

Queensland

RAAF Base *Scherger*

- 2.1 After completing the visit to the 1st Brigade in Darwin, the Sub-Committee moved to RAAF Scherger located near Weipa. The Sub-Committee was accompanied from Darwin to RAAF Scherger by the Commanding Officer 321 Combat Support Squadron, Wing Commander Allan Cook. On arrival at the Base the Sub-Committee were briefed on the role, characteristics and capabilities of RAAF Scherger. The visit concluded with a tour of the facilities at the Base.
- 2.2 In addition to the manned operational bases of Air Command, there are three bare bases at Learmonth, Curtin and Scherger in northern Australia. These bases have the infrastructure necessary to support operations and for use as a forward base for deployed forces. Of these bare bases RAAF Scherger was the last to be completed and was opened in 1998.
- 2.3 RAAF Scherger hosts one base activation per year and, on average, one aircraft transit per month. During base activations significant forces may be deployed to the Base but RAAF Scherger is permanently staffed by only a small caretaker staff comprising one Sergeant and two corporals. Caretaker duties include maintenance, security, airfield sweeping, non-technical duty crew functions and assistance with local support of forces deployed to the base. Caretaker staff are also responsible for the supervision of contract maintenance tasks including rubbish collection, laundry, domestic cleaning and gardening.
- 2.4 RAAF Scherger provides significant operational facilities for deployed forces including a configuration of main, secondary and emergency runways that allow for simultaneous operations. The command,

operational and maintenance facilities provided at the base are excellent but the Sub-Committee noted that all facilities were 'fitted for but not with' the equipment integral to a deployed force. The concept for the operation of the base calls for any deployed force to bring its own equipment and to provide its own operational services including air traffic control. The only exception to this concept appeared to be some larger scale Ground Support Equipment.

- 2.5 With regard to logistics, RAAF Scherger has a significant holding of aviation fuel and can, for a limited time, support daily requirements that exceed 100,000 litres. The Base has the facilities to cater for 400 personnel in fixed accommodation and an additional 1000 personnel in tent lines. Kitchen and ablution facilities to support such a force are also provided. The Sub-Committee noted that the Base provides its own power and water but has no permanent hospital facilities.
- 2.6 During the visit to RAAF Scherger, the Sub-Committee discussed a number of issues including:
- The vulnerabilities of RAAF Scherger.
 - Conditions for the Caretaker staff at the Base.
 - Relationship with the local community.
 - Involvement of the Base in Exercise CROCODILE 99.
 - Impact of the climate on operations at RAAF Scherger.
 - Ability to support a long-term deployment of a force at RAAF Scherger.

395 Expeditionary Combat Support Wing

- 2.7 After completing the visit to the RAAF Scherger, the Sub-Committee moved to 381 Expeditionary Combat Support Squadron located in Townsville. On arrival at Headquarters 395 Expeditionary Combat Support Wing the Sub-Committee was met by the Commanding Officer 381 Expeditionary Combat Support Squadron, Wing Commander Graham O'Brien and the Officer Commanding RAAF Townsville, Wing Commander Chris McHugh. The Sub-Committee was briefed on the role, structure and capabilities of 395 Expeditionary Combat Support Wing by Wing Commander Graham O'Brien.

- 2.8 395 Expeditionary Combat Support Wing was established in May 1998 when No. 1 Operational Support Group was retitled. 395 Expeditionary Combat Support Wing is headquartered in Townsville and comprises three expeditionary combat support squadrons, a combat logistic squadron, a combat communications squadron, an air terminal squadron and a combat support hospital. As part of the Combat Support Force Element Group with Air Command 395 Expeditionary Combat Support Wing provides the expeditionary component of the Command Support Group.
- 2.9 395 Expeditionary Combat Support Wing is responsible for the provision of combat support to air operations. This role incorporates the provision of ground defence, logistic support not including aircraft maintenance, airfield and terminal services, communications, electronics and navigation aids and command of the air base for a deployed force conducting air operations. With a total strength over 1300 personnel, the level of activation of the Wing for an operation will be influenced by the role of the deployed force, the number of aircraft deployed, the flying rate of effort, the duration of the deployment, the ground threat and the local support infrastructure.
- 2.10 During the briefing, the other issues discussed included:
- The ability of 395 Expeditionary Combat Support Wing to support sustained, dispersed operations in northern Australia.
 - The dependence of the Wing on local infrastructure for the support of a deployed force.
 - Planned changes to the Combat Support Group organisation.
 - Air Force Reserve organisations within the Combat Support Group.

