so gained may be aligned more with propaganda rather than the actual truth. The truth always remains an enduring casualty in guerrilla cum psychological warfare.

The Archive and Museum of the Timorese Resistance in the Old Dili Court building has about 150 documents online at www.amrtimor.org to preserve the memory of the struggle, including from the armed resistance, the clandestine front, the diplomatic front, the youth resistance, the solidarity organizations, the Catholic Church, international organizations and also Indonesian documents.

Another book *A luta armada timorense na resistência à ocupação 1975-1999*, which in English is *The Armed Resistance Struggle of the Timorese against the Occupation*, was published in 2014 by Tribuna da História in the Portuguese language. From all reports it is a detailed history of the armed resistance to Indonesian occupation. The authors, Abílio Pires Lousada, António José Oliveira and Carlos Dias Afonso, are or were members of the Portuguese armed forces.

The book draws upon interviews conducted in 2010 and 2011 of almost all the senior surviving Falintil

commanders including Taur Matan Ruak, Lere, Falur, Sabika and Meno Paixao. According to Ernie Chamberlain, the book has nothing new and it lacks important tactical detail which is disappointing to a reader with a military background.

The Falintil organizational charts are particularly useful as are several sketch maps but there are a number of shortcomings including several errors of detail on the Indonesian Army. For example, Nicolau Lobato is cited as having been killed by 744 Battalion led by Lieutenant Yunnus and other Indonesian troops led by Lieutenant Colonel Prabowo. Colonel (Artillery) Purwanto the East Timor commander in 1983 is confused with Major (Special Forces) Gatot Purwanto who hands-on negotiated the ceasefire.

The Resimen Para Komando Angkatan Darat (RPKAD) the army para-Commando regiment is cited many years after it had evolved into Kopassandha in February 1971, and later into Komando Pasukan Khusus (Kopassus) in December 1986. Ernie Chamberlain states that these errors have been made by several writers.

The controversial death of Kilik Wai Gai and the coup in 1984 are glossed over, and the passages on urban guerrilla activities make no mention of the Brigada Negara incident. The writers also imply that ex-Israeli US A4 Skyhawk and F5 Tiger and UK Hawk aircraft were used in attacks against Falintil. What we do now know is that the first A4s deployed from Madiun in Java to Bacau for an air defence exercise in 1984 and subsequently in November 1987 several A4 aircraft deployed to Bacau for ground attack missions.

The most interesting aspect of the book is the 80 photographs in the addendum from Dili's Museum of the Memory of the People which opened in 2012, but most of the information from the interviews with the members of the Resistance is not in the English language. There is also the Timor-Leste collection of books at the Footscray Park Campus Library of the Victoria University in Melbourne.

Lieutenant General Kiki Syahnakri who was the Indonesian Army's martial law commander in Dili during INTERFET published his memoir in the Indonesian language in 2013. He called the book *Timor Timur – the untold story* and he also relates his earlier tours in 1974 to 1975, 1981, 1987 and 1994. He concludes that military operations will not succeed if people are mired in poverty.

He attributes the Indonesian failure to inappropriate and outdated US military doctrine, a failure to apply the principles of counter-guerrilla warfare including the alienation of the population through misconduct and the shooting of unarmed civilians, the failure to make use of the traditional structures of power including the Catholic Church, the over-centralization of authority in Jakarta, the failure to integrate military operations and community development, the arrogance of many army and police who served in East Timor and the presence of widespread corruption and the failure of media relations.



An Australian Army Case Study of Guerrilla Warfare by Falintil in East Timor

So how are the characteristics of guerrilla warfare in Australian doctrine as they were taught to me at Swan Island and in the jungles of Far North Queensland in 1989 in any way applicable or different in East Timor from the following perspectives?

- Civilian support
- Outside sponsorship
- Deliberate delay
- Intelligence
- Central planning and decentralized execution
- Offensive action
- Topography and environment
- Mobility
- Surprise
- Legal aspects
- The political situation
- The tactical situation
- Demobilization

Civilian Support

When I first met Taur Matan Ruak in September 1999, I was pleasantly surprised to see the plaque from 2 Commando Company, my old unit that I had commanded in 1990 and 1991 in Melbourne nailed on the centre pole in Falintil's bamboo headquarters at Uaimori. Some of the now very old and bold 2 Company boys from the Second World War and later had been helping the guerrillas for years. That night after talking and looking at each other for hours on end to see who would fall asleep first, Taur Matan Ruak and Pedro Gomes, his Chief of Staff slept in one bamboo bunk and I slept by myself with one eye open in the other bamboo bunk!

The Resistance movement had operated with four fronts consisting of Falintil and the clandestine movement, supported by international diplomacy and the solidarity movement. Some historians say three just fronts, the armed, clandestine and diplomatic, but either way it was a complex and partially integrated network.

The clandestine movement which was formed in 1990 became the second front when the National Council of the Maubere Resistance (CNRM) recognized that Falintil had been significantly weakened and that a strategy was needed to organize the people against the occupying forces. Internationally this front used Indonesia's political weapons against it and the real threat to Indonesia's military control came from these underground and urban guerrillas.

The clandestine movement had a cellular structure, with each village having a network known as the *nucleos de resistencia popular* or *nurep*. The *nurep* coordinated hamlet-level networks, known as *selcom*. Even within the same cell, members had little knowledge of who beyond their immediate contact was in the clandestine movement which meant that they were not in a position to give up other members if captured and interrogated.

Thousands of East Timorese men, women and children had risked their lives to take food, medical supplies and messages to and provide intelligence for Falintil and there were about 1,700 cells around the country towards the end of the struggle. Some of these cells also sent reports to the outside world, organized demonstrations and replenished the small Falintil force with men and women prepared to risk their lives. The Falintil leaders used the ceasefire in 1983 to recruit Timorese people deep within the Indonesian state and security apparatus into the clandestine network such as the Indonesian commander's police driver.

The Catholic Church also played a significant role. In 1974, only 10 per cent of the population were members of the church, but by 1997 the number of Catholics has increased exponentially to 90 percent as priests, nuns and lay people challenged the brutality and injustice of the Indonesian occupation.

Traditional kin-based house communities also thwarted the Indonesian eradication of the armed and clandestine resistance components. When Indonesian intelligence realised the extent of the underground and the auxiliary called *miplin*, they partially mirrored the Falintil clandestine structure by locating *babinsa*, a village guidance non-commissioned officer in each village. More restive villages had a village guidance team and armed village guards called *hansip*.

It has been estimated that about 35,000 East Timorese men and women fought against Indonesian rule between 1975 and 1999 and that more than 13,000 of them died. After the concerted Indonesian campaigns that began in 1978, the number of fighters in Falintil dwindled from 14,652 to 1,043. Despite this seemingly hopeless situation, they fought on against an Indonesian Army of up to 30,000 troops equipped with US and British equipment.

The King's College study on the shape of their future East Timor security force estimated that every Falintil fighter must have killed several Indonesian soldiers each over the 24 years of armed resistance.

The estimates of the number of Indonesian soldiers killed range from 15,000 to 20,000. In all that time, the Falintil guerrilla bands were not betrayed despite the reprisals that the Indonesian Army exacted on people or villagers suspected of supporting Falintil.

The survival of Falintil showed the extent and depth of the people's support for freedom. Falintil organized its own food supplies with the people, its auxiliary. Food in the highlands was always scarce but some excess crops were planted by subsistence farmers that allowed discreet harvesting by Falintil. They also hunted for wild game with traditional means in order to save ammunition.

Throughout the struggle, Fretilin and Falintil faced quite strong Indonesian-led local Timorese forces. As part of the strategy of Indonesianization almost 100,000 Muslim Indonesian settlers were migrated to East Timor. The Indonesians also used a special team of Timorese including ex Falintil to scout and seek out guerrilla bases and units.



It was a war of genocidal proportions with massive human rights violations causing the death of one third of the 700,000 population. Close to 60,000 people were killed or died from starvation in the months following the 1975 invasion. Around eighty percent of the mortality caused by the Indonesian occupation has been attributed to disease and hunger, with the bulk of it between 1975 and 1980.

This means that about 102,800 people died between 1974 and 1999, however this repression backfired on the Indonesian regime as the people endured the pain, even the scorched-earth campaign that led to the mass destruction of buildings, the scorched earth of towns and the forced displacement of nearly the entire population following the elections in September 1999.

Intelligence

The Clandestinos were a complex informant network of men, women and children that guaranteed the circulation of information, as well as the supply of food and other goods. They used dead letter boxes to circulate correspondence with couriers called estafeta and through the use of codes in sounds and other ways. Xanana Gusmão said that waging war like this was the art of living with the enemy.

Numbering in their thousands, the clandestine front was responsible for the internal political organization, for facilitating communication between Falintil and overseas representatives and activists through an elaborate network of cells, and in supporting Falintil with food, intelligence, weapons, ammunition, and shelter in the towns. Both the armed and the clandestine support networks had formal, linked command structures. Falintil also regularly received additional food and other materials from individuals in communities near where it operated and who were not a part of the formal command structures.

Outside Sponsorship and Legal Aspects

An interesting aspect of the struggle is that it was a resistance war without a cross border sanctuary for support, resupply and recovery. Very few guerrilla wars have been successful without such an important geographic asset. However, while the battle ground had no adjacent physical sanctuary, it was of another international kind.

The fourth front, referred to as the solidarity movement, contained a small number of people in a few countries who confronted their own governments' apathy and complicity and who supported the diplomatic campaign headed by Jose Ramos-Horta and his colleagues. Many people were attracted to the cause by his commitment, tenacity and charisma.

International diplomacy was the critical third front. Jose Ramos-Horta and his few colleagues outside East Timor with meagre resources and international support kept Portuguese Timor on the United Nations agenda for twenty-four years. Its listing as a 'non-self-governing territory' unlike Aceh or West Papua gave East Timor the legal and moral legitimacy that enabled and obliged the

United Nations to take action when the opportunity arose. However, there was a nadir in 1982 when the majority of support for East Timor fell only to four votes with fifty abstentions.

Deliberate Delay

While Falintil adapted to its political circumstances over the course of its history, it also adapted to its changing operational conditions. There were four turning points in the struggle but none were in the nature of the deliberate delay characteristic of guerrilla warfare.

The first turning point was in 1978-81 when Falintil no longer possessed a large military formation and it had been reduced to a guerrilla movement. There was also a ceasefire in 1978 which Prabowo Subianto broached and which enabled the Indonesian forces to gain ground rapidly. By 1979 Falintil and those Fretilin who remained inside East Timor were scattered, killed or captured and its leadership inside East Timor virtually destroyed. Originally formed as a regular armed force it was forced to transition into a guerrilla force in the face of Indonesia's relative military superiority.

The second turning point was in 1983 to 1985 when the ceasefire failed and a Fretilin coup followed. The second ceasefire came in 1983, when the Resistance was in disarray, and which was later abandoned by the Resistance when it was realized the advantage that it offered Indonesia.

The third turning point was in 1987 when Falintil transformed from a partisan Fretilin force into a non-partisan force that represented the full spectrum of all nationalist parties.

The final and fourth turning point was in the period 1991 to 1998 through the use of the civilian clandestine movement.

Once Indonesian occupation was consolidated and Falintil had shifted from a partisan to a nonpartisan footing, as part of the Conselho Nacional de Resistencia Maubere (CNRM), it consisted of a small and determined, yet symbolically important, guerrilla force linked to a broader civilian resistance movement. Recognising that military victory was impossible this combined movement was guided and motivated by the search for a political solution to Indonesia's occupation. History bears witness that it was a successful strategy.

Hence deliberate delay as a characteristic of guerrilla warfare did not apply throughout the twenty-four years of armed resistance other than the ceasefires and when Falintil could have attacked the militia in October 1999 post the elections, but they chose not to do so as to not give the militia any political or military legitimacy.

I was with Taur Matan Ruak in his cantonment when he was told about the Team Alpha military attack on the religious people near Vera-Kotxo on the Malaileia River at the eastern end of the island in October 1999. I could see that he was visibly upset as some of the religious people were his relatives. Despite this we discussed how it would best if Falintil did not ambush the militia returning to dispose of the bodies.



Otherwise there was no deliberate strategy of delay as Falintil just resisted as the situation demanded. This doctrinal characteristic is best described as strategic patience rather than deliberate delay.

Falintil initially took on the Indonesian Army using conventional military tactics which failed by 1979 when they were forced to revert to a guerrilla campaign. This action in turn was reasonably ineffective until the formation of the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM) in 1988 and the passive resistance movement led by the students which in turn led indirectly to the 1991 Santa Cruz cemetery massacre. This home goal by the Indonesians, rather than the actions of the guerrillas, did more to revive the international condemnation of the Indonesian occupation and stiffen widespread passive resistance than the actions of the guerrillas.

Finally, it was the political decisions by President Habibie and Prime Minister Howard, and not military action that led to the independence vote. Armies not only win wars but they also lose them.

Centralized Planning and Decentralized Execution

The Revolutionary Council of National Resistance (CNRN) was initially formed in 1981. Then the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM) which was created in 1988 to place greater emphasis on the political and diplomatic struggle by bringing together all political forces, Falintil and the underground operating in East Timor and Indonesia, to lead the resistance against Indonesian occupation and to assist the UN mandate.

