



# SHUTTERBUGS

# *Grey*

Conversations and collages with  
Navy's talent behind the camera lens  
By Lieutenant Will Singer

*Volume One*







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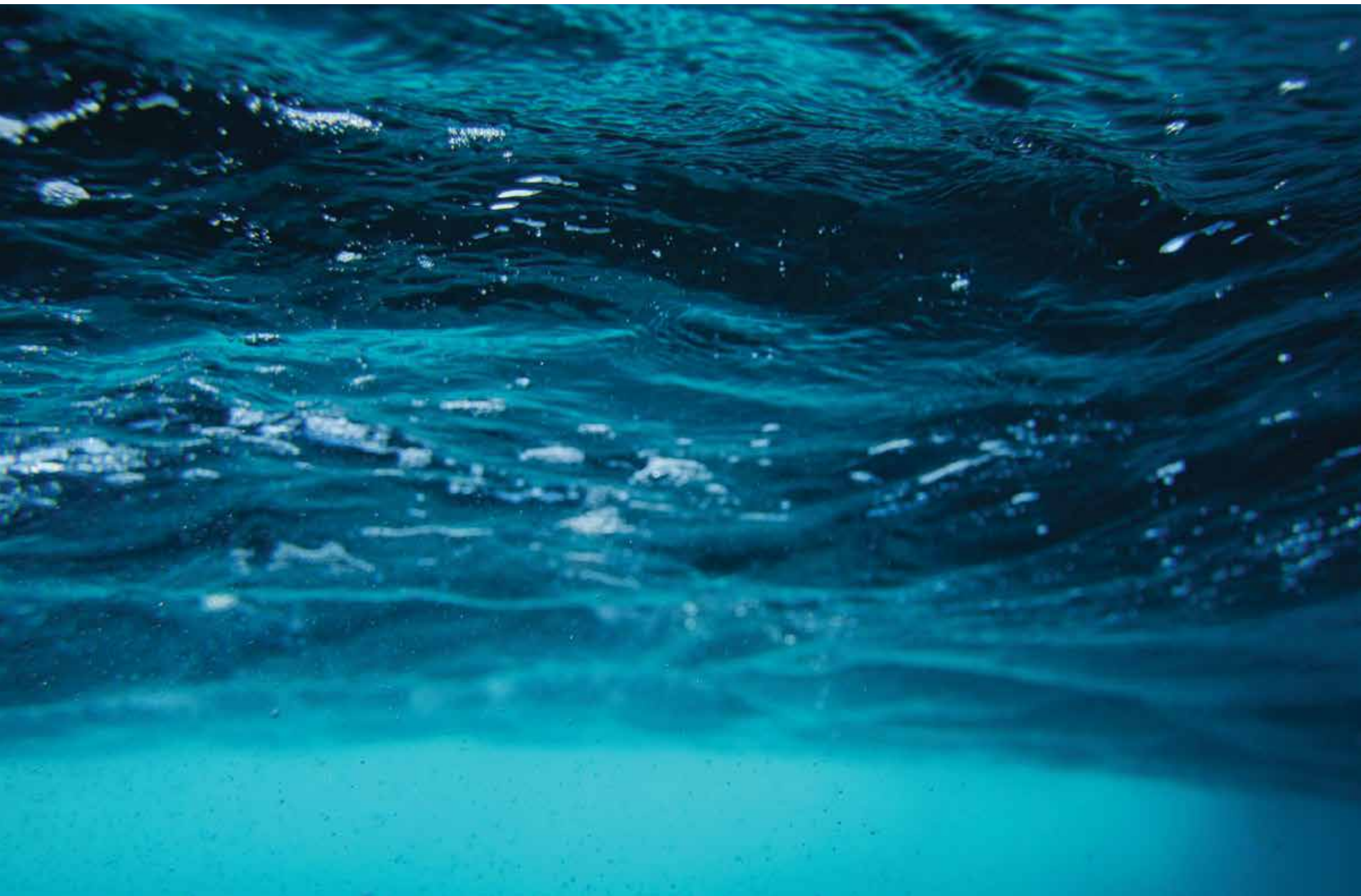
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**Cover Image:** HMAS *Parramatta* positioned in the middle of a formation anchorage, with the other participating units of Exercise OCEAN EXPLORER 17 (LSIS Richard Cordell – 2017)

'A portrait is not made in the camera but on either side of it.'

Edward Steichen  
Photographer





# Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
FOREWORD: Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Michael Noonan, AO, RAN	5
FOREWORD: Director Sea Power Centre-Australia, Captain Sean Andrews, RAN	7
INTRODUCTION	8
<b>CHAPTER 1:</b> Leading Seaman Imagery Specialist Richard Cordell	11
<b>CHAPTER 2:</b> Petty Officer Imagery Specialist Thomas Gibson	27
<b>CHAPTER 3:</b> Chief Petty Officer Imagery Specialist Damian Pawlenko	39
<b>CHAPTER 4:</b> Chief Petty Officer Imagery Specialist Paul Berry	53
<b>CHAPTER 5:</b> Petty Officer Imagery Specialist Phillip Cullinan	69
<b>CHAPTER 6:</b> Leading Seaman Imagery Specialist Kayla Jackson	83
<b>CHAPTER 7:</b> The Rosemary Rodwell Memorial Prize	97
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	104

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for his valuable contributions and unflagging hard work.