3rd Brigade

- 2.11 Day three of the tour commenced with a visit to the 3rd Brigade located at Lavarack Barracks in Townsville. On arrival at Headquarters 3rd Brigade, the Sub-Committee was greeted by Commander 3rd Brigade, Brigadier Mark Evans. The visit commenced with a briefing on the role, characteristics and capabilities of the Brigade provided by Brigadier Evans and the Brigade Major, Major Marcus Fielding.
- 2.12 The 3rd Brigade was raised in August 1914 as part of the 1st AIF. The Brigade saw service in Gallipoli and France during World War I and as a

militia force charged with defending Darwin in World War II. The Brigade was disbanded in April 1944. Reformed in 1967 and designated 3rd Task Force, elements of the brigade saw service in Vietnam. In 1981 the 3rd Task Force was redesignated the 3rd Brigade and re-joined the 1st Division. Since 1981, elements of the brigade have participated in United Nations operations in Cambodia, Somalia and Rwanda and in 1994 in a force which supported the peace talks in Bougainville.

- 2.13 The 3rd Brigade is one of the Army formations held at the highest degree of readiness for combat operations and is the major component of the ADF's Ready deployment Force. The brigade consists of a Headquarters and a range of combat, combat support and combat service support elements. The combat units comprise two light infantry battalions: 1 RAR and 2 RAR. The combat support units provide additional firepower, battlefield mobility and tactical information to the combat units. The capability of the brigade is significantly enhanced by the current allocation of several Townsville based units, namely 5th Aviation Regiment, 10th Forward Support Battalion, No 35 Squadron RAAF and 395 Expeditionary Combat Support Wing.
- 2.14 The tactical flexibility of the brigade is enhanced by air portability, a capacity for air mobility and a limited degree of ground manoeuvre. The brigade relies heavily on the use of aircraft, from both the Black Hawks of 5th Aviation Regiment and the Caribou of No 35 Squadron RAAF for tactical mobility once deployed. The rapid deployment role of the brigade necessitates 'light scales' and less emphasis on heavy equipment than a standard infantry brigade.
- 2.15 Mission essential tasks identified by the 3rd Brigade include; operations in a conventional setting, service-assisted and service-protected evacuation, point-of-entry operations, special recovery operations, peace and humanitarian operations and disaster relief operations. The 3rd Brigade is a high readiness formation capable of flexible grouping and experienced in planning and operating in a joint and combined environment. Depending on the task, the Brigade has the capability to deploy a Company Group of approximately 190 personnel, a Battalion Group of approximately 1150 personnel or the Brigade Group comprising some 3000 personnel and their equipment.
- 2.16 Following the briefing at Headquarters 3rd Brigade, the Sub-Committee was provided with a demonstration of the capabilities of a 3rd brigade Company Group by the 1st Battalion Royal Australian Regiment and supporting Brigade elements. The Company Group included elements of infantry, artillery, armour, engineers and logistics. On the completion of the demonstration the Sub-Committee was given an opportunity to speak

to individual soldiers and to examine, more closely, the equipment of the Company Group. The demonstration was hosted by the Commanding Officer 1st Battalion Royal Australian Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Mark Bornholt.

- 2.17 The Sub-Committee then moved to the Mount Stuart Range Complex and Marksmanship Training Range to participate in a live-fire familiarisation range practice using the F88 Steyr rifle. The Mount Stuart Training Area is located close to Lavarack Barracks and includes a number of small arms ranges and some close training areas. On completion of the range practice the Sub-Committee returned to Lavarack Barracks and visited the newly commissioned Weapon Training Simulation System to witness a simulated range practice.
- 2.18 During the visit to the 3rd Brigade, the Sub-Committee discussed a number of issues including:
- The operation of the Mount Stuart Range Complex under the recent commercial support arrangements.
 - The training opportunities and advantages offered by the newly commissioned Weapon Training Simulation System.
 - The planned introduction of an improved night fighting capability throughout the Brigade.
 - The development of the 3rd Brigade as an air manoeuvre formation
 - Sustainment of the deployed Brigade.

5th Aviation Regiment

- 2.19 After completing the visit to the 3rd Brigade, the Sub-Committee moved to the 5th Aviation Regiment, located at RAAF Townsville. On arrival at the Headquarters the Sub-Committee were greeted by the Regiment Second in Command, Major Peter King. During the visit the Sub-Committee were provided with a briefing on the role, characteristics and capabilities of the Regiment and provided with a tour of the regiment facilities.
- 2.20 5th Aviation Regiment was established as an Army unit in 1987 and now operates two helicopter types: 24 S-70A-9 Black Hawks providing battlefield mobility/utility and four Chinooks providing medium lift transport. Each air mobile squadron of the Regiment (some 10 aircraft) is capable of lifting an infantry rifle company. The 3,620 kg cargo hook on the Black Hawk provides the capacity to lift light artillery pieces.