After nearly one-third of the population at the time was eliminated, the pro-independence movement developed a decentralized and civilian-led resistance movement. This proactive and disruptive non-violent strategy significantly increased the political, economic and military costs of occupation for Indonesia.

The CNRM leadership structure comprised Executive Councils for both the Armed Resistance and the Clandestine Front. Even when captured in 1992, Xanana Gusmao remained the titular head of the Resistance although Taur Matan Ruak was the effective leader of the struggle in country. The National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT) was formed in 1998 when there was a prospect of autonomy.

From 1975 Falintil was the armed wing of Fretilin, then in 1987 Falintil became a national liberation army at the direction of Xanana Gusmao so that it was not linked to or dominated by any party. Falintil was mainly a disciplined and a well-trained army. Xanana Gusmao reorganized Falintil into military sectors and seven companies in 1984 and by 1999 Falintil was organized in four regions with subordinate Group Commanders, ten strong in each group.

All Falintil units had political commissars to explain the military and political line to soldiers, that they would share food with the people and help those that were sick. It is not known if they should be more properly called political assistants and it is not known what

happened to these functionaries when Falintil was no longer associated with any political party. The policy on prisoners was to re-educate them on colonial aggression and to overcome the desire of people to kill them. It is not known if this statement is completely true or if it was guerrilla propaganda.

However Major Mau Buti, the Veterans Commissioner said that,

"Through the long process of the resistance, we learned a lot. Reconciliation really started with the first meeting of Xanana and Mario in 1983, after that we didn't kill Indonesian prisoners anymore. One time after fighting near Luka, two Indonesians surrendered, but we didn't kill them, instead the commander told them 'Go to Jakarta and tell your families that we are not fighting the Indonesian people, but only the Suharto regime.' From 1975 to 1979, people thought only about killing, but after the support bases were destroyed and Xanana Gusmao changed the political line then people's attitudes began to change and they thought about reconciliation."

Offensive Action

I was with Taur Matan Ruak in his Uamori cantonment when a captured Indonesian army captain was escorted into his camp. His own soldiers had abandoned him in early September 1999, just following the electoral ballot.

On hearing that he was in captivity and possibly Kopassus, I had asked that he be brought in from the village of Solboda, some two weeks walk away. He was Taur Matan Ruak's prisoner, but the plan was to indirectly question him to establish if he was Kopassus. As it turned out he was just an infantry officer but the interviewing charade by a trained Australian Intelligence Corps interrogator so amused Taur Matan Ruak that he just walked around muttering "prisoner, new concept" over and over again.

Taur Matan Ruak quickly realised the opportunity to be gained in exchanging one Indonesian Army Captain for over 200,000 East Timorese refugees who had been forced out of the country against their will and he warmed to the concept of keeping the Captain alive, just a little longer. This is a most unusual practice for guerrillas, as it was for our own commandos with some captured Japanese in the Pacific in the Second World War.

In this respect the East Timorese resistance is set apart from all other conflicts by one shining quality. That is Falintil did not target civilians, although the terror campaigns of the Indonesian Army and the settlement of 100,000 Indonesians in the villages and on the lands of the people of East Timor were extreme provocations and, some would argue, justified any means of resistance.

After suffering for so long, and following the large-scale planned terrorism by the Indonesia Army and its proxy militias in 1999, it would not have been surprising if a wave of revenge and retribution engulfed the volatile people of East Timor, after the jubilation of



freedom. Remarkably at the direction of Xanana Gusmao and Taur Matan Ruak, this did not happen.

How did Fretilin and Falintil avoid succumbing to the terrorism that has engulfed so many resistance movements around the world? The character of the resistance evolved and the ultimate decision to conduct the guerrilla war in a principled way, without murdering civilians or resorting to other atrocities, as so many such movements have done, was by no means a foregone conclusion. Indeed, in the early years there were distinct failures of principle. Fretilin and Falintil did kill some dissenting people and collaborators early on and there was the internal failed coup in 1984.

Topography and Environment

The island of Timor is culturally quite diverse as there are many language groupings. The further you go eastward the more Melanesian are the people ethnically and linguistically. While West Timor is comparatively flatter, East Timor has a rugged mountain spine that hampers conventional military operations and the ground provides some assistance to guerrilla warfare. There are karst cave areas and interestingly Z Special Unit had a discrete course on caving relative to Timor in the Second World War.

Falintil also used the caves as an underground asset. The topography afforded Falintil the ability to hide noting that throughout the 1990s they were a very small and reasonably inactive guerrilla force. Their aim was to survive so that in the event of international support they could rise to take control. The Resistance was always stronger in the eastern half of the country because of ethnic reasons and probably also due to the Indonesians wiping out the resistance on the border early on. After the encirclement disaster at Matabian, Falintil became much more centred on the east.

Mobility

Throughout the struggle there were many forced and self-initiated displacements of parts of, and even of the total population thereby making the populous inherently and strategically mobile. Fretilin and Falintil suffered major divisions and schisms along political and ethnic lines which impacted the characteristic of mobility in this guerrilla war.

Their Mount Matebian redoubt, which was the fixed defence strategy soon failed. Falintil dispersed and much of the movement in the west of the country disintegrated particularly from February 1979 with the surrender of some key Falintil. 1979 was a year of strategic defeat with 90 percent of the fighters and weapons lost from the positional-based defence disaster requiring a significant change in strategy.

With the transition to guerrilla warfare in 1988, Falintil became more mobile, espousing the guerrilla creed of 'shots to the north, head south' supported by the clandestine organization inside population centres and resettlement camps.

However, after the fall of Mount Matebian and Natarbora in 1978, Fretilin and Falintil were then only

really operating in part of the centre and mainly in the east. The March to August 1983 ceasefire also ended badly for Fretilin and Falintil, which was then followed by the putsch crisis of early 1984. By late 1980 Falintil had less than 100 fighters. In 1996 there were about 1,888 men and by 1998 about 242 men. Their ranks then swelled by August 1999 to about 1,500 fighters.

Surprise

The characteristic of surprise in guerrilla warfare certainly applied in the tactical ambushing actions by Falintil. It was less so strategically applied in the field, however several startling actions kept the movement in the international spotlight including the requests for political asylum at various embassies in Jakarta from 1993 onwards and the demonstration at the US Embassy in Jakarta in 1994, the protests at the Dutch and Russian Embassies in Jakarta in 1995 and the awarding of the Noble Peace prize to Belo and Ramos-Horta in 1996.

The demonstrations during the Pope's visit in 1988 embarrassed the Indonesian Government. They showed the existence of an indigenous resistance movement to the outside world and it galvanized the population.

The Political Situation

Who would have thought that the economic crisis in Asia and the downfall of President Suharto would be the trigger points for subsequent jubilation in East Timor after twenty four years of oppressive occupation by the Indonesian Army?

In hindsight the Asian financial crisis precipitated independence. That crisis caused the downfall of Suharto and when it brought Habibie to the presidency, the rest was history. Without Habibie's decision, there would probably not have been any popular consultation or any United Nations and INTERFET involvement in East Timor.

In 1998-1999 Falintil were weak and their strongest cards were the Timorese youth movements. Without the political crisis it is probable that East Timor would still be under Indonesian rule albeit with considerable Aceh-style provincial autonomy

East Timor remained unstable throughout the occupation and it belied constant Indonesian propaganda to the contrary. It explains why East Timor remained a political and psychological embarrassment to Jakarta.

There is no systematic account of Indonesian casualties but most probably occurred during skirmishes and ambushes in rural areas. There are 3,804 names on the Seroja monument in Jakarta consisting of 2,777 Indonesian soldiers and police and 1,527 East Timorese irregulars who were killed in action. These names are combat deaths from many units right across Indonesia and they are higher than those acknowledged during the occupation.

The number of Indonesian wounded can only be guessed, but with the three to one, wounded to killed in action ratio, there was likely about 10,800 casualties. By



comparison Australia lost less than a seventh of this number of deaths in the immensely controversial Vietnam War from 1962 to 1972. The war in East Timor rebounded against all of Indonesian society, albeit in subterranean ways and not on television, in thousands of bedrooms and coffee shops across Indonesia.

The Tactical Situation

When Rick Moor and I met Kopassus Captain Prabowo Subianto in Jakarta in late 1981 he told us that in 1979 the Indonesian Army was still receiving mortar fire from Falintil positions. He attributed this capability to the involvement of two Portuguese Special Operations Majors who had assisted the East Timorese to establish Falintil in 1975.

Prabowo further advised that amongst other things many members of Falantil had previously served in the Portuguese Colonial Army and they had combat experience in Angola and Mozambique. He also said that the Portuguese program to develop Falantil included leadership selection and training and the stockpiling of weapons and ammunition. The first two Falantil Commanders had indeed been Sergeant Majors in the Portuguese Colonial Army.

When Taur Matan Ruak first met Major General Peter Cosgrove at Uaimori he advised the general that,

"With respect to the problem of reconciliation, this has been initiated by Falintil since 1983 when negotiations commenced with Indonesian generals. At that time Indonesia was not very honest and hence there was a lot more trouble. Just recently while the UN were present, TNI presented themselves as honest but the same thing happened again. It is a cultural thing for Indonesians. They always lie, rob and kill. We knew most Indonesian generals as they went up through the ranks and they killed people. It is not an issue of brain power. They perform wrong things compared with constructive things. We have enough information to never believe Indonesians. Any process of reconciliation with Indonesia will not work".

This meant that in the eyes of the Resistance, the way ahead with Indonesia was unequivocal. Indeed, it was clear that the fledgling state of East Timor would not even consider disarming its guerrilla forces until some diplomatic arrangements had been put in place with Indonesia to guarantee its security.

As Ernie Chamberlain accurately summarizes in his book, it is a truism that Falintil did not win in a military sense; rather that the Indonesian Army lost. It was not violent resistance that liberated the territory from Indonesian occupation.

The Falintil presence in the mountains helped boost morale, but it was the non-violent struggle that achieved the victory. The whole population fought for independence, even Indonesians, and the action of the people was decisive.

Falintil could never have hoped to have won a strategic military victory on the ground, only to keep the tactical flame alive. Independence only came as a result of the general Indonesian economic collapse.

There is a recording of a secret interview with David Alex who was the Deputy Chief of Staff of Falintil and responsible for Region II in 1991. There was another interview again in 1995 when he would not state the number of tactical engagements by Falintil, but he spoke of some with a permanent and constant presence, causing Indonesian and Falintil casualties.

He said that as the war moved into its third decade prolonged resistance was only possible by an essential harboring of resources based upon fighting with wisdom to save men and material. He said that they would only attack the weak parts of the enemy and avoid their strong positions. He also said that the guerrillas fought with captured weapons, wore captured Indonesian uniforms and bought rubber boots from Indonesians during the wet season.

After the collapse of the Mount Matebian resistance base in 1978, the engagements became exclusively of the hit and run type, which is characteristic of guerrilla warfare. In only a very few years did any Indonesian unit suffer more than ten combat deaths.

Tactically it was a people's war and a people's army that launched many small-scale offensives. They were small guerrilla attacks or a concentration with a larger number of fighters when the situation was suitable. The guerrillas focused on supply lines and occasional raids with some fierce fighting in villages in the early days.

The reality is that a guerrilla army does not need to win the war in a clear-cut military victory. As long as it survives, as long as it keeps bleeding the enemy, the enemy will be forced to come to negotiations at one time or another. It was the shift to non-violence without abandoning the diplomatic card of a return to armed violence that was effective.

The option of armed escalation maintained the high financial cost of containment for Indonesia, the belief in the possibility of ultimate victory for the clandestine youth, and the concern of the international community that East Timor could turn disastrously embarrassing again.

Demobilization and the Falintil Reinsertion Assistance Program (FRAP)

Two months into INTERFET, Major General Peter Cosgrove initiated his '3P' policy to achieve the progressive laying down of arms, the progressive reconciliation between Falintil and the Militia and the progressive introduction of Falintil into government service.

When INTERFET handed control of East Timor back to the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in February 2000, the disarmament, demobilization and re-integration of some 1,300 Falintil members then largely took place through the Falintil Reinsertion Assistance Program (FRAP) which was funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank.

The FRAP was implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) from January to December 2001. The FRAP provided transport from the



cantonment location at Aileu to communities, a five-month transitional safety net of \$100 a month, a small project worth approximately \$500 per beneficiary, training, and medical referrals.

The small projects consisted of livelihood or income generation ventures designed by individuals or cooperatives of former Falintil who were working together with FRAP staff. The most popular schemes were small shops, fuel stations, livestock, and transport cooperatives although many of these seeded businesses later failed.

On 1 February 2001, Falintil was disbanded and Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor Leste (F-FDTL) was established with 650 Falintil absorbed into the first battalion. This action excluded more than 1,300 Falintil fighters and it upset many guerrillas who thought that by simply being Falintil that they would become F-FDTL.

Taur Matan Ruak stated that *"some have lost their families, some have not got married because of the fighting and some have nothing at all, no clothes, no furniture."*

A final evaluation report of the FRAP in June 2002 concluded that the program was broadly successful, particularly in mitigating the immediate concern of unrest in the cantonment at Aileu. The report found that the program had achieved its objectives regarding the social and economic reintegration of demobilized Falintil and that it had generated discernible and ongoing benefits that contributed to security and stability.

