
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Defence Sub-Committee
Visit to RAAF Williamtown,
Darwin Establishments,
East Timor & RAAF Tindal

14-17 July 2003

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

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Chairman's Foreword

The Defence Sub-Committee of the Joint Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee completed a successful visit program to Australian Defence Force (ADF) facilities at RAAF Williamtown, Darwin, East Timor and RAAF Tindal between 14 and 17 July 2003.

The visit provided an excellent opportunity for Members to familiarise themselves with the ADF establishments situated on RAAF Base Williamtown and the various Defence establishments in the Darwin area, in particular Northern Command (NORCOM) and the North West Mobile Force (NORFORCE). As part of this visit program, the members undertook a day visit to East Timor to gain an appreciation of the excellent work being undertaken by the Australian contingent involved with 'Operation Citadel' (OP CITADEL), the Australian contribution to the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). The visit program concluded with an inspection of RAAF Base Tindal.

The sub-committee was introduced to a broad range of Defence capabilities and were exposed to a wide variety of issues. The report is not an exhaustive examination of the establishments visited nor of the issues raised during the inspection program. Rather, the report outlines the extent and nature of the activities of the sub-committee during the visit and the main issues presented.

The sub-committee was particularly interested in OP CITADEL, Australia's contribution to the UNMISET Peacekeeping Force and its elements: Australian National Command Element - East Timor (ASNCE-EM) located in Dili; and Australian Battalion Group Rotation Eight (AUSBATT VIII) situated in Forward Operating Base MOLEANA in the BOBONARO District.

The committee members noted that the ADF personnel supporting OP CITADEL displayed remarkable professionalism and dedication to what was clearly a most arduous undertaking. The harsh nature of the geography, climate, poor transport systems and general lack of infrastructure were clearly evident. Notwithstanding, the committee was impressed with the ingenuity of the ADF members in making

their living accommodation reasonably liveable, even at the most forward of the operating bases, and the conspicuous focus on health and safety.

The sub-committee is most appreciative of the considerable efforts of numerous people and organisations that contributed to the success of this tour. In particular, the sub-committee extends its thanks and gratitude to all those who provided briefings, presentations, were escorts or who provided armed close personal protection to the members. Throughout the tour, the committee was impressed with the excellent quality of the presentations provided, a number of which were given by ADF personnel from RAAF Williamtown, NORCOM, NORFORCE and RAAF Tindal who returned from recreation leave. The committee greatly appreciated this effort. Indeed, the overall impression gained by the sub-committee was a lasting one of an ADF replete with very dedicated and thoroughly professional men and women who made us feel quite proud to be Australian.

Lastly, the committee is particularly grateful to the Minister of Defence for making available the BBJ-737 aircraft from No.34 Squadron that transported the members from RAAF Fairbairn to RAAF Williamtown, RAAF Darwin, East Timor, RAAF Tindal and back to RAAF Fairbairn. The flight crew were unfailing in their cooperation and assistance, and made the flying legs of the inspection tour a thorough pleasure to undertake.

Hon Bruce Scott, MP

Chair, Defence Sub-Committee

Membership of the Committee

Chair Senator A B Ferguson

Deputy Chair Hon L J Brereton, MP

Members

| | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Senator A Bartlett (from 1/7/02) | Mr R C Baldwin, MP |
| Senator M Bishop (from 1/7/02; to 19/8/02) | Hon K C Beazley, MP |
| Senator the Hon N Bolkus (from 1/7/02) | Hon A R Bevis, MP |
| Senator V W Bourne (to 30/6/02) | Hon G J Edwards, MP |
| Senator P H Calvert (to 19/8/02) | Mr L D T Ferguson, MP |
| Senator H G P Chapman (to 30/6/02) | Mrs J Gash, MP |
| Senator the Hon P Cook | Mr D P M Hawker, MP |
| Senator A Eggleston (from 1/7/02) | Hon D F Jull, MP |
| Senator C Evans | Mr P J Lindsay, MP |
| Senator B Gibbs (to 30/6/02) | Hon Dr S P Martin, MP (to 16/8/02) |
| Senator B Harradine | Hon J E Moylan, MP |
| Senator S Hutchins (to 30/6/02; from 19/8/02) | Mr G R Nairn, MP |
| Senator D Johnston (from 22/8/02) | Hon L R S Price, MP |
| Senator J A L Macdonald | Hon G D Prosser, MP |
| Senator K O'Brien (from 1/7/02) | Hon B C Scott, MP |
| Senator M A Payne | Hon W E Snowdon, MP |
| Senator the Hon C Schacht (to 30/6/02) | Hon A M Somlyay, MP |
| Hon B G Baird, MP | Mr C P Thompson, MP |

Secretary Dr Margot Kerley

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| Chair | Hon B C Scott, MP | |
| Deputy Chair | Hon L R S Price, MP | |
| Members | Senator C Evans | Mr R C Baldwin, MP |
| | Senator A B Ferguson | Hon K C Beazley, MP |
| | Senator S Hutchins (to 30/6/02; from 19/8/02) | Hon A R Bevis, MP |
| | Senator D Johnston (from 22/8/02) | Hon L J Brereton, MP |
| | Senator J A L Macdonald | Mr AM Byrne, MP |
| | Senator M A Payne | Hon G J Edwards, MP |
| | | Mrs J Gash, MP |
| | | Mr D P M Hawker, MP |
| | | Mr P J Lindsay, MP |
| | | Mr G R Nairn, MP |
| | | Hon W E Snowdon, MP |
| | | Hon A M Somlyay, MP |
| | | Mr C P Thompson, MP |
| Secretary | Mr Stephen Boyd | |
| Defence Adviser | Wing Commander Rob Scrivener, AM, CSM | |
| Administrative Officer | Ms Emma Flynn | |



Visit Participants

| | | |
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| Chair | Hon Bruce Scott, MP | |
| Deputy Chair | Hon Roger Price, MP | |
| Members | Hon Kim Beazley, MP | Senator Alan Ferguson |
| | Hon Warren Snowdon, MP | Senator Sandy Macdonald |
| Secretary | Mr Stephen Boyd | |
| Secretary JSCFADT | Dr Margot Kerley | |
| Defence Adviser | Wing Commander Rob Scrivener, AM, CSM | |
| Administrative Officer | Ms Emma Flynn | |
| Defence Representative | Wing Commander Bob Richardson | |



Maritime Strategy

terms of reference

The primary priority for the Australian Defence Force (ADF), identified in the White Paper *Defence 2000*, is 'to defend Australia from any credible attack, without relying on help from the combat forces of any other country'.