- 2.21 The 5th Aviation Regiment provides air mobility and battlefield support to the 3rd Brigade. In addition the Regiment provides assistance to the civilian community in search and rescue and disaster relief operations. The 5th Aviation Regiment also has a role in the support of counter terrorist operations and works closely with the Special Air Service Regiment in this regard.
- 2.22 Following suspension of special operations training after the accident at High Range Training Area involving two Black Hawk helicopters engaged in a special operations training exercise in 1996, the 5th Aviation Regiment special operations capability was restored in July 1997. Indeed at the time of the Sub-Committee's visit a significant number of 5th Aviation Regiment personnel (including the Commanding Officer) and aircraft were deployed to Sydney for Exercise *Day Pegasus*; a special operations exercise conducted as part of the preparation for support to the Sydney Olympics.
- 2.23 During the visit to the 5th Aviation Regiment, the Sub-Committee discussed a number of issues including:
- The involvement of the 5th Aviation Regiment in support to the Sydney Olympics.
 - The use of simulation in aircrew training.
 - The operational requirement for an aircrew oxygen system.
 - Measures taken to reduce the incidence of corrosion in Black Hawk helicopters operated by the Regiment.
 - Involvement of the Regiment in Exercise CROCODILE 99.
 - The planned introduction of an aircrew head up display for Night Vision Goggle (NVG) flight operations.

RAAF Base Amberley

- 2.24 Day four of the tour commenced with a visit to RAAF Amberley located 8 km from Ipswich along the Cunningham Highway and approximately 50 km south-west of Brisbane. On arrival at RAAF Amberley, the Sub-Committee was greeted and briefed by the Commander Strategic Reconnaissance Group, Air Commodore Peter Growder. The briefing included an outline of units resident on the base and the roles, characteristics and capabilities of RAAF Amberley.

- 2.25 RAAF Amberley was initially established as No 3 Recruit Training Depot and No 3 Service Flying Training School. During World War II the base developed into a staging centre for the United States Army Air Corps for assembly, maintenance and salvage of combat aircraft for the Pacific Theatre before being used as a major disbandment centre at the end of the war. Since 1948 RAAF Amberley has been the RAAF's major base for bomber and strike operations.
- 2.26 Today RAAF Amberley is home to Headquarters Strategic Reconnaissance Group, No. 82 Wing and No. 38 Squadron. The base is also the home for a security and fire training school, a mobile control and reporting unit and a major aircraft depot. Base support is provided by the Combat Support Force (Amberley) incorporating, No. 382 Combat Support Squadron and No. 23 Squadron.
- 2.27 The briefing by Air Commodore Growder was followed by a tour of the Base commencing with a static demonstration of an F-111 aircraft. The F-111 is operated by No. 82 Wing that comprises a headquarters and two squadrons; No. 1 and No. 6. With a strength of over 380 personnel and 35 F111 (including F-111C, RF-111C and F-111G variants) the Wing provides a formidable reconnaissance and strike asset.
- 2.28 The Sub-Committee then moved to No. 38 Squadron where it was greeted by the Commanding Officer, Wing Commander Tony Bennett. No. 38 Squadron operates the Caribou aircraft and has a principle focus on support to Army. Tasking for the Squadron includes parachute and airland operations, tactical troop movement, air delivered logistic support, aeromedical evacuation, search and rescue, liaison, special missions and training. While the Caribou remains a capable aircraft, the age of the fleet provides significant challenges to maintenance personnel.
- 2.29 The Sub-Committee was then taken to 501 Wing and greeted by the Officer Commanding 501 Wing, Group Captain Dick Sargeant. The Wing is tasked with the provision of deeper maintenance for RAAF F-111 aircraft and logistic support to the Strategic Reconnaissance Group. The Sub-Committee was provided with a comprehensive brief on the function and capabilities of the Wing and an outline of the commercial outsourcing program being undertaken. In 1991 the Wing was staffed by over 1060 personnel but by 1998 that number had been reduced to 596. The process of commercial outsourcing could, subject to a current round of market testing, see the military strength of the Wing reduced to as few as 90 by December of 2000.
- 2.30 During the visit, the Sub-Committee discussed a number of issues including:

- The possible replacement of the Caribou aircraft.
- Newspaper reports regarding the proposed purchase of additional F-111 aircraft from the United States of America.
- Planned enhancements to existing F-111 capabilities.