It found that despite initial grievances at not joining F-FDTL, the FRAP beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with civilian life. Contextual factors also worked in favour of the demobilization process, including the discipline of Falintil itself, the small size of the country and the recovery of the economy during 2001 and 2002.

Rotary Australia and the East Timor Roofing & Training (ETRT) Project

Despite an initial lack of cooperation by some IOM officials, and while not specifically mentioned in the FRAP evaluation report, through sheer dogged persistence and determination by many Rotarians in Australia over 20 years, ETRT has been demonstratively successful nationally compared with other schemes, both financially and socially. ETRT had a direct impact on demobilisation of 116 fighters including the Clandestinos.

Indeed, when Xanana Gusmao was President and he visited Australia he described ETRT as the most successful NGO project in East Timor. The location of the manufacturing factory in Bacau was selected by Xanana Gusmao and Taur Matan Ruak due to its roughly central location on the north coast, as well as it having a large population of Falintil including Clandestinos at the time. Clandestino Eduardo Belo Soares Gattot was involved with the selection of the sites. The proximity to the Don Bosco College at Fatamaca was also a major factor.

ETRT was very successful in aiding the demobilisation of Falintil in Bacau and to a limited extent in Dili with the first steel rolled in late 2000, although it took some time for Rotary to establish a Timorese workforce and regular management from Australia.

ETRT made a strong contribution to demobilization as Rotary was able to deal directly with Falintil after the original plan which was drafted by Jim Truscott and Bruce Parker was given the go ahead by the Australian Army. Rotary then worked directly with Falintil through Eduardo Belo Soares Gattot and under the personal direction of Taur Matan Ruak.

This close working relationship meant that preference was able to be given to all former members of the resistance to support their entry into civilian life. Resistance women, and all other women were also encouraged to apply and further preference was given to houses for Falintil orphans.

When the Australian Government decided not to initially help financially for political reasons, Bruce Parker contacted the Rotary Club of Doncaster in February 2000 and they immediately agreed to the project. The Rotary Club of Melbourne also quickly came on board followed by the Club at Lilydale. The initial funding was generously donated by individual Rotarians and several Australian companies together with a large grant from the Shell Foundation to the training centre and Dili institute. A generator was donated by Cummins Diesel and BHP contributed some steel. The Australian Government did later make a generous donation through AusAID before 2002.

The first machine was installed at Bacau in November 2000. The curving machine was installed in April 2002 and the first second hand truck was donated by the Lilydale Club about 2002. A second mill was installed in September 2011 to make U and C-section purlins and rafters and trusses. The second new truck was delivered in December 2012.

Over the last twenty years, ETRT has made roofs for schools, orphanages, clinics, community houses, workshops and hospitals. Furthermore, Rotary has funded teachers' scholarships, university scholarships, sporting equipment and much more. The donations total over \$1m with another \$1m worth of equipment established in Bacau.

Rotary also set up a training school for basic building skills and a micro-credit bank in Bacau, and together with the Rotary Club of Balwyn, a Rotary business centre in Dili. ETRT has employed up to thirty Timorese men and women, becoming probably the major employer in the district.

A large number of trainees when through the Training Centre quite separate from ETR; maybe as many as 250, although it not known how many of them were Falintil. ETR has only actually employed 16 to 20 people at any one time, but again it is not known how many of them were Falintil.

In 2001 ETRT began making rainwater tanks. With no reticulated water supply, it was usually a young girl's job to fetch the day's water, sometimes kilometers away and



as a result, she was too late to attend school. Rain water collected in tanks has eased that situation as ETRT has made many hundreds of tanks persuading the people that still water could be healthy.

Some years later, ETRT made seed silos from small tanks with airtight fittings. Before tanks, a canvas sack suspended from a rafter or a tree would store the yearly rice or sorghum seed. Vermin would attack them and one third to a half could be lost. With the silos, igniting a small candle and clamping down the lid would use all the oxygen and kill all the vermin. A farmer was heard to say that he was able to sell seeds for the first time in his life.

By 2005, the operation had become fully self-sustaining as there have been no contributions from any organisation since then. Tight controls were put in place to ensure that the sale of goods was always profitable. Additional machinery was purchased with internally generated funds amounting to \$893k between 2008 and 2016 including new vehicles \$217k, rolling mills \$237k, forklift \$50k, tank making machines \$119k, drilling rig \$36k and metal folder \$37k. ETRT now makes an annual profit of \$300k to \$500k. The business is proceeding with significant funding with \$500k in stock and another \$500k in working capital.

ETRT has been strict in making sure that all product is supplied to Australian and international standards. A

great deal of construction in East Timor has been completed to inferior quality standards as it has been evidenced by many government schools losing roofing and structure and that should be a matter of serious concern to the local population.

Using internally generated funds ETRT has donated in excess of \$1.5m consisting of large amounts of building materials to the local communities including schools, government and others built or restored \$355k, water projects \$127k, water tanks \$89k, one thousand grain silos for subsistence farmers \$186k, roofs for communities \$345k, clinics \$121k, student scholarships \$60k with the total value of donations. This is a story of true success and it shows the power of Rotary in assisting third world countries to recover.

Rotary has not sought any financial payback and the Clubs have directed that their financial contributions are to be used in country. This unconditional aspect of the ETRT project since its inception was included in its constitution so that it had to be handed over as a self-sustaining entity to a non-commercial organisation for the benefit of the people of East Timor.

This handover took place in December 2018 and ETRT is now owned and managed by the Don Bosco College. East Timor Roofing and Training has retained its name to this day and a fascinating chapter in Australia's military and social history has finally closed.



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LIVE NATION

Why was an Indonesian the only AIB Operative to wear a VC?

Visit the Julius Tahija Family Museum in Jakarta!

By

Jim Truscott & Rick Moor

It is a little known fact that there is a significant story about Indonesian, Dutch and Australian military history hidden right under the noses of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta. The Julius Tahija Family Museum is a memorial to the only Operative in the Allied Intelligence Bureau (AIB) to wear a VC. To understand the reason why, you must appreciate the strategic significance of the Tanimbar Islands in the defence of Australian air-sea gap in WWII.

Operation PLOVER was an Australian-Dutch military operation in July 1942 to regain control over several small Indonesian islands in the Dutch East Indies north of Darwin. In March 1942 the islands were not yet under Japanese occupation but there were strong pro-Japanese sentiments on many islands. The Netherlands did not maintain any military garrisons on most islands relying on local police instead. In June 1942 the local people on Saumlaki in the Tanimbar Islands and Toel on Kai Island rebelled against Dutch authority but the uprising was quelled by the police.

Realizing the strategic importance of these islands on 27 June 1942, General MacArthur ordered HMAS *Warrnambool* and HMAS *Southern Cross* to land 80 soldiers from the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL) including Sergeant Julius Tahija and 12 men on Saumlaki to defend the islands. They did not expect any Japanese reaction but the RAAF made several reconnaissance flights and bombed the islands just before the landing at Dobo on the Aru Islands on 12 July and at Saumlaki on 13 July in order to intimidate the population.

On 28 July HMAS *Southern Cross* and HMAS *Chinampa* were sailing to strengthen the small garrison on Saumlaki but at 0410 on 30 July a Japanese force of about 300 soldiers in two destroyers landed on the island. The defenders killed about 200 Japanese but seven KNIL soldiers were also killed. The remaining six soldiers withdrew into the bush and six hours later the island was in Japanese hands and the Japanese ships moved away. At 0930 the engine on HMAS *Southern Cross* failed and HMAS *Chinampa* anchored off shore Saumlaki. The commander went ashore but was shelled and returned on board awaiting the arrival of HMAS *Southern Cross*. The next morning HMAS *Chinampa* approached the Saumlaki jetty to destroy it but it was fired on by Japanese, killing the Commander and one sailor. The two ships withdrew and returned to Darwin on 2 August.

Anticipating that his force would be wiped out by the overwhelming odds they faced Sergeant Tahija planned their defences and escape route in detail. After engaging the force as it approached the beach he



Jean & Julius Tahija

conducted a very effective fighting withdrawal, decimating the enemy and saving his own force. Sergeant Tahija and five other KNIL soldiers evaded for 3 to 4 days to Larat Island and with refugees they sailed and landed on Bathurst Island on 14 August 1942. In the family museum in Jakarta you will see the compass and the map used by Sergeant Julius Tahija as he sailed south to Darwin with what was left of his small force.

He was awarded the Militaire Willems Orde, the Dutch equivalent of the VC and the full citation is on display at the family museum. Only two such Dutch awards were made during WWII and he was the only Indonesian in the in the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army to receive it and only one of four awarded to Indonesian soldiers throughout 200 years of colonial rule. After the award ceremony in Melbourne on 27 October 1942 he was invited to join Z Special Unit. The Dutch, along with the UK and Australian Governments provided the initial funding to establish the Inter-Allied Services Department (ISD) which was the forerunner to the Services Reconnaissance Department (SRD) and the original cover name for Special Operations Australia (SOA). The NEI Section was an integral part of ISD until May 1943 when a new division, NEFIS III, was established as part of the overall reorganisation of the allied Special Operations Forces within the AIB. NEFIS was split into three sections, NEFIS I General Intelligence, NEFIS II Security and NEFIS III Special Intelligence and Special Operations. NEFIS III had little success as the agents lacked experience and expertise. It was also difficult to win support from the local population as they feared Japanese reprisals. NEFIS III and its predecessor the NEI section of the ISD sent 36 teams into enemy territory. Over 250 agents were involved in these operations and 39 lost their lives.

It is likely that Julius Tahija was initially posted to ISD



along with the rest of the Dutch soldiers in Australia. He may have been interviewed by US personnel from the G2 Intelligence section and asked if he wished to continue fighting the Japanese. Julius Tahija served as a Lieutenant and deputy intelligence instructor in the first cadre at the Z Experimental Station in Cairns and then he went on a NEFIS III operation in Ceram to gather information in the Ambon area called Operation FIRTEE where he and 9 men landed at Medion in late 1944. It was successful despite several failed attempts to land. It is not clear from scant records what other operations he was in but he described them as straightforward in his autobiography, he also noted that each of us carried death lollies, colourless cyanide pills that would kill instantly. His leadership and planning abilities were well recognised and he was commissioned and promoted to Captain by the end of hostilities.

He returned to Jakarta on 15 October 1945 and he resigned his commission in April 1946 to enter politics where he served as a Cabinet Minister in the State of Eastern Indonesia. In 1951 he was selected by Sukarno because of his prominence to work with the Americans in PT Caltex Pacific Indonesia. From 1966 he was Director of the Company's Board for many years. He later had a significant involvement in the Gull Force Association Pilgrimages to Ambon. In 1995, he was featured in Horizon Beyond part of the Time Books International 'Entrepreneurs of Asia' Series. He married Jean Falkner Walters on 22 November 1946. She was the only female Dentistry graduate from the University of Melbourne in the class of 1941 and in 1998 Jean Tahija published her story *An Unconventional Woman*. Julius Tahija was born on 13 July 1916 in Surabaya of Ambonese parents and he died on the morning of 30 July 2002, exactly 50 years to the hour of the Saumlaki battle. It is very eerie how that happened with him receiving a 50-year life bonus.

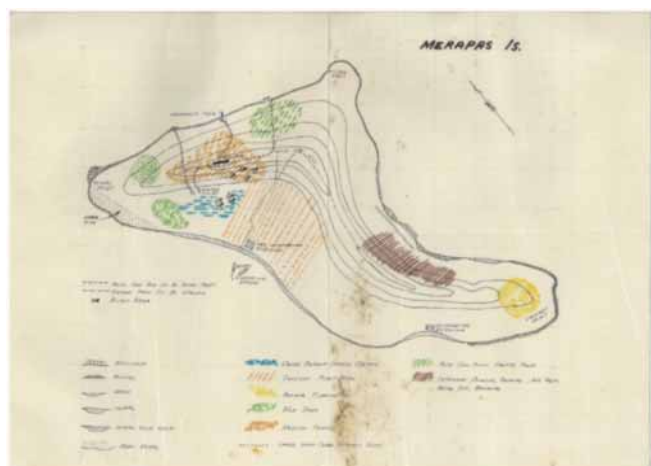
Julius and Jean Tahija have two sons George and Sjakon. Today they are businessmen and philanthropists. The Tahija family continue to play prominent roles in Indonesia's business and medical communities. They also support and give generously to many worthwhile causes and the Dr Jean Falkner Tahija lecture theatre at the University of Melbourne is named in honour of a most extraordinary woman from an extraordinary family.

In mid-2019 George and Sjakon Tahija plan to visit Merapas Island in the Riau Archipelago on the edge of the South China Sea to possibly bring home one of the four rock sangars that are still there in the canoe hide in the mangroves from Operation RIMAU. Only three things have ever come back from RIMAU. Electronic intercepts of Japanese communications, the remains of the Limpet mine that I found on Taipai Island in 1994 just below the ground where Lieutenant Commander Donald Davidson and Corporal Archie Campbell were found by the Japanese with rigor mortis set in, and also the cyanide

pill that Major Walter Chapman, the draft conducting officer on the submarine, used to commit suicide in the UK in 1964 after being interviewed by a historian. When the government refused to consider posthumous awards for the 23 Operatives, the Commando Association specially designed a Commando Cross of Valour for them in 1978.