The key to defending Australia is 'to control the air and sea approaches to our continent, so as to deny them to hostile ships and aircraft, and provide maximum freedom of action for our forces'. For this purpose Australia relies on a 'fundamentally maritime strategy'. To successfully apply a maritime strategy the Australian Defence Organisation (ADO) will 'maintain and further develop an integrated and balanced joint force'.

This inquiry aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of Maritime Strategy and its place within Australia's broader military strategy and defence policy. It is **not limited** to an examination of Australia's naval or maritime forces nor is it focused only on the Defence of Australia.

The inquiry also seeks to understand the implications of a Maritime Strategy for the other tasks set out in the White Paper, namely: contributing to the security of our immediate neighbourhood; contributing effectively to international coalitions beyond our immediate neighbourhood; and support of peacetime national tasks.

Terms of Reference

The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade shall inquire into and report on the ADO ability to deliver the necessary capabilities to meet Australia's strategic interests and objectives as defined in *Defence 2000*, with specific reference to the:

- ADO capability to apply the maritime strategy outlined in *Defence 2000* in the current strategic environment;

- primary roles in Australia's maritime strategy of the key components of the ADO, including the three services, Defence Intelligence Organisation and ADF Command and Control structure;
- impact of Australia's maritime strategy on ADF capacity to participate in combined, multi-national regional and global coalition military operations;
- integration of maritime strategy with the other elements of Australian national power to achieve specified national strategic interests and objectives;
- impact of the evolving strategic environment on Australia's maritime strategy; and
- integration of Australian Defence Industry into capability development to support a maritime strategy.



List of abbreviations

| | |
|-----------|--|
| ADF | Australian Defence Force |
| ADFWC | ADF Warfare Centre |
| AEW&C | Airborne Early Warning and Control |
| AO | Area of Operations |
| AR | Area of Responsibility |
| ASLAV | Australian Light Armoured Vehicle |
| ASNCE-EM | Australian National Command Element – East Timor |
| ATC | Air Traffic Control |
| CO | Commanding Officer |
| CDF | Chief of the Defence Force |
| COMASC | Commander Australian Contingent (East Timor) |
| COMAST | Commander Australian Theatre |
| COMNORCOM | Commander, Headquarters Northern Command |
| CRU | Control and Reporting Unit |
| CSU | Combat Support Unit |
| ECSS | Expeditionary Combat Support Squadron |
| DACC | Defence Aid (Assistance) to the Civil Community |

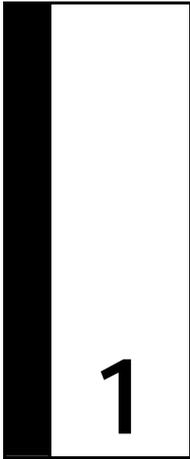
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|------------|---|
| DFACA | Defence Force Aid to the Civil Authorities |
| IFF | Identification, Friend or Foe |
| JCSS | Joint Command Support System |
| JORN | Jindalee Operational Radar Network |
| JOSS | Joint Operating Simulation System |
| JTLS | Joint Theatre Level Simulation |
| LCAUST | Land Commander Australia |
| OC | Officer Commanding (For the Air Force, normally an Officer superior to a CO; for the ARA, an Officer subordinate to a CO) |
| OP CITADEL | Operation Citadel – Australia’s peacekeeping contribution to UNMISET |
| NORCOM | Northern Command |
| NORFORCE | North West Mobile Force |
| RFSU | Regional Force Surveillance Unit |
| RSU | Radar Surveillance Unit |
| SACTU | Surveillance and Control Training Unit |
| SRG | Strategic Reconnaissance Group |
| UNMISET | United Nations Mission in Support to East Timor |
| 04 | Squadron Leader (e) |
| 05 | Wing Commander (e) |



Acknowledgements

The Defence Sub-Committee extends its appreciation to Mr Paul Mellifont and Mr Marcus Smith of the Directorate of Ministerial and Parliamentary Liaison Services (DMPLS) for their significant contribution in the development of an impressive program that more than met the needs of the Committee. These individuals are to be congratulated on a job, very well done.

Further, the delegation would like to express their sincere gratitude and thanks to Lieutenant Colonel Michael Schlatter, CSC, Chief of Staff for the Australian National Command Element – East Timor (ASNCE-EM), and Lieutenant Colonel Stuart Smith, Commanding Officer of the Australian Battalion VIII (AUSBATT VIII), Moleana, East Timor, for their outstanding contribution in developing, preparing, coordinating and conducting the extensive tour of East Timor on 16 July 2003. The visit to East Timor was most impressive and a resounding success due to the excellent work carried out by these Officers and their staff.