Deployable Joint Force Headquarters

- 2.31 The Sub-Committee moved from RAAF Amberley to Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera, Brisbane and a visit to the Deployable Joint Force Headquarters (DJFHQ). On arrival at the Headquarters the Sub-Committee was greeted by the Commander of the 1st Division and DJFHQ, Major General Peter Cosgrove, AM, MC. The visit included a briefing on the roles, characteristics and capabilities of the DJFHQ, presented by Lieutenant Colonel Roger Joy, and a short tour of the Headquarters hosted by Major General Cosgrove.
- 2.32 DJFHQ was established as a deployable joint force headquarters in 1990 and was given its current title in 1995. Prior to this date the headquarters was designated as Headquarters 1st Division. The 1st Division was established in 1914 as part of the AIF. During World War II the majority of the Division remained in Australia as a home defence formation however the commander of the division and his staff were used to form the headquarters of Milne Force which inflicted the first major land defeat on the Japanese in 1942 at Milne Bay. From 1950 to 1972 elements of the 1st Division campaigned in Korea, Malaya, Borneo and South Vietnam. In 1973 HQ 1 Division was relocated to Enoggera to command three full-time brigades. Subsequently, two general reserve brigades were allocated to the Division.
- 2.33 Today the 1st Division is the major combat formation of the land Army and consists of four subordinate formations: two Regular Brigades, one Integrated Task Force, and one General Reserve Brigade. The Division has a strength of approximately 13,500 regular and reserve soldiers. Subordinate formations and units of the Division are located in Sydney, Brisbane, Townsville and Darwin.
- 2.34 The role of the DJFHQ is to command and control assigned maritime, land, air and special forces for the conduct of joint and/or combined operations. To conduct this role DJFHQ may be allocated additional Navy, Army, Air Force and Special Forces assets. Under normal peacetime arrangements DJFHQ is predominantly staffed with Army personnel and

commands the 1st Division. Notwithstanding, the Headquarters is structured for, and as required by the task, may be supplemented by, additional Navy and Air Force staff. Existing command arrangements for DJFHQ mean that, dependant on the issue, the Commander DJFHQ reports either to the LCAUST or to COMAST.

2.35 During the visit to DJFHQ, the Sub-Committee discussed a number of issues including:

- Recent operations conducted by DJFHQ.
- Communications requirements of the Headquarters.
- Logistic support to deployed forces.
- *The Fundamentals of Land Warfare.*

7th Task Force

2.36 The Sub-Committee moved directly within Gallipoli Barracks from DJFHQ to 7th Task Force (7 TF). On arrival at Headquarters 7 TF the Sub-Committee was greeted by the Chief of Staff 7 TF, Lieutenant Colonel Wayne Fleming. The visit commenced with a brief by Lieutenant Colonel Fleming on the roles, characteristics and capabilities of the Task Force and concluded with a short tour of Gallipoli Barracks.

2.37 The 7 TF is a motorised formation comprised of a mixture of full-time and part-time forces. The TF was created after the Defence Efficiency Review by a merger of the 6th Brigade, a Regular / Ready Reserve formation and the 7th Brigade, a General Reserve formation. Currently, the formation is 33% full-time personnel and 67% part-time personnel. This ratio of full-time to part-time staff is not uniform throughout the Task Force. For example the Headquarters contains a ratio closer to 50:50 and the Combat Service Support Battalion contains a high proportion of full-time personnel reflecting the need for specialist skills and significant training times.

2.38 The role of the 7 TF is to conduct motorised operations in order to defeat attacks against Australia. To achieve this the formation has been tasked to maintain the minimum level of operational capability for Defence of Australia operations and a motorised infantry capability. In addition, the 7 TF may be used to reinforce or relieve elements of the Ready Force, provide support to non-operational Army activities, participate in

Restructuring the Army trials and to provide a 'respite' posting for personnel serving in the Ready Force.

2.39 During the visit to 7 TF, the Sub-Committee discussed a number of issues including:

- The success of integration of full-time and part-time personnel within the formation.
- The success of the Task Force in attracting and retaining sufficient part-time recruits.
- Impact on the Task Force of the change to Readiness Notice for the 1st Brigade (For example diversion of personnel and equipment from 7 TF to 1st Brigade).
- Involvement in Exercise CROCODILE 99.