George & Laurel Tahija (L) Jim Truscott (C), Shelley & Sjakon Tahija (R) in Jakarta December 2018



Map of Merapas Island showing the locations used by the RIMAU Operatives while awaiting the failed submarine rendezvous in July 1944



Commando Cross of Valour posthumously presented to the RIMAU Operatives in 1978



Rock Sangars, Canoe Hide, Jim Truscott and Indonesian Navy lighthouse keepers on Merapas Island in the South China Sea in July 1994

Rip Memorial Service Remembers Lost Commandos

A low-key but solemn service at Shortlands Bluff on Sunday, February 17 remembered the three soldiers who drowned during a military exercise at Port Phillip Heads in 1960.

President of the Australian Commando Association - Victoria, Colonel Doug Knight, conducted the service. Colonel Knight and the Officer Commanding 2 Commando Company addressed the gathering and outlined the events of the night 59 years earlier.

Many local people helped on that fateful night in 1960, including Geoff Beasley, the Ferrier brothers, and others on rescue vessels such as the Queenscliff lifeboat, the shark boat Acquilla and the ferry Mari Ann, that still sails from Queenscliff.

Local community members Geoff Beasley, Phil Meekins and Keith Stowers joined post-WW2 commandos and Amphibious Platoon veterans, with families and friends, who attended the service to honour the lost men. Each of the Queenscliff men had a unique involvement with the tragic events of the evening of February 17, 1960 or its aftermath.

The men of 2 Commando Company had been based at the Point Lonsdale Bight camp for 16 days of training and military exercises. Towards the end of the camp their final tactical exercise was to cross the bay and raid the Officer Cadet School at Portsea, supported by a drop of their airborne comrades who were ready to board a DC3-Dakota aircraft at the Laverton air base.

At 6pm the highly trained young Commandos set off from the Lonsdale Bight beach in an 'attack' flotilla of kayaks, three-man and 10-man inflatable Zodiacs and various safety craft.

A couple of hours into the exercise a fierce eight-knot ebb tide caught the raiding party and swept



*The Officer Commanding 2 Commando Company addresses the service at Shortlands Bluff.
Photo Trevor Bergman.*



*Former service members, family and friends get together after the service.
Photo Trevor Bergman.*



*Geoff Beasley goes aboard the abandoned DUKW in 1960.
Photo supplied.*



*Geoff Beasley, left, and Phil Meekins were both involved in the Rip incident.
Photo supplied.*

it out to sea towards the Rip. The outgoing tide was met head-on by the prevailing southwesterly wind, and huge waves, later estimated at about 10 metres in height, pushed the craft backwards and capsized many of them.

Many of the two-man crews were picked up by larger safety craft 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.

Warrant Officer George 'Taffy' Drakopoulos of 2 Commando Company, and the driver of an amphibious DUKW, Pte Eddie Meyer, from 41 Amphibious Platoon, drowned when their vessel sank. Colonel Knight acknowledged the presence of WO2 Drakopoulos' widow Rita who attended the service with her extended family.

Geoff Beasley spent many years with the Queenscliff Lifeboat Service and in the 5am darkness following the Rip tragedy he and Colin Ferrier, with Constable Ernie Porter, were commissioned to take Colin's ferry Mari-Ann to meet the pilot ship Akuna that was standing offshore, and take aboard the Commandos who had been rescued by the Akuna's lifeboat. Near the end of the creek, as it then was, Geoff sighted an army DUKW moving in circles with its engine still running. It had been abandoned by its crew when it was swamped and about to sink, and the skipper lashed its rudder and left the motor



on when the Akuna's lifeboat rescued them. Geoff went aboard and in the now calm waters he dropped its anchor and switched off the motor. A newspaper photo at the time shows Geoff climbing aboard the abandoned DUKW.

Now a Queenscliff resident of many years, Phil Meekins was present at the 1960 annual camp and was already an experienced Commando. As a qualified small craft operator, a few nights before the Rip incident he was called out in the small hours to crew a Zodiac inflatable craft and retrieve the Unit's whaler that had dragged its anchor.

Due to the cold and wet Phil caught pneumonia, and perhaps fortuitously was admitted to the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital a few hours before the 75-man raiding group left the beach on its ill-fated attack. Phil later said he wished he had been with his comrades at that time, but realised that perhaps, in a two-edged way, fate had been kind to him.

Keith Stowers was involved in the local campaign to prevent the development of the memorial site and the surrounding precinct, including the nearby Naval cairns.

Keith said, "The preservation of the Commando memorial is certainly a wonderful outcome as not only does it commemorate the tragic loss of life in 1960, but also the involvement of many members of the Queenscliff community and its combined services in the rescue efforts at that time."

Among the attendees at the service and lunch, Ian Halliburton travelled from Port Hedland in WA, joined by his brother Hugh. Jim Trainor was at the service despite health problems, but did not attend the lunch. Roy Hemmings' daughter Kym Meade travelled

from Queensland to join us. Roy's sister and brother-in-law, Betty and Geoffrey Best also attended. Our 126 Signals comrades supported their fellow members, as always.

Next year is the sixtieth anniversary of the Rip incident and the Australian Commando Association-Victoria will conduct a service at the Shrine in Melbourne and a special commemoration service at the Queenscliff memorial.



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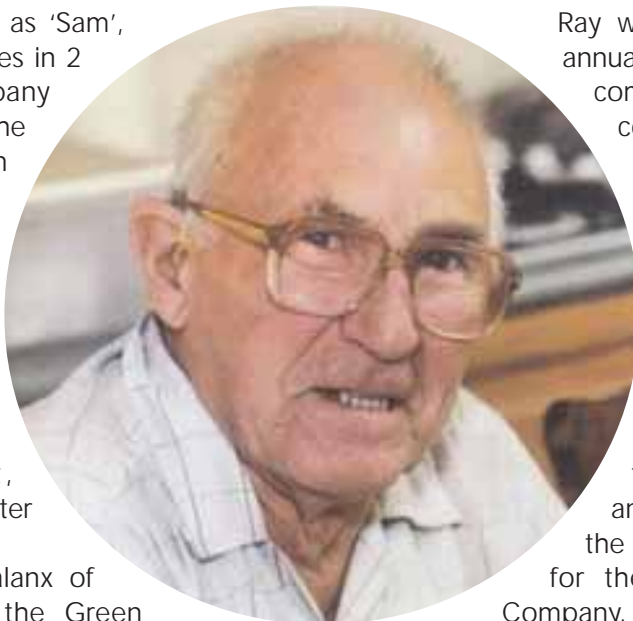
3/165608 Raymond William Sanders

1 July 1928 - 23 November 2018

2 Commando Company 1955 – 1963

His family knew Ray as 'Sam', but to his colleagues in 2 Commando Company he was Ray. He enlisted in the fledgling Company in December 1955 with the rank of recruit, suggesting he had no previous military experience. He joined soon after Taffy Drakopoulos, Don Bergman and other "originals" of the recently raised post-WW2 Commando Unit, under its first OC, Major Peter Seddon.

Ray was in the first phalanx of members to be awarded the Green Beret in August 1956, under Major John Hutchison, and qualified on the Frogman course with John O'Rourke, Ted Malone and others in early 1957. The following year he completed his Basic Parachute Course.



Ray was present during the 1960 annual camp and the Rip incident, completing the Small Scale Raids course, and in June that year was promoted to substantive Sergeant. He was appointed Company Sergeant Major after the tragic loss of CSM Taffy Drakopoulos in the Rip tragedy and formally promoted to Warrant Officer rank in 1961.

Ray's wife Carmel said they married in October 1955 and soon after Ray enlisted in the Unit, following the publicity for the newly raised Commando Company. Carmel said, "Ray loved the Commandos", but no doubt due to the demands of family and working life, Ray discharged from the Unit at his own request in mid-1963, after more than seven years of dedicated service. He had the respect of all of the men and senior officers in the Company, including the five Officers Commanding he served under, and to whom he gave steadfast and highly professional support.

Carmel and Ray's son Jeffrey and daughter Jennifer pre-deceased Ray. No doubt following in Ray's footsteps, their son Mark retired from 30 years of service with the rank of Warrant Officer Class One.

Carmel said she was surprised and extremely touched that so many of Ray's comrades attended his service last December and expressed her thanks for the support and wonderful tributes they gave.

All Association members offer their sincere sympathy to Carmel, Mark and his family, and all of Ray's extended family.



Dutchy Hollands inspects Ray's parachute gear in the 1950s.

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20120924 Albert 'Taff' Boyer

45 Commando Royal Marines

A staunch friend of the ACA Victoria

In his service with the Royal Marines Taff was one of the originals trained to function as an Operational Skier with 45 Commando in 1955 - one of the first in the RM. He trained recruits in Norway, and when serving with the UN did ski patrols along the Finnish border. In later years he remarked, "I feel cold now, even when it's 15 degrees - especially being a 'Wrinklie'".

He served in Libya with B Troop 45 Cdo in 3 Cdo Bde during 1956, when they were hastily recalled to Malta to help deal with the civil unrest following the independence referendum.

Taff served under Colonel Jack Richards. Coincidentally former OC of 2 Commando Company and ACA Victoria patron, General Sir Phillip Bennett, was posted to England in 1957 for commando training, prior to taking up his posting to 2 Company and also served under Jack Richards, with a tour of duty in Malta during those unsettled times. Their relationship led to the formal affiliation of 2 Cdo Coy with 45 Cdo Royal Marines.

Taff migrated to Australia in 1979. After living in Springvale for 19 years he moved south - and he said he found every day on the Peninsula a pleasure, come rain or shine.

Soon after his arrival in Melbourne Taff helped maintain the strong bonds between the two affiliated Units. He was a great liaison person between ACA Vic and his Victorian RM Association. Both groups shared many events over the years.

In the 1980s John Addison and Taff were on the committee that worked towards the first Special Forces Day at Fort Gellibrand. Since the early 1980s Taff maintained friendships with Glen Doyle, Jim Trainor, John Addison, Bruce Parker and many others since.

In the late 1990s Taff represented the RMA on a joint committee to establish the viability of a Special Forces Club in Melbourne city.

Taff strongly supported ACA Vic members who travelled overseas, visiting 2 Cdo Coy's affiliate Unit, 45 Cdo. Taff went out of his way to help arrange these visits, providing associate membership of the RMA, and supplying comprehensive information.

As a measure of his close ties over many years with 2 Commando Association and its successors, Taff attended the service of a good friend, the late legendary 2 Cdo officer, Ted Malone: "A man you would definitely seek out in a crowd . . . Our RMA lads will certainly miss him", Taff said.



*Taff Boyer at the 2 Commando Coy
50th anniversary celebrations in 2005.
Photo Sean Burton.*

Taff was secretary and later president of the Victoria Branch of the Royal Marines Association for over 25 years before retiring in recent years due to ill health.

One of Taff's final acts was the signing of the "Deed of Gift" documents as president on the handing over of the Royal Marines' historical collection into the care of the ACA Vic.

A large number of ACA Victoria members joined Taff's RMA comrades at a service for Taff at the Ringwood RSL last November.

All members of the Commando Association offer their sympathy and kind thoughts to Taff's family.

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A distinguished doctor with a strong social conscience

VX90284 (V56817) Dr Roland (Roly) Good
2/3rd Independent Company/Commando Squadron
8 October 1919 - 11 November 2018

Roly Good passed away on Remembrance Day at the age of 99. His son Ian said, "11th of the 11th – a fitting date for Dad. He went peacefully."

Roly was a strong young man, and played a lot of sport. As teenagers Roly and a good friend, Barry Dexter (later 2/6 Independent Coy), and Barry's brothers David (later 2/2 Independent Coy) and Stephen rode from Warragul to Tidal River on fixed-wheel push-bikes (and along unsealed roads) – great training for three future Commandos! In later years he recalled he had no problems physically serving in the 2/3rd, and most of his comrades coped remarkably well, considering the conditions they endured.

Roly served with the 2/3rd Commando Squadron in New Guinea, and later in Borneo, as a medical orderly. Roly joined the 2/3rd after its return to Australia from New Caledonia, before it sailed to Papua New Guinea in February 1943. Roly said, "We had a charismatic leader in Major George Warfe; he inspired us to do all sorts of things that unfortunately are done in war."

'The 2/3rd patrolled deep into Japanese held territory, setting ambushes and gathering intelligence. They also made a number of attacks against Japanese positions, in order to harass them to keep them off balance and also defend the 3rd Division's flanks. During its time in New Guinea, the 2/3rd suffered heavy casualties. They were credited with having killed 969 Japanese. Against this, the 2/3rd



Roly Good, left, and good friend and 2/3rd comrade Ray Roberts place a wreath at the Tidal River Memorial, Cairn in 2004.



2/3rd Independent Company in action during the Battle for the Ridges outside Salamaua, July 1943. Medic Roly Good, centre, tends to Pte Robbie Robbins, wounded moments before in the shoulder and back. Picture: Damien Parer. Australian War Memorial 127978.

suffered 65 killed, 119 wounded, and 226 men evacuated for medical reasons.' [1]

After a period in Queensland, "...we were sent off to Borneo, which had nothing to do really with winning the war – it just meant we lost a few men, the Japanese lost a few more, and the only thing is we did manage to save a few prisoners... and then the atom bomb dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima and that was the end of the war", Roly later said.