RAAF WILLIAMTOWN

ADF Warfare Centre

- 1.1 The first Defence establishment visited by the Defence Sub-Committee was the ADF Warfare Centre (ADFWC), a lodger Unit on RAAF Base Williamtown. The sub-committee was met at their aircraft by the Base Commander, Wing Commander Ian Farnsworth, and the Commandant of ADFWC, Air Commodore Dennis Green. On arrival at ADFWC, Air Commodore Green briefed the sub-committee on the role and functions of ADFWC, including its role in the development of joint doctrine, joint training, joint and combined exercises, the evaluation of Defence exercises, and the role of the ADF Peacekeeping Centre. The brief also outlined the planning for Exercise Crocodile 03.
- 1.2 The ADFWC is a joint unit established to study, develop, teach, promulgate and provide advice on Australian Defence Force joint and combined warfare doctrine, procedures and tactics. This includes advice on administrative support of operations, education for individuals, group training, exercise management and control, and wargaming. It has about 80 ADF personnel, as well as a small number of APS and contracted staff, and an annual budget of around A\$1.2M. The ADFWC's key sections include Exercise Wing, Simulation Section, Training Section; whilst the ADF Peace Keeping Centre also resides within the ADFWC complex.

Exercise Wing

- 1.3 Exercise Wing provides the Commander Australian Theatre an avenue to enable him to exercise operational elements and headquarters of the ADF. Credible circumstances are exercised such that the force's strengths and weaknesses at the operational and tactical levels of war are revealed, pertinent doctrine is tested and the staff planning processes at all levels are evaluated.
- 1.4 Exercise Wing undertakes the planning and execution of a wide range of exercises across the Strategic and Operational level of the Australian Defence Force. These exercises are designed to test the processes and decision making of Headquarters staff ranging from Australian Theatre down to Northern Command and the Deployable Joint Force Headquarters. A series of exercises are also conducted to test our links and processes with other nations in our region and around the world.
- 1.5 Exercises include Kingfisher and Crocodile as well as the more operational exercises such as Rainbow Serpent and Satria Bhakti. Activities also include the Northern Trilogy exercise testing the staff of Northern Command, and the Tendi Run series evaluating Australian Theatre, Northern Command and Deployable Joint Force Headquarters. The major exercise for 2003 is Crocodile 03. Planning for this combined exercise commenced early 2001 and is the major Australian/US exercise for the year.

Figure 1.1 A number of typical platforms used in CROC series exercises



Simulation Section

- 1.6 Simulation Section provides a method to simulate the entire range of Headquarter processes. The Joint Operating Simulation System (JOSS) replicates messaging, command support environments and tools by linking to the Joint Theatre Level Simulation (JTLS) through the Joint Command Support System (JCSS).

Training Section

- 1.7 Training Section is structured to provide general education and job-specific training in the concepts of joint warfare. Approximately forty courses, seminars or study periods are run during the year, reaching more than two thousand participants. The training program covers three broad joint warfare categories: Core, Specialist, and Overseas. The core courses are the building blocks of all joint training conducted and are usually prerequisites for the specialist courses. Considerable support is given to the conduct of overseas courses in the region or sponsored overseas students in Australia in support of the ADF's regional engagement initiatives.

Australian Defence Force Peacekeeping Centre

- 1.8 Australia has a long and proud history of helping to keep peace in many of the world's trouble spots and, since the end of the Second World War, the ADF has contributed to over thirty peace operations. This contribution, and the professionalism of the ADF, has earned the respect and admiration of Governments and individuals throughout the world.
- 1.9 In 1992, the Australian Department of Defence acknowledged the increasing complexity of peace operations and identified a need to provide additional doctrine and training. Consequently, on 25 January 1993, the ADF Peacekeeping Centre was established as part of ADFWC.
- 1.10 The Peacekeeping Centre is manned by the Director, a Wing Commander equivalent (05) on a rotational basis and a Squadron Leader equivalent (04) Staff Officer from each service, all with recent Peace Operation experience.
- 1.11 During the brief, the sub-committee discussed a number of issues including:
- the nature of environmental planning, and the requirement to obtain the Minister for Environmental and Heritage's approval for the conduct of major military exercises,

- the conjoint nature of environmental and exercise planning and the mitigation strategies implemented to lessen any significant impact on the environment from ADF training activities,
- the proactive approach being taken to consult and obtain the support of environmental interest groups, and
- the impact of major exercises on local communities.

Surveillance and Control Group

1.12 The sub-committee moved from the ADFWC to Surveillance and Control Group (SCG) Headquarters situated in the Eastern Regional Operations Centre (EASTROC) where they were met by Air Commodore David Peitsch, AM, Commander SCG, and Warrant Officer Scott Chenery, Warrant Officer Disciplinary of SCG. Air Commodore Peitsch briefed the sub-committee on the role and functions of SCG, including its mission, scope of operations, current priorities and new developments.

Figure 1.2 Members with Air Commodore Peitsch, Commander SCG



- 1.13 Formed in September 1998, the SCG is responsible for conducting effective surveillance and tactical control in support of, and as an integral part of, an expeditionary force. It consists of a Headquarters as well as No. 41 and No. 44 Wings.
- 1.14 Formed in 1943, No. 41 Wing provides air surveillance and counter air control in support of expeditionary forces and consists of the following Units:

- No. 2 and No. 3 Control and Reporting Units (CRU),
 - No. 114 Mobile Control and Reporting Unit (114MCRU),
 - No. 1 Radar Surveillance Unit (1RSU), and
 - Surveillance and Control Training Unit (SACTU).
- 1.15 No. 44 Wing formed in November 2000, and is the designated Air Traffic Control (ATC) Wing which provides the tactical airspace management and air traffic control capability to support expeditionary forces. Fixed base capability consists of 11 ATC flights located in Darwin, Townsville, Amberley, Richmond, Williamtown, Tindal, Edinburgh, Pearce, East Sale, RAN Air Station Nowra and the Army Aviation Centre at Oakey.
- 1.16 SCG provides Battlespace Management which involves positive control of the air environment and is achieved through the Aerospace Battle Management, Aerospace Management and Early Warning and Control roles.