I dedicate this work to all the Royal Australian Navy Imagery Specialists and especially the contributors who did so during a high-tempo period. I am in awe of their creativity, professionalism, commitment and hard work. It was an absolute thrill to go through this collation process and identify some of the images of activities I was involved in.

Navy make enormous sacrifices, and every day we should be thankful for our personnel, who are serving around the world, around the clock to protect and defend Australia. We should be equally thankful for their families, who serve at home, and thankful for our veterans, who have stood the watch.

Every effort has been made to acknowledge copyright holders where possible.





## shutterbug

(n.) Slang for a photographer, particularly an avid photographer, derived from 'shutter', the camera's light-admitting mechanism.



# Foreword

by the Chief of Navy



I am delighted to present *Grey Shutterbugs Volume One* – conversations and collages with Navy’s talent behind the camera lens.

This book is dedicated to our Navy’s Imagery Specialists – our Photographers. From the rough seas of Australia’s four oceans, to the valleys in Afghanistan, wherever our ships, our helicopters, and our People go, our Imagery

Specialists follow. Their work bears witness to those who serve in challenging, and often dangerous circumstances.

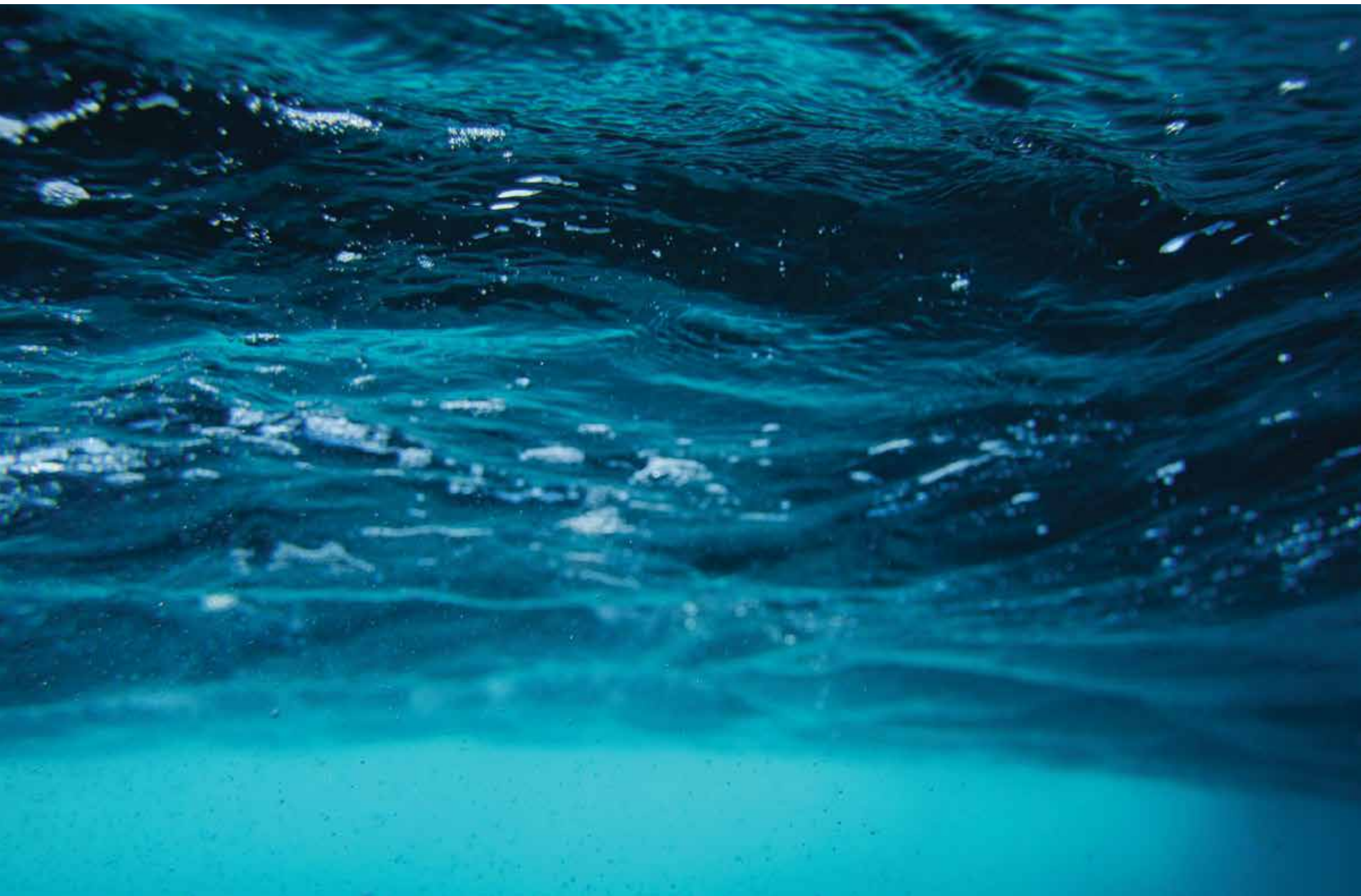
Beyond beautifully composed and compelling pictures, *Grey Shutterbugs* offers rare insights through anecdotes and reminiscence. Our Navy is innovative, far-sighted, hardworking and proudly Australian. Our Imagery Specialists offer an

unparalleled picture of our Navy and our People.