Roly always went out on patrols with the other soldiers, and carried a pistol, because the Japanese took no notice of the Red Cross – they hadn't signed the Geneva Convention on treatment of prisoners. Later in the war, in Borneo, he said he probably went out on more patrols than anybody else, because his platoon commander said he must go with any group that went out, and, Roly said, "There were numerous small patrol groups, of about five or six, so I did a lot of walking!"

Roly qualified as a doctor after the war. After years of study and a number of locum positions, while a



resident at the Horsham Hospital a friend invited him to go to Korea. Roly joined the Save the Children Fund as a medical officer when the Korean War was still raging, and worked in Pusan, an area the Americans managed to protect from the invading North Koreans. He said he saw all sorts of poverty and corruption. Later, when the Armistice was signed, he established his own health centre, employing a Korean doctor and nurses, and experienced local life by living with a Korean family. On his return from Korea Roly began his medical practice in Traralgon in 1957.

Roly possessed a very strong social conscience, perhaps fuelled by some of his earlier experiences.

"At one stage in New Guinea I shared my shelter with an aboriginal 2/3rd soldier, Tim Clancy, a drover from Queensland. Tim was wounded and went back to Australia. Being a drover he thought he might get land from the (Soldier Settlers) scheme for giving land to returned servicemen, but they refused to give it to him because he was an aborigine, and that has always... always... made me very furious."

At the service and committal celebrating Roly's life, his sons Ian and Norman, and other family members spoke of Roly's love for, and dedication to, his family, friends and the community at large. During the open tributes a number of speakers gave inspiring accounts of their knowledge of, and great respect for Roly.

Local Commando Association members attended the service and paid tribute to Roly. Graeme Walker, the son of Roly's WW2 2/3rd comrade Roy Walker, travelled from Carisbrook (near Maryborough) to attend. Graeme also placed a wreath at the request of Darren Robins, the grandson of another of Roly's longstanding friends from WW2, the late Ray Robins, also 2/3rd.

All members of the Australian Commando Association offer their sympathy and kind thoughts to Roly's family.

Reference. [1] 2/3rd Independent Company: Second World War, 1939–1945 units. Australian War Memorial.



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Australian Commando Association Inc.

EULOGY OF NX120218 TPR REG DAVIS 2/9 CDO SQN WW2

14 APRIL 1923 - 18 FEBRUARY 2019

"NX120218 Trooper Davis RTR". "SIR!" That's our Reg. When the roll is called up yonder, he'll be there.

Always there, on parade, ready for anything.

This is a sad occasion, but it does not have to be a dismal occasion. Reg was always ready to look on the brighter side; that's what kept us sane in those bad old days. Just a couple of weeks ago, we were discussing this coming Anzac Day and I said that if we were spared, we could both march again. Reg burst out laughing for he knew that by "March" I really meant; "Sit in a wheelchair while our grandchildren pushed us"! So let us remember the good things that happened and get some pleasure from the memories. Remember, we will mourn his death, quietly, at home, but we're here to CELEBRATE his life. So let's CELEBRATE!

Trooper Davis RTR was always ready for anything; a top soldier, one of the older members of B Troop. We were mostly 19 or 20; Reg was an old soldier of 22 and one of only two who had served in New Guinea before. He had graduated from 6 Div Sigs to 6 Div Cav – the senior unit in the second AIF, established on 3.11.1939. Our sub-unit was 2/9 Aust Commando Squadron, which was part of what by then had become known as the 2/6 Aust Cavalry (Commando) Regiment. Each Squadron was different in many ways from each other Squadron, but to the rest of the Division, we were known collectively, as "The Cav". We copped a bit of flak if we called ourselves "Commandos", and we went along with it. Our Cavalry chargers, which had been Bren Carriers or captured Italian or Vichy French tanks when the Regiment was in the Middle East, were now Shanks's Ponies – but we reckoned we could outmarch the Infantry.

Though he had volunteered to join the new Commando Squadrons (we were all volunteers and had to pass selection, just as modern day Commandos do) Reg remained a Signaller, which meant that, despite his special skills (and specialist pay of about sixpence a day) he toted a rifle on patrol, just like us plebeians – but had also to hump a thundering great sig set – a transceiver. I don't know what it weighed but would guess at about 30 lbs, the equivalent of three SMLE



rifles. So it was just as well that he was the fine physical specimen that he always was; as strong as a bull but with none of the droppings that you might associate with that word.

Of the three sections in the Troop, two would usually be on patrol on any given day, with the third guarding our perimeter. But a Sig might find himself detailed to accompany another section from the one to which he was attached, thus missing out on his day off. But as Professor Higgins described himself in that great Musical "My Fair Lady", Reg was "even tempered and good natured, whom you never heard complain with

the milk of human kindness by the quart in every vein"!

When I speak of a patrol, I don't mean a stroll in the park. Distance was measured by units of 1,000 yards, the size of one little square in an Ordinance Map, but more usefully, converted into time. So 2,000 yards on the map, involving precipitous, razor-back ridges and steep gorges, might mean three or four hours hard going. If you often the "track" was a creek, so that you walked for half a mile or so through fast-running water, strewn with rocks from fist size to boulder size – hard enough to keep upright with just a rifle to carry, let alone with a heavy sig. set. Our role was "to see without being seen" but to be prepared to fight if necessary. Reg was on the patrol that lost the Squadron's first man Killed in Action – and on the patrol that went back next day to try to recover his body and his Bren gun.

Reg would be most embarrassed to hear all these things said about him, but after all, it is a eulogy, so he must like it or lump it! (like his sig set). He was the living proof that you don't have to be a foul-mouthed, hard-drinking, Marlborough-man to win the popularity and respect of your fellows. He was a teetotalter and a non smoker and claimed to be a non-swearer - but, eulogy or not, I've got to admit that he was known to take a weak shandy on special occasions and, when strongly moved, he would utter a really frightening expletive: "Golly golly golly".

Post-war, he maintained his old comradeships, being a regular attendee at regimental reunions, bucks' parties and funerals. His uniform still fitted, and he



wore it with pride. When the time came to give up greenkeeping, he was not content to be idle. He got a post as Tipstaff to the Judge in Bankruptcy; a fine man, but extremely conservative, to the point of being stuffy. A judge's Tipstaff is a combination of Man Friday and an Officer's Batman and that was not Reg's chosen role. So he left after a few months and became a Sheriff's Officer; not a Bailiff but a Court Attendant. Here he showed another side. In uniform, he became Troop Sergeant: brisk, alert and full of authority. When a sullen youth was called unwillingly to the witness box, you might hear Reg say: "Take your hands out of your pockets!" in his best Parade ground voice and I can tell you the slouching youth would smarten up as if he'd been hit with a stock whip. When he administered an oath it was well and truly administered. He still managed to lunch in the Botanic Gardens quite often with Frank Glover, Frank Rheinberger and me.

Signallers were sometimes called "Dit-dah-dits" because of their use of the Morse Code. There is an old Army song that really belongs to the Gunners, but they won't mind me borrowing a couple of lines and

changing them a bit. It tells of Old King Cole calling for various people and then "He called for his signallers three. Dit-dah-dit said the Signallers, Beer, Beer said the troopers, singing merrily – 'There's none so fair as can compare to the Six Div Cavalry!'"

Our colour patch was the brown and green rectangle; the colours of the first three brigades in the AIF, and the source of our Regimental motto: "Through the mud, through the blood, to the green fields beyond." Many's the time that the rafters have rung as Reg proposed the toast to the regiment with those words. See you, Reg: in "the green fields beyond".

Cheers,
Harry Bell (2/9)



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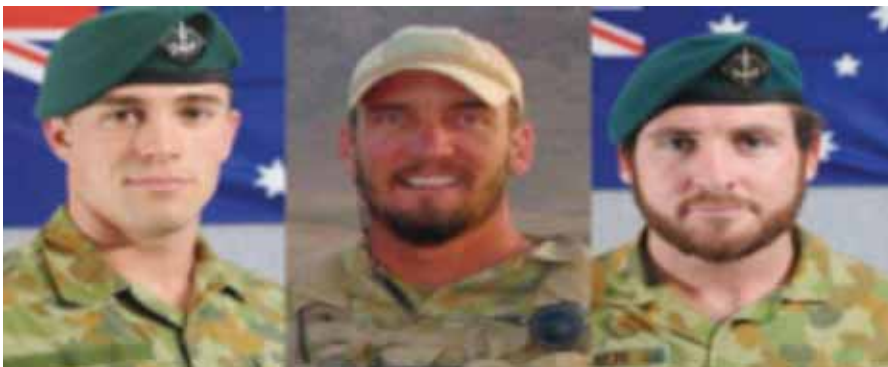
27 April 2008
LCPL Jason Marks
Delta Commando Company,
4th Commando Battalion
Killed In Action, Urazghan Province
Afghanistan



23 May 2011
SGT Brett Wood MG. DSM.
Charlie Commando Company,
2nd Commando Regiment
Killed In Action, Helmand Province
Afghanistan



22 June 2013
CPL Cameron Baird, VC. MG.
Bravo Commando Company
2nd Commando Regiment, KIA
Urazghan Province, Afghanistan



21 June 2010
PTE's Ben Chuck, Tim Aplin, Scott Palme
Alpha Commando Company, 2nd Commando Regiment, KIA
Kandahar Province, Afghanistan



01 July 2014
LCPL Todd Chidgey
Alpha Commando Company
2nd Commando Regiment, DOW
Kabul Province, Afghanistan



04 July 2011
SGT Todd Langley
Charlie Commando Company
2nd Commando Regiment, KIA
Helmand Province, Afghanistan



15 July 2017
SGT Ian Turner
Bravo Commando Company
2nd Commando Regiment, DIS
Sydney, Australia



16 July 2014
SGT Gary Francis
Operational Support Company
2nd Commando Regiment, KIT
Mount Cook, New Zealand



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COMMANDO WELFARE TRUST REPORT

I have taken off my National ACA Vice President's hat and replaced it with that of the Trust Executive Officer of the Commando Welfare Trust (CWT).

I have two aims with this report – first to keep you up to date with what the CWT is doing and as well to perhaps put an idea into your head as to how you can help the Trust without causing yourselves too much financial pain.

So! What will the CWT Trustees do with your hard earned money if you choose to donate a little of it to the Trust? Here is just a little of what we have done on behalf of our donors:

- Paid school fees for over 30 children of soldiers killed in action or seriously wounded/ill.
- Provided financial support for specific treatment for significant spinal damage received by a Commando where neither the Dept of Defence nor Dept of Veterans' Affairs would cover the costs.
- Purchased two electronic treatment devices used in reactivating lazy muscles affected by gunshot or explosive device wounds – this was not covered by Dept of Defence/Dept of Veterans' Affairs funds.
- Purchased suitable computer equipment for a Commando rendered quadriplegic by an IED to try in some way to improve his life.
- Assisted a severely wounded soldier with significant but temporary financial support for legal costs to

successfully challenge a court ruling that there is no link between military service and skin cancer.

- Each year we have provided a small Christmas cash gift as well as significant "back to school" financial support to each school/university age child the Trust supports where the father was either KIA in Afghanistan or who has returned severely incapacitated as a result of events or wounds received in Afghanistan.

If any of these donations are the kind of support you think you would like to be associated with then here are two options:

- Set aside a small amount per fortnight or month – a cup of coffee or a pint of beer. Do some good such as the support shown above for a family that deserves your assistance, or
- As none of us are getting any younger leave an amount in your will to the Commando Welfare Trust as the work will have to go on for many years to come.

Commando Welfare Trust - BSB 062 000 Acct no 13898012

Happy to discuss either of these options at any time – give me a call or shoot me an email.

Steve Pilmore 0418 314 940
or steve.pilmore@commandotrust.com
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He recognised that currently available myo-electric hands have two key deficiencies - water resistance and robustness.

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Mathew gathered a multi-talented team around him, and a growing resource of contractors. With funding for research and development TASKA(tm) moved from prototype to reality. Today the TASKA(tm) team share the same mission:

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piece of new technology - it is all about delivering real life practicality that improves people's lives."

Well known and accomplished Australian Orthopaedic Surgeon, Dr Nick Hartnell, has extensive knowledge in this area of traumatic injury and he sees enormous advantages in the TASKA hand.


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Dr Hartnell operates out of Bowral, NSW and can be contacted for further information via email: nick@bonesurgeon.com.au





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Australian Commando Association Response to: The Productivity Commission Inquiry into Veteran Support Services Draft Report

By Paul Copeland OAM. ACA National DVA Advocate

1. Introduction

The Productivity Commission has recently returned the draft results of its inquiry into Veteran Support Services. The purpose of this Productivity Commission's inquiry was to investigate the effectiveness and efficiency with which compensation and rehabilitation services are delivered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) to current and ex-serving veterans of the Australian Defence Force. The draft report: "*A Better Way to Support Veterans*" was released on the 14th of December 2018.

The Australian Commando Association (ACA) supports the submission lodged by the Alliance of Defence Services Organisation (ADSO) to this Inquiry.