Aerospace Battle Management

- 1.17 The RAAF provides management of operating airspace through coordination of offensive air and defensive air and ground assets. This role is achieved through the networking of surveillance information sources including fixed and mobile Control and Reporting Units, over-the-horizon radar and tactical and domestic air traffic control radars. The Control and Reporting Units provide focal area surveillance that supports effective application of defence systems such as ground based anti-aircraft weapons and counter-air aircraft. Airborne Early Warning and Control aircraft will form part of this capability.

Figure 1.3 JORN over-the-horizon radar receiver antenna array



Aerospace Management

- 1.18 RAAF Air Traffic Control detachments provide aerospace management of tactical and non-tactical airspace for safety and efficiency reasons. RAAF Air Traffic Control works closely with civil Air Traffic Control and other Aerospace Battlespace Management agencies to deconflict airspace users. RAAF Air Traffic Controllers provide air traffic services for all ADF military and joint user aerodromes.

Figure 1.4 Tactical air traffic control facilities



Airborne Early Warning and Control

- 1.19 Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) provides extended range for detection of hostile strike forces and control of allied counter-air aircraft. The platform will supplement other battlespace management information sources. The RAAF is planning delivery of four AEW&C aircraft around 2006-07 which should be capable of detecting fighter aircraft at a range of at least 300 km. In addition, the AEW&C aircraft will be capable of being aerial refuelled, will have an advanced surveillance radar, identification friend or foe (IFF) system, an expanded passive surveillance system, and a highly effective self-defence capability.
- 1.20 During the brief, the sub-committee discussed a number of issues including:
- SCG's role in the Defence of Australia and its contribution to the security of the immediate regional neighbourhood;

- the difficulties associated with personnel retention in the face of strong competitive market forces, particularly for Air Traffic Controllers, Electronics Engineers and Communication-Electronics Technicians; and
- the rapid evolution of technology, the lead times associated with major capital acquisition, and the apparent need for an integrated approach.

Figure 1.5 Airborne early warning and control aircraft



RAAF Base Williamtown

- 1.21 Following the brief at SCG, the sub-committee was met by Wing Commander Ian Farnsworth, the Base Commander, and given a windscreen tour of the major infrastructure developments taking place at RAAF Williamtown. The committee were shown the new site and building works for No. 2 Squadron (2SQN) AEW&C Aircraft, as well as the new Headquarters for No. 76 Squadron.

Development of RAAF Williamtown

- 1.22 Currently, RAAF Williamtown is in Stage 1 of a major redevelopment involving major works to establish the facilities for the AEW&C aircraft, engineering services upgrade (including power, water, sewerage, communications), airfield pavements, ordnance loading areas, explosive ordnance areas, aircraft refuelling facilities and fuel farm, and childcare facility.
- 1.23 RAAF Williamtown has been continually redeveloped as the need for a permanent fighter base has grown. Within the next 12-18 months, 2SQN

equipped with AEW&C aircraft will be situated at RAAF Williamtown. This has necessitated major development and an extension of the base, with many buildings being replaced with hangars for 2SQN aircraft and their associated maintenance facilities.

- 1.24 The economic impact of RAAF Williamtown on the local community is quite significant. The Base has a population of some 2,500 staff (1,800 military) with an annual salary of around A\$125 million, whilst operational expenditure is somewhere in the order of A\$42.1 million per year. The Base is estimated to have contributed some A\$1.25 billion into the local economy over the years from contracts and redevelopment, which is still ongoing. Defence Housing Authority has purchased A\$19.2 million of housing acquisitions and expended some A\$1.24 million in local maintenance contracts.
- 1.25 During the brief, the sub-committee discussed a number of issues including:
- security of the Base in the current heightened threat environment,
 - Base redevelopment,
 - urban encroachment and aircraft noise issues, and
 - the future of Salt Ash Air Weapons Range.

No. 381 Expeditionary Combat Support Squadron

- 1.26 Following the windscreen tour of RAAF Williamtown, the sub-committee was met at No. 381 Expeditionary Combat Support Squadron (381ECSS) Headquarters by the Commanding Officer, Wing Commander Mark Kelton. The sub-committee was provided with a brief on the history of the squadron since its formation in 1998, its deployable nature and its roles within the ADF combat power model, as well as its inter-relationships with RAAF Williamtown and the various Service Provider Groups, and concluded with a summary of where the squadron fits within Combat Support Group.
- 1.27 In addition, opportunities were provided to speak with 381ECSS personnel recently returned from operational service. Of note, a number of these members returned from leave to be available to meet the committee and share their operational experiences. At the conclusion of the brief and meeting with the military members of 381ECSS, the sub-

committee was provided the opportunity to inspect an F/A-18 Hornet fighter aircraft.

- 1.28 381ECSS was formed at RAAF Williamtown in May 1998. The Squadron motto, 'Lead the Way', reflects the expeditionary nature of the Squadron and its role as one of the first Air Force units to deploy in a contingency to support military operations.
- 1.29 The range of support services provided by 381ECSS on forward deployment include:
- security,
 - fire fighting and prevention,
 - ground defence,
 - physical fitness training,
 - aircraft arrestor systems,
 - aircraft refuelling,
 - transport maintenance,
 - general engineering,
 - administration,
 - communications,
 - logistics,
 - explosive ordinance demolition, and
 - catering.
- 1.30 When not training or on deployment, these extensive support services are provided to RAAF Williamtown in an arrangement with the Base Commander and Combat Support Unit, Williamtown.
- 1.31 Since its inception, 381ECSS has assisted in a number of significant ADF activities including:
- OP WARDEN (The ADF involvement in the International Force in East Timor. On 15 September 1999 the UN Security Council adopted UN Resolution 1264/99, under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, authorising the immediate deployment of an Australian led International Peacekeeping Force to East Timor.);
 - OP GOLD (The Defence support to the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games.);

- OP GABERDINE (The ADF's logistic, stores and engineering support to the onshore management of unauthorised arrivals, including logistics support to offshore processing centres.);
- OP RELEX (This is a program to detect, intercept and deter vessels carrying unauthorised arrivals from entering Australia through the North-West maritime approaches. The current OP RELEX II contribution includes one RAN frigate, one Air Force P3C and an Army Transit Security Element supported by Coastwatch and Customs.);
- OP GUARDIAN (The ADF operation to provide support to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held over 6-9 October 2001 in South Queensland.);
- OP SLIPPER (The ADF contribution to the International Coalition against terrorism.);
- OP BASTILLE (The ADF's forward deployment of personnel and equipment to the Middle East. The purpose of the deployment was to:
 - ⇒ increase diplomatic pressure on Saddam Hussein, and
 - ⇒ to ensure men and women of the ADF had the opportunity to acclimatise to conditions in the region, exercise with other coalition forces and prepare for a potential conflict should a diplomatic solution not be found.); and
- OP FALCONER (Australia's contribution to the international coalition of military forces enforcing Iraq's compliance with its international obligations to disarm. Some ADF remain in the Middle East to support the transition from combat operations to the coalition provisional authority under OP CATALYST.).

Figure 1.6 381ECSS on deployment



- 1.32 During these operations, 381ECSS personnel were heavily engaged in a range of support activities including defence aid to the civilian community, the activation of bare bases, support to various UN peace keeping missions, support to border protection, support for the coalition force activities in the War on Terrorism, as well as direct support for the War in Iraq.

Figure 1.7 381ECSS member marshalling a C-130 Hercules transport aircraft on deployment



- 1.33 During the brief, the sub-committee discussed a number of issues including:
- the high operational tempo experienced by the Unit since 1999, and
 - manning and morale.

NORTHERN COMMAND & NORTH WEST MOBILE FORCE

Headquarters Northern Command

2.1 On 15 July 2003, the Defence Sub-Committee was met at Headquarters Northern Command (HQNORCOM), Larrakeyah Barracks, by Captain Norman Banks, RAN, Deputy Commander of Operations (JO1). Captain Banks subsequently briefed the sub-committee on the following:

- the structure and function of HQNORCOM;
- the military surveillance and response operations conducted;
- Defence Aid to the Civil Community (DACC) and Defence Force Assistance to the Civil Authorities (DFACA);
- the maintenance of operational and military links with Eastern Indonesia;
- responsibilities as the single point of contact for ADF and Northern territory Government;
- facilitation of industry and commercial support to ADF operations; and
- support for current ADF operations.

2.2 HQNORCOM was established in 1988 as an operational level joint Australian Defence Force (ADF) Headquarters. The Commander NORCOM (COMNORCOM) reports directly to the Commander Australian Theatre (COMAST) and is responsible for the planning,

- practice and conduct of surveillance, reconnaissance, protection and civil support operations within the Command's Area of Operations (AO). That AO covers Queensland and the Northern Territory above 19 degrees south, and the Kimberley and Pilbara Districts of Western Australia.
- 2.3 COMNORCOM is currently Air Commodore Steven Walker who has approximately 130 personnel from the Navy, Army and Air Force that form his Headquarters staff. HQNORCOM is centrally located at Larrakeyah Barracks in close proximity to the Darwin CBD. COMNORCOM passed on his apologies for not being able to personally brief the committee, but was called away from Darwin on pressing work matters.
- 2.4 During the inspection the sub-committee was briefed on the vastness and operational complexity of HQNORCOM's AO which includes terrain and geography of remarkable diversity, ranging from arid to semi-arid desert, mangrove swamps, dense tropical jungle to open woodland and savannah.
- 2.5 HQNORCOM's mission is to plan for, practice and conduct the defence of Northern Australia as part of the Australian Theatre campaign, and to conduct other Defence operations and tasks in the NORCOM AO.
- 2.6 HQNORCOM's roles and responsibilities include the following:
- the conduct of military surveillance and response operations;
 - direct, coordinate and support all DACC activities;
 - facilitate support to DFACA;
 - re-establish and maintain military operational links with military counterparts in Eastern Indonesia;
 - act as the ADF single point of contact for, and coordinate ADF liaison with the NT Government;
 - coordinate ADF liaison with Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local Govt Agencies, NGOs, other agencies and organisations, and the community; and
 - facilitate industry and commercial support to ADF operations and exercises.
- 2.7 The sub-committee was also briefed on HQNORCOM's role in the coordination of the various surveillance efforts conducted in northern Australia, as well as the important role undertaken in the prevention of various illegal activities such as fish poaching, people smuggling and

other violations of Australia's immigration laws, and customs related issues.

2.8 During the brief, the sub-committee discussed a number of specific issues including:

- the role of HQNORCOM in regional engagement;
- the extensive work carried out to create effective civil/military cooperation in the North;
- current support for ADF operations, in particular OP GABERDINE, OP RELEX II, and OP CRANBERRY;
- current surveillance operations across the north of Australia, and the excellent working relationship with the Australian Customs Service, Coastwatch; and
- the use of the ADF in DACC and DFACA situations.

Figure 2.1 Members with Captain Norman Banks and Lieutenant Colonel Clay Sutton



North West Mobile Force

2.9 Following the HQNORCOM brief, the sub-committee was introduced to the Commanding Officer of the North West Mobile Force (NORFORCE), Lieutenant Colonel Clay Sutton, who subsequently briefed the committee on:

- the roles and responsibilities of NORFORCE,

- the unique features of the Unit including the special relationship with isolated indigenous communities and the vast area that makes up NORFORCE's area of responsibility (AR),
- the history of the Unit,
- the Unit's equipment, and
- current issues.