The ACA acknowledges that DVA has worked hard in the past two years to fix the Veteran Support System with initiative such as the Veteran Centric Reform (VCR), "Transformation", and PROJECT LIGHTHOUSE. Significant ICT restructuring is understood to be being remedied. The ACA Supports these improvements of DVA to make the system "end-user" friendly and simplified to enable easier navigation of what is a complicated Legislative system. The functions of the ACA are broadly described as follows:

- a. To foster and develop the Association's Welfare Patriotic Funds to support *its eligible members to its Objectives (Veterans Compensation and Welfare Entitlements under Commonwealth Law)*.
- b. Provide welfare and advocacy to sick, helpless, wounded, vulnerable, aged, destitute and needy Commandos and their dependents of: World War 2 Independent Companies/Commando Squadrons; members of post-World War 2 Australian Commando and Special Forces Units;
- c. Current serving members who have been/or are on the posted strength of a current or former units, which have been, or are now part of Special Operations Command (SOCOMD) and their dependents; To encourage a spirit of loyalty to Australia and to encourage former Commandos to take an active part in matters of national importance; particularly defence.
- d. Promote the interests of members through activities of a ceremonial, commemorative, memorial, sporting or social character for the benefit of current serving members, former members and their families;
- e. Foster and develop the Association's support of the Commando Welfare Trust in support of its eligible members.

- f. Form and support relationships with other national and/or international special forces, military and kindred associations for mutual benefit.

2. Brief History of Australian Commandos.

In 1941, Australia raised Independent Commando Squadrons that were tasked to conduct raiding, sabotage and subversion. Initially these Squadrons were to be the early warning of a Japanese occupation of various islands throughout S.E. Asia and South Western Pacific. They also conducted Guerrilla Warfare against the occupying Japanese forces in S.E. Asia.

The M & Z Special Units were raised 1942, as part of the Allied Intelligence Bureau and later the Australian Services Reconnaissance Department (SRD), to conduct clandestine warfare and intelligence gathering behind enemy lines. The Commando Squadrons, along with M& Z Special Units were demobilised following the cessation of World War 2.

In 1954, it was decided by Army Command that the Australian Army needed to retain the skills and expertise associated with the Commandos of World War 2. In 1955 the 1st and 2nd Commando Companies were raised in Sydney and Melbourne respectively.

In 1958, the 1st Independent Signal Squadron was raised, to provide communications support to clandestine operations. It was later tasked for provide special communications and was particularly unique as it had a Regular Army Special Warfare Field Troop with a Reserve Field and Base Troops. This unit went on to become 126th Signal Squadron (Special Forces) and in 1981 became a sub-unit of the 1st Commando Regiment.

In 1981, the 1st Commando Regiment was established, with Headquarters located at Randwick, NSW, with 1 Commando Company in Mosman (Sydney) and 2 Commando Company and 126 Signal Squadron in Melbourne.

On the 1st of February 1997, the Regular Army Commando Regiment was raised as the 4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (Commando) (4RAR (Cdo)). 4 RAR (Cdo) went on to develop the Regular Army Commando capability and was redesignated as the 2nd Commando Regiment on 19th of June 2009.

Since the establishment of Commando units in the Australian Army, Commandos have served in Borneo, South Viet Nam, Cambodia, Somalia, The Sinai, East Timor/Timor Leste, Iraq, Afghanistan and the Middle East Area of Operations. They also continue the necessary Counter Terrorism (CT) capability and have



been involved in the MV Pong Su incident, and a range of Major Public Events in Australia such as the Olympic Games.

Commandos are part of the front line and the strategic defence for Australia. During the Afghanistan conflict, Commandos had the highest number of soldiers killed and wounded in action than any other Australian unit deployed to the conflict (2001-2014).

Serving as a Commando is a high intensity and high-risk environment, with the expectation to readily deploy at very short notice. Service within the Special Forces environment is typically extreme and represents the highest degree of endeavour, endurance and military capability asked of ADF Members.

Hence, the skills, physical and mental toughness, and individual experience of Commandos is expected to be at the highest levels. Unfortunately, 17 Commandos have died in service since 1955 up to 2017. 13 Commandos were Killed in Action whilst fighting in the Afghanistan conflict from 2007 to 2014. Countless others have been wounded, injured and ill; causing premature medical discharge of these Commandos from the ADF, as a result of their service rendered.

3. Summary of Draft Report Recommendations

The following numbered list provides a very brief summary of the recommendations of the Productivity Commission's draft report. Recommendations are interpreted as follows: -

1. Dismantle DVA and have Defence manage Compensation for Veterans in 2023.
2. Introduce a new Veteran Services Commissioner (in place of the Secretary and other Senior Executives within the DVA Structure).
3. A Minister for Defence Personnel and Veterans' Affairs (The incumbent Minister holds both portfolios).
4. Cease the DRCA eligibility (post Dec 1988 to 30 June 2004) and replace with a scheme similar to MRCA in 2025 (Scheme 2).
5. Abolish the Special Rate Disability Pension (SRDP).
6. Maintain the VEA (Scheme 1), for older veterans at or above the age of 55 on the date of the proposed cut-over to Scheme 2.
7. Include Superannuation (CSC) into the Veterans' Compensation system by access to a 'single door'.
8. Not to increase TPI Rate of Pension.
9. Transfer responsibility of Commemorations over to the AWM.
10. Remove the Gold Card.
11. Remove the other younger persons and/or orphan payments under VEA, DRCA and MRCA
12. War Widows Pensions only eligible for the partner of a veteran who dies as a result of service caused conditions.
13. Remove the Veterans' Children Education Scheme (VCES) and the Military Rehabilitation

Children's Assistance for Education and Training Scheme (MRCAETS). The PC's view is to place children on Aus Study and New Start with Centrelink.

14. Remove the Defence Force Income Support Allowance (DFISA) and the DFISA Bonus.
15. Place Veterans and their families into the DHS arena or Welfare (Centrelink) for Income Support and other DHS Allowances.
16. Veterans to utilise a Private Health Insurance, rather than the White (Specific Treatment Entitlement Card) or Gold (All Conditions within Australia); Card system.
17. Veterans to be only treated for the conditions that they have had accepted. This is the view of the PC, as the Gold Card provides for All Health Conditions within Australia, this is in their view too generous.
18. Scrutiny of Veteran Mental Health to make comparisons of the performance and outcomes of Open Arms with external Counselling Services.
19. Removal of Allowances such as Victoria Cross Allowance and Decoration Allowance.

4. Response to Draft Report Recommendations

Point 1, Dismantle DVA.

The ACA rejects any dismantling of DVA, with the view to handover the responsibility of Veteran Compensation and Rehabilitation to the Department of Defence, under a Transition Support Command. The ADF is involved in the development of the capability of warfighting, with commitments to overseas operational deployments and the protection of Australia. It has no present infrastructure to undertake the significant task of managing Veteran Compensation and Rehabilitation

The retention of DVA is vital to the ongoing relationships and managing of client's needs. The ACA strongly supports the Strategic initiatives of DVA through the Veteran Centric Reform (VCR) Program and the Transformation Program.

Point 2, Veteran Services Commissioner.

The ACA rejects the proposition of a Veteran Services Commissioner (VSC), as it relates to the dismantling of the DVA model recommended by the PC Inquiry Panel.

Point 3, A Minister for Defence Personnel and Veterans' Affairs.

The ACA supports this recommendation and notes that the current Minister for Defence Personnel and the Minister for Veterans' Affairs is Mr Darren Chester, MP, who holds both portfolios.

Point 4, Cease DRCA eligibility and replace with Scheme 2 (MRCA).

The ACA supports this recommendation, however care is highlighted that veterans and their families will not be worse off at the cut-over of Schemes.



Point 5, Abolish the SRDP. The ACA supports only partially with the abolishment of SRDP, but only the Offsetting arrangements within s204 of MRCA. The choice to receive SRDP, regardless of the compensation received for those with 50 Impairment Points or higher and who are unable to work 10 hours or more per week, should remain. The reason for this condition is so the VEA determination of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) (s24 VEA), holds a similar concessional value under MRCA.

The ACA wishes to retain the Gold Card stamped TPI for those under MRCA SRDP, or MRCA with 50 Impairment Points for a veteran who is unable to work more than 10 hours as a result of their service or war caused condition(s). TPI is given special consideration by Australian States and Territories for a range of beneficial concessions, as recognition of the severity of the Veteran's conditions, resulting from their service to Australia.

Point 6, Maintain Scheme 1 (VEA) for veterans aged 55 and above at a cut-over to Scheme 2 (MRCA).

The ACA supports this recommendation.

Point 7, CSC access through a "Single Door".

The ACA submits that COMSUPER (CSC) is specifically Legislated to provide Retirement, Invalidity and Death Benefits. Therefore, the Invalidity Benefits within CSC, have a specific criterion that needs to be satisfied. The criterion for Compensation differs from Invalidity Benefits, as compensation must be proven to be service-related and/or clinically onset; clinically worsened; or materially contributed arising from the person's service.

Invalidity Benefits are not within the realms of compensation. Invalidity Benefits have the criterion that the medical condition either inhibits or prevents the individual from working, based on their qualifications, skills and previous and recent employment.

A misunderstanding of many within the ADF and Veteran community is the belief that Invalidity Benefits is compensation. This is not correct. Superannuation is contributed by the member, with the employer also contributing to the member's superannuation fund. If the person is incapacitated or disabled, not necessarily arising from their work, the member is then assessed for Invalidity. In the Private Sector and in some Public Sectors, this is known as Totally and Permanently Disabled (TPD).

The other differences of compensation and Invalidity Benefits is that there is no demonstrated or legal linkage of Superannuation to Workers Compensation in Australia. This is because of the *Law of Superannuation in Australia*. The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) has various regulations relating to Superannuation, as does the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC). Superannuation is governed by *The Superannuation Act 2005 (Cth)*.

The creation of the PC recommendation of a "Single Door", whilst understandable for a single point

access of both Compensation and Superannuation for exiting ADF Members, may not be practicable in its application, as a result of the differing Legislative and Criterion requirements of both compensation and superannuation.

Point 8, No increase to TPI pension under VEA.

The ACA believes that the issue of parity of TPI pension and that of Average Weekly Ordinary Time Earnings (AWOTE), has been a long-standing matter and hasn't been reviewed since the Independent Tanzer (1999) and Clarke (2003) Reviews. The Campbell Review of 2009 did not address this matter.

Point 9, Transfer Commemorations to the AWM.

This recommendation is rejected by the ACA. The AWM has a specific purpose and is not practically equipped to take on the role of Commemorations. The DVA Commemorations Branch has been functioning reasonably well over many decades. The Office of Australian War Graves (OAWG), has also been managing very well by DVA.

Commemorations are not only a National approach for the continued remembrance of Australia's service, courage and sacrifice; but they are also of an International interest to the Nation. Many of Australia's war dead are buried in numerous locations around the world. The respect and sanctity of Commemorations and the OAWG must be maintained with a well-equipped and functioning body, as the DVA Commemorations Branch so performs on behalf of the Government.

Point 10, Remove the Gold Card.

The ACA rejects this Recommendation. The Gold Card is recognition for the holder's sacrifice to Australia. The sacrifice for eligibility of the Gold Card is not a "prize" as has been touted by ill-informed commentators. The Gold Card recognises the significant impact of a single or multiple condition as a result of that holder's service to Australia.

The Gold Card is also recognised by various State and Territory Governments who also recognises the significance of the sacrifice made by the holder, of which Concessions are provided. Veterans and their families are most grateful to receive the Gold Card, as it not only provides treatment for all conditions within Australia, it is recognition of their sacrifice to Australia.

Point 11, Remove the other younger persons and/or orphan payments under VEA, DRCA and MRCA.

The ACA rejects this recommendation. Australian Workers' Compensation Schemes compensate families of those who die as a result of their work. In the same context, younger persons and/or orphans are also compensated within Veteran Entitlement Law.

Point 12, War Widow(er) Pensions only made available, if a service person dies from service caused conditions.



This will extinguish the long-time entitlement for partners of veterans who have had to care for a TPI Veteran. This is an unfair recommendation, of which the PC Inquiry Panel consistently fails to recognise the effects of a Veteran's war or service-caused conditions has on his/her family. The family carry the burden of caring for these most disabled veterans for many decades. It is a burden that is currently recognised by the Australian Government, with the automatic eligibility of the War Widow(er).

Point 13, Remove the Veterans' Children Education Scheme (VCES) and the Military Rehabilitation Children's Assistance for Education and Training Scheme (MRCAETS). The PC's view is to place children on Aus Study and New Start with Centrelink.

Point 14, Remove the Defence Force Income Support Allowance (DFISA) and the DFISA Bonus.

The recommendation is rejected by the ACA. The PC has not made any recommendations toward an alternative Economic Loss compensation stream for those veterans in receipt of TPI (Special Rate of Pension) under the VEA. The DFISA arose as a result of the level of poverty that eligible peacetime, or non-warlike, or Hazardous, or Peacekeeping, or Defence Service Veterans will be living on if they are not eligible for Qualifying Service (QS).