2.10 NORFORCE was raised in 1981 as the first of three Regional Force Surveillance Units (RFSU) in northern Australia. The unit traces its history back to the 2nd/1st North Australia Observer Unit which was a bush commando unit conducting surveillance in northern Australia during World War 2. NORFORCE is a high readiness unit that is not structured or intended to be deployed away from its current AR. While it remains a direct command unit of the Land Commander – Australia (LCAUST), NORFORCE may be placed under Operational Command of COMNORCOM for specific operations.

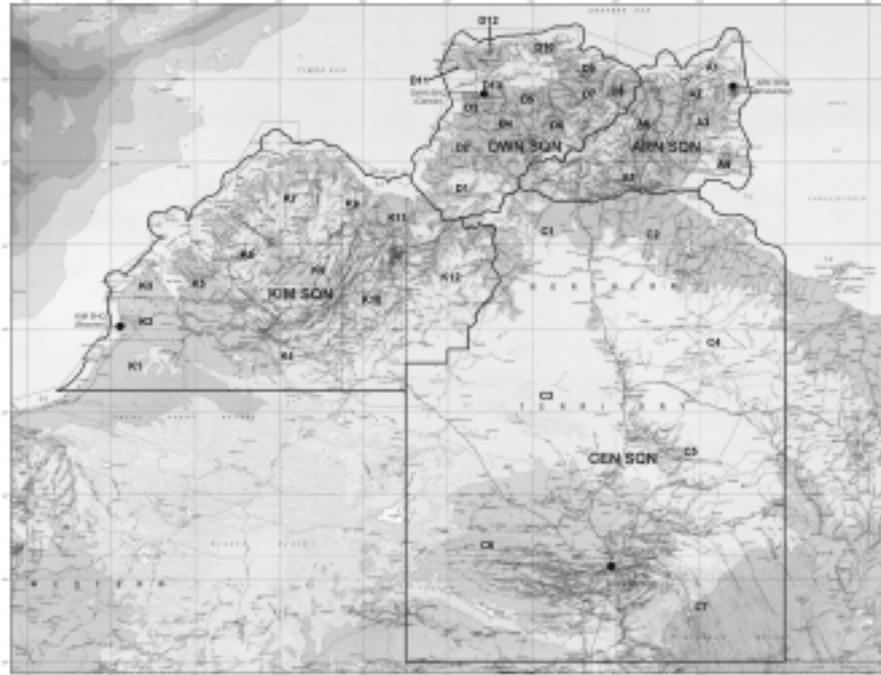
Figure 2.2 NORFORCE members on patrol



2.11 NORFORCE generally recruits, trains and operates in a number of local areas across northern Australia. The majority of the regiment's some 550 personnel are Reservists drawn from the local indigenous communities in its AR. Although headquartered in Darwin, most of NORFORCE's full-

time staff are situated at over 30 different locations throughout their AR across the north of Australia.

Figure 2.3 NORFORCE distribution and areas of operations



2.12 The Regiment maintains squadrons in the Pilbara, Alice Springs and Gove. These are Kimberley Squadron, situated at Broome; Arnhem Squadron, located at Nhulunbuy; and Centre Squadron, stationed in Alice Springs. NORFORCE conducts surveillance and reconnaissance operations in northern Australia within an AR that covers over 1.8 million square kilometres and stretches from the Gulf of Carpentaria in the east to the Kimberley in the west.

Figure 2.4 NORFORCE observers in operation



- 2.13 As a regional force, the unit provides a permanent surveillance presence enhanced by a civilian reporting network which is widely supported by the local indigenous communities. The regional nature of the unit allows access to what would be otherwise closed communities, engenders strong community support for their operations and facilitates access to unparalleled local knowledge. NORFORCE is the largest employer of indigenous people in both the Northern Territory and the Kimberley region.
- 2.14 NORFORCE has 73 permanent ARA members out of a total compliment of 597 with an Establishment of 530. Approximately 60% of Patrolmen are indigenous, with a female representation of 44 soldiers. The Unit has the capacity to field 48 patrols, each of six personnel, and is capable of conducting wide area land surveillance for the operational level.
- 2.15 Patrols are deployable by air, land and sea and are equipped with vehicles, high technology based surveillance and communication equipment including: Night Vision Equipment (NVE), ground surveillance radar (GSR), thermal sighting systems (TSS), unattended ground sensors (UGS), and image capture and transfer systems (ICATS).

Figure 2.5 NORFORCE deployment by land and sea



- 2.16 The sub-committee was briefed on a number of initiatives being undertaken by NORFORCE including:
- the implementation of an information management system (IMS) to assist in patrol planning and to provide information whilst on patrol;
 - the creation of a patrol database, to also assist with patrol planning, and to provide ready information whilst on patrol in a personal digital accessory (PDA – PalmPilot), and to allow for an Automation Patrol Report System;
 - the development and implementation of a capability management system to hold the current status and qualifications of the members of NORFORCE; and

- the eventual creation of a real time, fully integrated, distributed communications and information system that would allow the downloading of imagery and data to appropriate level throughout the organisation.

EAST TIMOR

- 3.1 On 16 July 2003, the Parliamentary delegation was met at Comoro, East Timor, by Australian Consul Mr John Michell and accompanied by Third Secretary Sophia Cason. Also present was Colonel Mark Webb, the Defence Attache with the tour escort Lieutenant Colonel Michael Schlatter, CSC, the Chief of Staff of the Australian National Command Element – East Timor (ASNCE-EM).
- 3.2 The sub-committee was flown by Helicopter to forward operating base (FOB) Moleana and put down at Landing Zone (LZ) Wallaby where they were met by Lieutenant Colonel Stuart Smith, Commanding Officer of the Australian Battalion Group Rotation Eight (AUSBATT VIII). The sub-committee was subsequently provided with a comprehensive brief on AUSTBAT VIII operations including a description of its roles, responsibilities and current area of operations, (AO), the level of internal security needed, and the patrol areas of other international peacekeeping forces. The brief was followed by a tour of the Moleana facilities where the members had an opportunity to meet and talk with the ADF personnel serving there.
- 3.3 From Moleana, the sub-committee was driven to FOB Maliana where they received a short introduction on the roles and current operations of 'C' Company and had an opportunity to meet and talk with the ADF staff serving there.
- 3.4 The sub-committee was driven from FOB Maliana to the border patrol and crossing point 'Junction Post Charlie' (JP-C) where they received an overview on role and function of the ADF members situated there and had an opportunity to view the amenities and talk with the personnel.

- 3.5 Following the inspection of JP-C, the sub-committee was flown by helicopter to FOB Gleno where they received a brief on the role, functions and current operations being conducted by 'D' Company. The sub-committee also had an opportunity to meet and talk with the ADF personnel deployed at Gleno, including members of the UN Police. The committee was also provided with the opportunity to inspect the local Gleno Market enroute to Gleno sports field to meet their air transport. From Gleno, the sub-committee was transported to Comoro for departure.

The Australian National Command Element - East Timor

- 3.6 ASNCE-EM is located in Dili, the capital of East Timor, and is staffed by members from all three Services. It is located in a former Indonesian Regional Labour Department building, and is one of the better buildings in Dili, having escaped the widespread destruction and looting. All working areas are air-conditioned and renovations and improvements are taking place regularly.

Figure 3.1 ASNCE-EM Headquarters



3.7 The principal roll of ASNCE-EM is to provide support to the Commander Australian Contingent (COMASC). The responsibilities of COMASC include:

- the provision of national support to all Australian Force Elements in East Timor;
- ensuring the safety of all Australian Force Elements in East Timor; and
- informing higher headquarters in Australia of developments that affect Australia's contribution to United Nations Mission In Support to East Timor (UNMISET).

AUSBATT VIII

3.8 AUSBATT VIII is the eighth rotation of Australian Service personnel and is based primarily on the 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, but includes strong representation from specialist members of the Navy and Air Force.

Figure 3.2 Members of the committee entering AUSBATT VIII Headquarters



3.9 Contributing Army Units include:

- 4th Field Regiment,
- B Squadron 3/4th Cavalry Regiment,
- 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment,
- 5th Aviation Regiment,
- 1st Military Police Battalion,
- 3rd Combat Service Support Battalion, and
- AUSBATT VIII had been allocated one Fijian Rifle Company under operational control for a short duration.

3.10 As indicated, Headquarters AUSBATT VIII is based at FOB Moleana in the Bobonaro District. This is a purpose built base and contains facilities for all combat and service support elements for AUSBATT VIII (up to 400 personnel).

3.11 AUSBATT VIII facilities include: communications, accommodation, repair workshops and supply warehouses, helicopter landing sites, and a level three aeromedical medical evacuation infrastructure.

3.12 One rifle company group is based at Batugade. This group comprises 120 personnel and is responsible for providing security in the Bobonaro North District. Their responsibilities include supervising the border crossing point at 'Junction Post Alpha' (JP-A) and protecting radio retransmission locations. The group usually commits one platoon to securing their base, one platoon to patrolling the District, and one platoon to supervising the border crossing. The group is equipped with 4WD troop carrying vehicles and Armoured Personnel Carriers (APC) to move around the District.

Figure 3.3 Typical patrol by foot and armoured personnel carrier



- 3.13 A second rifle company group is based at Maliana. Similarly, this group comprises 120 personnel and is responsible for providing security in the Bobonaro Sought District.
- 3.14 Their responsibilities include supervising the border crossing point at JP-C and protecting radio retransmission locations.

Figure 3.4 Parliamentary members at Junction Post 'Charlie'



- 3.15 The group usually commits one platoon to secure their base, one platoon to patrolling the District, and one platoon to supervising the border crossing. The group is equipped with 4WD troop carrying vehicles and Armoured Personnel Carriers (APC) to move around the District.

Figure 3.5 ADF personnel at Forward Operating Base Maliana



- 3.16 A third rifle company group is based at Gleno. As with the other rifle company's, this group comprises 120 personnel and is responsible for providing security in the Ermera District.

Figure 3.6 Parliamentary members with local children at Gleno

- 3.17 The group also commits one platoon to securing their base, one platoon to patrolling the District, and one platoon to supervising the border crossing. The group is only equipped with 4WD troop carrying vehicles to move around their District.

Figure 3.7 Parliamentary members with ADF personnel at Gleno

- 3.18 In addition, a logistics base exists in DILI with approximately 100 personnel and provides additional repair, recovery, supply, medical and transport support to AUSBATT VIII.

- 3.19 The following two major issues were discussed with the sub-committee during this inspection:

- AUSBATT VIII relies on an extensive civil liaison network to conduct its operations. To facilitate this liaison six man detachments are distributed throughout each District to establish and maintain rapport with the locals. Much of the work conducted by these detachments relates to both training and advising local administrators and security groups on law and order matters.
- AUSBATT VIII will soon conduct a significant back loading of equipment in order to make way for the proposed smaller AUSBATT IX. This activity will need to be carried in addition to AUSBATT VIII's current operations and responsibilities.

- 3.20 During the tour, the sub-committee discussed a number of issues including:

- the austere nature of the working environment, particularly for the soldiers who undertake patrols;
- the generally 'Spartan' lifestyle the ADF members experience during their tour of duty, particularly those at the more remote FOBs;

- the conspicuous poverty and poor living standards of those in rural areas; and
- the apparent lack of organised agriculture.