QS provides eligible TPI and certain other Veterans with a Gold Card (100% of the General Rate [GR]), with the War Service Pension (WSP). The WSP is a partnered pension for both the veteran and their partner.

The removal of DFISA will also penalise partners of TPI Veterans, as they will no longer receive the Support Payment, hence no longer eligible for the Pensioner Concession Card under the DFISA scheme.

DFISA is not as beneficial as WSP, however in both instances, the Pensioner Concession Card (PCC) is issued to both recipients. For Coupled WSP recipients the PCC is received also by the partner.

Without any Income Support for TPI Veterans who do not have QS, this will mean a significant and detrimental effect to their lifestyle.

Point 15, Place Veterans and their families into the DHS arena or Welfare (Centrelink) for Income Support and other DHS Allowances.

This Recommendation fails to recognise the unique nature of service rendered by the veteran. It goes against a beneficial Government approach toward supporting veterans who have put their country before themselves and their families. No other occupation in Australia demands this of their employees.

The Government recognises this dedication and sacrifice. Veterans are treated with dignity, with special attention to caring for the needs of Veterans and their families. Hence, it is a duty bound by the Government to provide a better service for Australia's Veterans and their families.

The recommendation to place Veterans into the

Welfare spectrum not only lacks respect to the veterans of Australia, but it is impracticable, as it dissolves any care the Government has toward Veterans and their families.

Point 16, 17: Downgrading of Gold & White Card Medical Cover

This goes against the DVA strategic plan to provide Cards to exiting ADF Members. The ACA rejects this recommendation. The Gold and White Card Medical Cover, whilst it has had some difficulties, is a system that has worked for many decades.

The system has evolved to an end-user friendly approach and billing does not appear to be too much of a problem. However, there have been limitations in treatment for veterans and various specialists during the freezing of Scheduled Fees introduced in 2013.

A point to note is that most DVA clients are placed on the same Medical Schedules and Scales as with Welfare and Aged people of the Public. There is some concessional acceptance toward specialists, only after approval has been made by the Department (DVA).

Point 18, Scrutiny of Veteran Mental Health to make comparisons of the performance and outcomes of Open Arms with external Counselling Services.

The ACA supports any performance measurement; however, we caution of the apparent recommended approach to scrutinise Open Arms Counselling Services. Open Arms has a dedicated Committee (National Advisory Committee [NAC]), of which they visit Open Arms centres around Australia three times per annum, consult widely with the Veteran constituency, consults with Outreach Providers, and clients of Open Arms.

The NAC oversees the delivery of services of Open Arms to Veterans, their families and current service members and their families of the ADF. A report of each visit is raised by the Chairperson of the NAC, which is briefed to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs. This practise has been ongoing since 1982 to the present day. The NAC has been instrumental in the development of eligibility for a wide range of veterans.

Point 19, Remove Allowances such as the Victoria Cross Allowance and Decoration Allowance.

The ACA rejects the recommendation to remove Allowances such as the Victoria Cross Allowance and Decoration Allowances. Since Warrant Officer Ray Simpson, VC, DCM, who was a former Training Warrant Officer of the 2nd Commando Company and many other Officers and Soldiers from Commando units have been awarded Decorations.

The most recent was Corporal Cameron Baird VC, MG. His legacy being carried by his father Doug Baird, who educates the Australian Public and veterans alike on the honourable service of his son and the ADF. Cameron Baird is among many other soldiers from the Australian Regular and Reserve Army to be recognised for their courage under fire in the most hazardous of circumstances.



The Decoration Allowances have been long held as recognition, for service above and beyond what is required of a service person in combat. Recognition for selfless courage and sacrifice to save other people's lives, and/or to change the advantage of battle by a single, or multiple acts of heroism, either individually or collectively.

5. Other matters.

The ACA has observed the content of the submissions to a range of Inquiries since 2017. Most appear to highlight significant problems with decision-making and the complexity of the Legislative Acts, that a veteran must navigate to ensure success of their Primary Level Claims for Commonwealth Liability. It would perhaps be prudent for the PC Inquiry Panel to recommend an impartial quasi-judicial body to hear of any cases that relate to such decisions by DVA. This would of course be outside of the Reconsideration and Review processes under the various Acts.

The complexities of Multiple Legislation is an area that requires streamlining and simplicity. The ACA acknowledges that the recent enacted Safety, Rehabilitation & Compensation (Defence related Claims) Act 1988 (aka DRCA), has combined the previous Commonwealth Employees Compensation Acts, along with the Safety, Rehabilitation & Compensation Act 1988 (SRCA), into one single Act. DRCA provides for a much easier and fair Compensation Act for the older Commando cohort to claim conditions that have been service related.

In terms of the Military Rehabilitation & Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA), the Act is complicated by a range of variables. The bias toward service type, gender and age is not found in other Australian State or Territory Compensation Acts. The calculation of Permanent Impairment (PI), by using different tables within the MRCA Guide to the Assessment of Permanent Rate of Impairment (GARP M), adds complexity to MRCA. The ACA recommends that the one table is used, that is similar and not biased, for example GARP V (VEA), which does not discriminate toward gender or service Transition.

The ACA is aware of the difficulties faced by veterans during the Transition from the ADF to "Civilian Street". It is a period of difficulty in understanding the full entitlements made available within the ADF Career Transition Assistance Scheme (CTAS), completing ADF Discharge Documentation, lodging Primary Claims for liability, and re-connecting with external services, such as Health.

The Medically Discharged soldier will tend to have high anxiety and potential exacerbation of a currently existing psychological illness. Care and understanding by staff must be taken into consideration when dealing with these Medically Discharged members.

The ACA is aware of an initiative of the Special Operations Forces Pilot (SOF-Pilot), which has been conducted with 2nd Commando Regiment at Hols-

worthy Barracks, Sydney. The concept of the SOF-Pilot is ideal in working toward a seamless transition for a Commando. The ACA understands that more work is continuing with the SOF-Pilot and looks forward to a participative inclusion with this initiative.

6. Conclusion.

In short, there is grave concern as to what the PC Inquiry Report has placed within the Draft Report. We understand that the Government has always provided a beneficial approach toward veterans and it is the strong desire of the ACA to see this approach retained and refined. The concessions that come with being a highly incapacitated veteran at the State and Territory levels are also not taken for granted and are rightfully enjoyed by veterans and their families. These Concessions are a "thank you" for the service rendered by these veterans and recognises these veterans and their families as helping to protect Australia from conflict.

The ACA has seen a change within DVA, that is focussed on veterans, with a number of changes to simplify the complexities of navigating the Veteran Support System. The ACA supports the initiatives that have been underway for over two years and believes that DVA is the best agency to support our veterans and their families.

The ACA believes that the tax-payer of Australia is more than happy to pay for the Veteran Support System, in particular toward Commandos who are actively involved in the defence of Australia against domestic threats, whilst maintaining continuity and capability toward Australia's interests by neutralising international threats.

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BRIEF FOR TMR THROUGH EDUARDO

OLD & BOLD VISIT TO EAST TIMOR - MONDAY 20 MAY TO MONDAY 3 JUNE 2019

The Team

- Jim Truscott. Former INTERFET and former 2 Commando Company
- Colette Truscott. Wife of Jim Truscott, Our son also served with 5 RAR in East Timor
- Bruce Parker Former 2 Commando Company and current Rotarian
- Gail Parker. Wife of Bruce Parker
- Marc Preston. Current 2 Commando Company
- Keith Hughes Former 2 Commando Company
- Barry Hughes. Former 2 Commando Company

Our Possible Agenda 20 years after INTERFET and the commencement of ETR

- Participate in the Independence Restoration Day on Monday 20 May and enjoy Dili as tourists
- Socialize informally with TMR and other available former FALINTIL Commanders that Jim Truscott got to know very well 20 years ago including XG, Eduardo, Pedro, Filameno and Sabika. Is Falur still alive?
- Visit the ETR facility in Bacau now operated by Dom Bosco College as an Annex and celebrate its success in aiding the demobilization of FALINTIL
- Motor cycle tour of places of military history significance to FALINTIL, 2/2 Commando Company and Z Special Unit from Wednesday 22 May to Monday 3 June and hopefully meet some former FALINTIL in these areas. Enjoy village life
- Call on Lere at FDTL Headquarters and assess the possibility of writing a more comprehensive 'Hit and Run, Tragedy and Triumph' military case study of Guerrilla Warfare in English language.

Likely Tour Route www.timoradventures.com.au/tours/motorcycle-tours

Dili tour	Archives and Museum of the East Timorese Resistance, Sparrow Force House. 2/2 & 2/4 Memorial towards Dare.
Baucau: <i>Baucau Pousada</i>	Orientation ride, Baucau via Manatutu (Z special site) Matebian: camping Explore Baucau then ride to Quelicai and onto Maluro base of Mt Matebian, hike to saddle to camp overnight
Quelicai <i>homestay/guesthouse</i>	Climb to summit of Mt Matebian Mane
Jaco: <i>Lukamore beach guesthouse</i>	Ride to Valu beach (Jaco) via Lospalos
Com: <i>Kati beach bungalows</i>	Take a boat trip to Jaco and after lunch ride to Com
Ossu: <i>Hotel Wailakurini</i>	Ride to Ossu via Baucau, General Falur's Guest house and hike to the new resistance memorial
Same: <i>Uma Liurai GH</i>	Ride to Viqueque, detour to south coast to see Z special site, through Natabora and on to Betano WW 2 site, then Same Hatu Bulico: Ovalido Gardens Explore Same Posto, travel through the Same saddle and on to Hatu Bulico. Hike Mt Ramelau in the PM or AM next day
Dili: <i>Hotel Esplanada</i>	Travel via Maubisse and Aileu to Dili. Time for dinner with friends in the evening
Balibo: <i>Balibo fort hotel</i>	Travel west of Dili through Liquica and on to the border at Batugade before heading to Balibo in the mountains
Dili: <i>Hotel Esplanada</i>	Explore Balibo and optional ride to Maliana before heading back to Dili. Dinner in Dili and time to catch up with friends and depart next day





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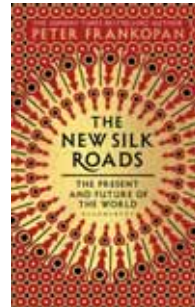
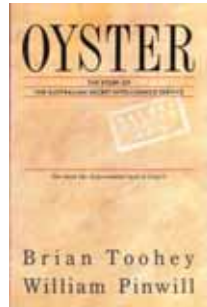


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HOIST THE GREY AND BROWN FLAGS BEHIND THE BAMBOO CURTAIN!

Anti-Silent Invasions and Sophisticated Counter Influence Operations
with Zhong Guo

By
Taipan, Tiger & Tarantula



What is the paramount leader President Xi Jinping doing to get close inside their 9-dash economic line, the Bamboo Curtain? As Dictator for Life it is evidently clear that Xi's number one priority is the preservation of the Chinese Communist Party's monopoly of power. Xi is rewriting history about such matters as Mao's contribution in WWII and omitting from history such events as the Great Leap Forward which caused a dreadful famine and the 1989 Tiananmen Square tragedy. Xi's 'Chinese characteristics' are conflating the Communist Party leadership's current thoughts and Chinese traditions and Marxist philosophy. He is making a sustained effort to completely recast the global order. His goal is nothing less than to reshape the way that the world works and he is succeeding step by step, despite one or two setbacks enroute. The only thing that has given Xi's golden textbook any real pause is Trump.

The Chinese Ministry of State Security (MSS) is doing what their President for Life is telling them! The MSS are collecting every man's Social Credits on global CCTV. Eat your heart out Salvos! Each 200 Chinese households are monitored closely by a security manager via a grid management system. The MSS are also mobilizing the large Chinese-Australian diaspora to buy access to politicians, limit academic freedom, intimidate critics, collect information for Chinese intelligence agencies and protest in the streets against Australian government policy. Hybrid Warfare is a military strategy that employs political warfare and which blends conventional warfare, irregular warfare and cyberwarfare with other influencing methods such as fake news, diplomacy, lawfare and foreign electoral intervention. Beijing is flouting international norms of fair play to become the world's predominant economic and technological power.

The Chinese Economic Hit Men (EHM) from the Advanced Persistent Threat Unit 10 (APT 10) are already working on the dark web from a secret room in Shanghai's China Telcom building and they are stealing

intellectual property 100 times a day courtesy of the People's Liberation Army Unit 61398 who direct the advanced persistent threat unit. Aghhhhh.....the technique of the close embrace! Their quest for other people's information is a driver of global cyber conflict, a shadowy undeclared war that is a security concern for Australia. Such virtual conflict may well spark the next hot war. Cyber weapons empower states to fight war by other means and they are particularly suited to the grey zone between peace and war where much modern conflict plays out because they are scalable, deniable and relatively cheap to develop. Chinese intelligence services have been blamed for the most audacious, widespread data theft in history after State-directed hackers used invasive techniques to steal commercially sensitive data from nine of the world's largest managed service providers and scores of their smaller clients. APT10 has targeted dozens of sensitive industries including aviation, manufacturing, oil and gas exploration, IT, pharmaceutical technology and defence contractors. They use key-stroke loggers to steal passwords as well as Trojans, malicious software providing a backdoor into a network. Their hacking operations have evolved over time, demonstrating advances in overcoming network defences, victim selection and tradecraft. And what we are doing about it? Are we being drawn into a technology-driven US-led Cold War being fought in cyber space that will strain ties with Beijing?

China has been going down this path well before they bought HMAS *Melbourne* back in 1984 for reverse engineering to facilitate their capacity to produce aircraft carriers. Now they find it easier to just steal the plans from companies like Austal at Kwinana and this does not negate the stupidity of the Australian Government, then and now, in not looking beyond the free trips to China. China is playing a long game like a dingo following a wounded kangaroo. The Chinese have a plan. Australia does not. We simply engage in



brinksmanship to lurch from one election to another.

What is 'paramount leader' Xi Jinping doing to get close outside the 9-dash economic line? Read the *South China Daily* newspaper and understand what the Chinese Coastguard are doing to other nation's drilling rigs in the South China Sea. Use Google Earth and see the Chinese long range bombers on the Spratly Islands. Read the *Hindustan Times* newspaper about their network of naval facilities in the Indian Ocean at Djibouti, Jiwani in Pakistan, Bagamoyo in Tanzania and Hambantota in Sri Lanka. The Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) is being engineered so that not only roads but also all rail, air and sea routes, all compliance arrangements and technical standards, all telecommunications carriers, all leading internet platforms, lead not to Rome, as of old, but to Beijing as Eurasia's connectivity hub. Online, Xi has transformed the internet into a great tool of control in the name of cyber sovereignty.

It does not take Chatham House to work out that China's moves are like the game of 'GO', a fiendishly difficult board game in which each player tries to acquire the largest area on the board using black or white pebbles. One's position in the endgame is determined by where one places one's chips at the beginning. In this game on the New Silk Road, China is using the international diaspora of Chinese people, 'dark money' to buy influence, so-called China institutes, leveraging trade and investment, exploiting university linkages, controlling overseas Chinese students and, not least, old and new spying. How close can you get to the communist superpower, which is Australia's biggest trading partner, before you are seen to be too close? This imbroglio is the China paradox.

So what are the Mongols doing to get close to the Bamboo Curtain in the northern province of China? Ghenghis Khan raised the original Special Forces in the 14th century so they will probably be breeding those little Trojan horses again to leap over the great Alibaba firewall.

What will the Russians be doing to get close in the Western Province of China? They will probably be getting ready for proxy war with all those Uyghurs who are in re-education camps. Google proxy war fighting https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proxy_war

What will the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) be doing in India to get close as they have been in opposing trenches on the contested Himalayan border with China since 1962? They have the mother of all atomic bombs and their billion plus poor people are their greatest asset.

What will the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) be doing in Pakistan to get close as they also have the daughter of all atomic bombs?

What will Badan Intelijen Negara (State Intelligence Agency) be doing to get close in the South China Sea? They will probably be getting their crocodile pits ready once again for the 'Oriental Swords'. Luckily they see Australia as their 'Southern Protectors'!

What is Six Star General Trump doing as Disrupter-in-Chief? All roads lead to China albeit via Pennsylvania

Avenue as the Chinese and American economies are in separable. The economy remains the core point of vulnerability for Xi and Chinese Communist party. The US Confrontation with China is political, cultural, informational and economic. It is a great power confrontation. The Chinese Communist Party has been using all forces of society against the US, and under Trump all forces of US state power are now coming together to confront China. It may piss people off but Trump knows that Economic Warfare is predicated by political courage.

Trump is engaged in Strategic Retrenchment and Trade Warfare and because they don't teach advancing to the rear and trade stouthing at military school he has his military and social generals on the hop every day! Trump keeps pissing on their parade ground and they have to learn to deal with the chaos and play off the reservation. Without an economy you cannot wage any form of warfare. The Russians learnt that lesson in the last Cold War.

What is the CIA Special Activities Division doing to get close, even if competition does not imply hostility? The American people do not see their work or know their names in Directorate S but the US strategic defence/security policy seems to be not to slow the growth of China's power but rather to shape Chinese calculations of its interests as it expands its influence.

Armed conflict between China and America is not inevitable as the so called Thucydides Trap would imply, but all members of the five eyes intelligence alliance (US, UK, Canada, Australia and NZ) have emerged from the shadows to sound the alarm, either explicitly or indirectly over China and their information approach to Unrestricted Warfare.

What are the 'Big Australians' doing from the Southern Province of China AKA WA, QLD and NSW to stay close? The big end of town is selling iron ore, coal and gas for 1,000 years in order to get the Australian Government back into surplus by Christmas. There must be at least 20 ships on the high seas every day between Australian and Chinese ports. In Western Australia alone we sell \$60 billion of products to China and only buy \$4 billion of their goods back so how to navigate a *sturm und drang* course between China and the US? An industrial-scale hacking of Rio Tinto's IT in the height of the boom cost more than \$1billion in lost revenue as Chinese buyers used insider knowledge to squeeze down prices. Is that war by other means or just market manipulation and deceptive conduct? Is divine justice enough or should we also apply some form of human justice?

What would the Political Warfare Executive (PWE) have done to get close to MSS as their task was to promote disaffection, passive resistance, active revolt and guerrilla warfare? They would be using 'Black Boomerang' broadcasts AKA tweeting fake news and slanderous alternative facts on the false Radio China and using the Far Eastern Liaison Office (FELO) to manipulate Weibo Social Media amongst the masses, just like Cambridge Analytica.



What would the Services Reconnaissance Department (SRD) have done to get close, even inside the 9-dash economic line? They would already be in experimental houses on hills behind Cairns and marching to the muffled beat of silent feet. They would be getting brown men and women to spend many nights with a million mosquitos to get ready to go belly to belly behind the Bamboo Curtain.

What would the Ferdinand bulls have done to get close? Their Falung Gong missionaries and Filipino deep sea fishermen would already be staring out to sea in the South China Sea and the South West Pacific.

What would the Joint Clandestine Organization (JCO) have done to get close? Their Chief of Destruction would have already be reporting to the Ministry of Economic AKA Ungentlemanly Warfare and be planning umpteen false flag and red flag mission profiles by filibusters.

What would the Phantoms of the Jungle have done to get close? They would have been up to their armpits in Confrontasi shoot and scoot Claret style, e-tractor (AKA 'click bait') ambushes on the New Silk Road and training Montagnards in pseudo operations and proxy war fighting on their border.

What would Krazy Horse Stan Krasnoff and the AATTV have done in War Zone C? He was the master of the close embrace and Project Rapid Fire. He would have said "kill those Orange Fuckers."

What would Taur Matan Ruak and Falintil have done, part from sleeping with one eye open in Timor? He would have resisted on at least four domestic and international clandestine fronts and he would have dramatically increased the membership of the Catholic Church in China using GetUp.

What would the Bearded Devils have done to get closer to the Chinese border? They would have trained the Mujahedeen and other non-communists to storm hell using disproportionate effects and industrial-scale 'balls on a bulldog' skill sets.

So are the Chinese communists and the Australian democrats and businessmen on a collision course in Political Warfare? Is it true that the Australian defence and security establishment is placing too much emphasis on democratic values and human rights rather than the economics of Australian house hold, which is the largest in the world? When do predatory Economic Warfare practices like bribes, opaque agreements and the strategic use of debt to hold countries captive to the demands and wishes of Beijing become more than ill-defined conflict amongst nation states?

How do Crisis Practitioners and Continuity Planners and Emergency Response Professionals answer these questions? Quite simply they plan for the best and prepare for the worst. They know that like strategy, crisis leadership and crisis brinksmanship begins before the first 'GO' move on the board. So should Australia's political, economic, defence and social strategy just be to outlast the communists? This delay approach has worked for the Taliban and they have defeated everyone including us.

Should our extant strategy of turning Australia into a quarry for China be enough to keep the Chinese diaspora out of our polling booths? Indeed should we regard China as Australia's silent enemy of the state? Has the Australian establishment set the "it's the economy, stupid" above everything? Or do we need to take a slightly different stand, with some counter-influence and thereby protecting our freedom from China's incursions? What are the strategic options and how do we "win-win" to quote Xi Jinping? What do you do about unconscionable conduct?

It requires more than a seminal change in attitude. Australia needs to think harder about its self-reliant defence strategy in order to be able to conduct demanding military operations alone. We need to be able to fight harder and to be able to punch well above our weight. The required change is not black and it is not white. It is brown and very dark grey. We need a small-scale approach with a light footprint, working through regional and global partners supported by 5G++ enablers. We need to be able to turn military success into the political leverage needed to consolidate peace. The greatest use of Special Operations is the threat to use them and not their actual use themselves. This is the template that we need when the only Chinese rule is that there are no rules.

Option one is clearly and always diplomacy and trade; especially in the current cold war. The parallel option two is always the military and the enduring default option three is always proxy war by fifth columnists in the land, sea, air and ether gap. We must be ready to hit them hard and send a message. No one loves a warrior until the enemy is at the gate. What has General Scomo said about getting close to the Bamboo Curtain and a rules-based order to foreign policy? He says that it must speak of our character and our values. What we stand for. What we believe in and if need be, what we will defend.

History has shown that a Ministry of Economic Warfare AKA Ungentlemanly Warfare is needed to bypass the bureaucracy and to approve the clandestine and illegal building of weapons when the rule is that there are no rules. History has shown that a 'work outside the law' organization and a freelance approach to warfare is needed, as unrestricted warfare can never, and will never fit in with the conventional military where there are rules. History has shown that the Ministry of Economic Warfare must be in overall charge of proxy warfare as it not constrained by military rules, command structures and centralized barracks.

History has shown that there is a need to employee civilians, foreign nationals and native people for subversive activities in breach of the laws and usages of war. The philosophy of using business people to assist in the collection of intelligence on an adversary is well based and sound. All Chinese organizations and citizens support and cooperate with and collaborate in national intelligence work so what should we do this as well? M.R.D Foot queried why you should even bother to fight conventionally in war.



History has shown that to conduct successful Special Activities there needs to be a very senior person to be a sponsor to counter the antagonism of more conventional commanders. History has shown that funding channels need to be outside normal appropriations in order to leverage Operatives with leading edge technology.

History has shown that filibusters must not be employees as they are engaged in a higher level of patriotism. They are ghosts with the darkest of minds and a higher level of deniability. History has shown that dark work is required and that once again there needs to be death lollies in the quartermaster's store.

欢迎来到恐慌室 Huānyíng lái dào kǒnghuāng shì.
"Welcome to the panic room where all your darkest fears are gonna come for you!" It is little wonder that Fairbairn and Sykes only spoke in Chinese at their killing school in Scotland. In our case this ship is our home. This ship is Australia and surprise is on our side. Hoist the grey and brown flags!



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UPCOMING ACA EVENTS

APRIL to JULY 2019

ACA NATIONAL

- Sunday 24 June/03 July - * Commandos Return 2019
Sunday 07 July - * National Meeting, Qld Maritime Museum, Southbank Brisbane from 1330.
Contact Nat Secretary - aca_secretary@commando.org.au

ACA NEW SOUTH WALES

- Thursday 25 April - * Commando Memorial Service @ Commando Chair, Martin Place, Sydney.
Timings TBC
Contact Secretary - bruce.poulter@poulterstanford.com.au
* ANZAC Day March, Sydney. RV & Timings TBC
Contact Secretary - bruce.poulter@poulterstanford.com.au

ACA QUEENSLAND

- Sunday 14 April - * Qld Shooters License Course (All Categories), Belmont Pistol Range, Brisbane. Cost \$120pp. Timings to be confirmed.
Contact ACA Qld Social Member - acaqld_social@commando.org.au
Thursday 25 April - * ANZAC Day March, Brisbane City from 1030. Form Up Point, Corner of George & Mary Streets Brisbane followed by lunch at the Jade Buddha, Eagle Street Brisbane from 1200. Cost \$20pp
Contact ACA Qld Social Member - acaqld_social@commando.org.au
Sunday 07 July - * Operation Rimau & Commando Day, Qld Maritime Museum, South Bank Brisbane from 1000. Cost \$0
Contact ACA Qld Secretary - acaqld_secretary@commando.org.au

ACA VICTORIA

- Thursday 25 April - * ANZAC DAY Dawn Service, 2 Cdo Coy @ 0530
* ANZAC Day March, FUP TBC & Luncheon at Bayview Eden from 1230
Contact ACA VIC Secretary - 0414 311 093
Saturday 18 May - * AGM, Box Hill RSL from 1030
Contact ACA VIC Secretary - 0414 311 093
Sunday 26 May - * Archery Family Day from 1000
Contact Keith Hughes for attendance - 0466 960 334

ACA WESTERN AUSTRALIA

- Sunday 7 April - * AGM, Kings Park Perth from 1400 (2pm)
Contact ACA WA Secretary - acawa_secretary@commando.org.au
Thursday 25 April - * ANZAC Day Service
Contact Secretary - acawa_secretary@commando.org.au

COMMANDO COMPANY'S & REGIMENTS

- Wednesday 19 June - 2 Cdo Regt Birthday (2009)
Tuesday 25 June - 1 Cdo Coy Birthday (1955)
Sunday 7 July - 2 Cdo Coy Birthday (1955)



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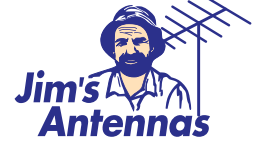
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