RAAF TINDAL

- 4.1 The final Defence establishment visited by the Defence Sub-Committee was RAAF Tindal which is located some 320 km south-east of Darwin by road, and about 17 km from Katherine. On arrival, the sub-committee was met by Group Captain Corrie Metz who subsequently briefed the members on the role, capabilities and current operations at RAAF Tindal. The briefing was followed by a tour of the Base, in particular the current Flying Fox infestation and its impact on the living areas of the Base, following which the members were given a static demonstration and inspection of a No. 75 Squadron F/A-18 'Hornet'. The visit concluded with an afternoon tea with some of the ADF personnel and their families.

Figure 4.1 Members inspecting an F/A 18 Hornet fighter aircraft with veteran combat pilot from Iraq

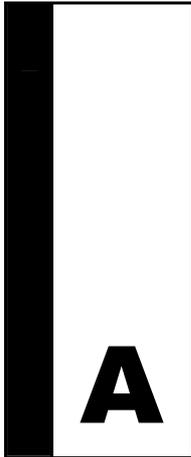


- 4.2 Tindal was built during World War 2 as one of several of airfields in the Northern Territory to support allied bomber operations. It was extensively redeveloped in the 1980s to accommodate the F/A-18 fighter aircraft and support facilities, as well as the infrastructure and accommodation for ADF personnel, and has been fully operational since 1989. RAAF Tindal is permanently staffed and operated by 322 Combat Support Wing and is home to No. 75 Squadron.
- 4.3 RAAF Tindal is also intended to act as a forward base for deployed forces and provides a secure entry point into the northern region of Australia. In this role, RAAF Tindal provides both security and a strategic airhead for the logistic support of deployed forces in the north of Australia.
- 4.4 RAAF Tindal is Australia's largest air base covering some 30,000 acres. In addition, Delamere Air Weapons Range is in close proximity providing an impressive air training facility and is one of only a few air weapons ranges in the world able to accommodate training with all conventional weapons.
- 4.5 Group Captain Metz briefed the Sub-Committee on the continuing development of the Base, the challenges provided by the 'tyranny of distance' and the remoteness of the Base. He also provided the members with an opportunity to inspect his nearly complete 'Command Bunker', and to see its extensive 'high tech' command and control equipment and IT systems in action.
- 4.6 During the brief and tour of the Base, the sub-committee discussed a number of issues including:
- the critical nature of Base security, and the proposed fitment of 'smart fences';
 - the Flying Fox plague that had infested the Base, in particular its impact on the living areas and members;
 - the poor local amenities in Katherine;
 - lack of Public transport;
 - serious demand for child care facilities for Base staff;
 - poor overall family support services;
 - limited spouse employment opportunities;
 - motor vehicle accidents;
 - lack of emergency air transport; and
 - the Base's general remoteness.

Figure 4.2 RAAF Tindal flying fox infestation



Senator Alan Ferguson
Chairman
15 October 2003



Appendix A – Tour Program

14 July 2003

Location: RAAF Fairbairn

0900 – 0950 Depart RAAF Fairbairn for RAAF Williamtown.

Location: RAAF Williamtown

1020 – 1140 ADF Warfare Centre - brief by AIRCDRE Green, Commandant ADFWC.

Brief on the role and functions of the ADF Warfare Centre. The brief included the development of joint doctrine, joint training, joint and combined exercises, evaluation of ADF operations and exercises, and the ADF Peacekeeping Centre. The brief also outlined the planning for Exercise Crocodile 03.

1230 – 1430 Surveillance and Control Group - brief by AIRCDRE Pietsch, Commander SCG.

1430 – 1530 RAAFWLM - brief and Tour by WGCDR Farnsworth, Base Commander RAAF Williamtown.

1530 – 1630 381 Expeditionary Combat Support Squadron - brief by WGCDR Kelton and Inspection of an F/A18 Hornet.

The reorganisation of RAAF Base support personnel into Expeditionary Combat Support Squadrons (ECSS) was an outcome of the Government initiated Defence Reform Program (DRP).

381ECSS is one of three such squadrons. The brief covered the history of the squadron since its formation in 1998, its deployable nature and its roles within the ADF combat power model, as well as its inter-relationships with RAAF Williamtown and Service Provider Groups, and concluded with a summary of where the squadron fits within Combat Support Group.

In addition opportunities were provided to speak with 381ECSS personnel recently returned from operational service.

1630 Depart for RAAF Darwin by VIP aircraft.

15 July 2003

Location: HQNORCOM

0900 – 1015 Headquarters Northern Command - brief by CAPT Banks, RAN.

The brief covered the structure and function of HQNORCOM and included discussion of Defence Aid to the Civil Community, the maintenance of operational and military links with Eastern Indonesia, responsibilities as the single point of contact for ADF and Northern Territory Government and facilitate industry and commercial support to ADF operations.

1030 – 1200 North West Mobile Force - brief by LTCOL Sutton, Commanding Officer.

LTCOL Sutton presented a brief on the roles and responsibilities of the North West Mobile Force and discussed the unique aspects of the unit, especially the unique relationship with isolated aboriginal communities and the very large area that NORFORCE covers.

The brief also covered a brief history of the unit, the unit's operating equipment and issues it currently faces.

16 July 2003

Location: RAAF Darwin

0830 Depart RAAF Darwin for East Timor by VIP aircraft.

Location: East Timor

0930-1800 Brief on the ADF Contingent & tour to meet ADF personnel.

1800 Depart East Timor for RAAF Darwin by VIP aircraft.

17 July 2003

Location: RAAF Darwin

1200 – 1220 Depart RAAF Darwin for RAAF Tindal.