**Mike Noonan, AO**

Vice Admiral, Royal Australian Navy  
Chief of Navy  
Chief of Navy, VADM Michael Noonan, AO, RAN.  
18 February 2021





# Foreword

by Captain Andrews



Writing in 1759, Samuel Johnson said: "No man will be a sailor who has the contrivance to get himself in gaol, for being in a ship is being in a gaol, with a chance of drowning.... A man in gaol has more room, better food and commonly better company..."

Johnson exposes the enduring hardship of the sea, a place where human insignificance is made plain by nature's power, by weather,

isolation, the scarcity of fresh water, the absence of landmarks, and the lack formed roads.

In this text, the Navy's Imagery Specialists capture the challenge of the sea and the challenge of serving at sea. They also capture the beauty of the sea, and beyond the ocean the hardship and honour of service to our Nation ashore and in the air.

I am pleased to endorse the Chief of Navy's words, and on behalf of the Sea Power Centre – Australia, pleased to commend this text to you.

**SAG Andrews**  
Captain, Royal Australian Navy  
18 February 2021



# Introduction

I have been proud to serve as a Public Affairs officer in the Royal Australian Navy. Sharing our Navy's story with our Nation's citizens has been a privilege and if it has not always been a pleasure, it has been a pleasure very often. And it has always been an honour.

The stories I tell are the stories of courageous and committed Australians serving in our ships at sea, in the air and ashore.

But text is only part of a narrative. A picture tells a thousand words.

Over the course of many years I have had the opportunity to work alongside some of the most talented photographers in the world. In the Navy, these men and women are known as Imagery Specialists.

Typically the Imagery Specialists start their service in another category; perhaps they have been combat systems operators, or electrical technicians, or communicators. They might come from any category. Many of them have served on operations before they have become photographers, and most of them deploy again on operations

*Petty Officer Imagery Specialist Andrew Dakin shoots video from an aircraft during Exercise Talisman Saber.*



as photographers in order to offer the Australian people a proper, vivid account of the service offered by the Navy to the Nation.

The Navy's photographers work at sea, ashore and in the air – often in difficult and dangerous circumstances. From the jungles of Papua New Guinea to the rough seas of the Bass Strait; wherever the ships and helicopters go, they go.

This short book tells part of their story.

As you enjoy this book I ask you to consider what it takes to be a shutterbug. Each story is different. Each story shines the spotlight on an individual, a passionate professional. A volunteer. Each of them here has offered up a selection of their favourite images, alongside some words which tell why a picture was

chosen. They unveil the insider's view of what happens behind the Navy camera; the highs and lows, the technology, the hard yakka, the family challenges, the incredible places they travel and what it takes to get "that shot."

This book pays homage to those who serve in our Navy – in front of the lens, and behind it.

Unfortunately I could not include every photograph – but you can see more of Navy Imagery Specialists' work on the Defence Image Gallery.

*Photographers from Navy Imagery Unit -  
East film CN's 2009 Symposium*









Chapter 1:  
**Leading Seaman Imagery Specialist**  
**Richard Cordell**

# *Farm to forecastle*

Richard Cordell was born and bred in Berrigan, in the Riverina region of New South Wales, Australia. Signing up with Navy at the recruitment centre in Melbourne was a huge step from life in the Berrigan farming community – almost 250 kms from the sea. Before joining the Navy, Richard donned his RM Williams boots and worked on a dairy farm, as a labourer, toured in a country band, cleaned factory floors and tried his hand at bartending.

Being an Imagery Specialist in the Royal Australian Navy means Richard has the unique opportunity to promote the Navy to a large audience: his work is seen in newspapers, magazines, billboards and on television across the world.

He concedes that he has been lucky enough to visit some amazing places and meet some very humble and gracious people along the way. His Middle East

'When I take a photograph, I want, as best as I can, to tell a story. Sometimes the subject tells the story on its own, like a ship at sea.'

deployment is, so far, one of the best things he has done in the Navy. Richard also admits that the Navy can be a tough employer for everyone, with time away from loved ones, key occasions missed, rough seas ... the list goes on. Building resilience is critical to pushing through and achieving the mission.

Richard has an amazing family. His wife served in the Navy and understands the requirements of his role, while his daughters, Lily and Ella, are both strong and resilient. While neither of them is happy when it's time for Dad to leave, they are both well-equipped emotionally and pitch in helping their mum around the house.

Richard is a keen and curious sailor who enjoys experiencing new things and exploring new interests, including archery, camping, gaming and karate.

'If you want to take more interesting photos, put yourself in front of more interesting things.'

He continues to grow and develop as an Imagery Specialist by researching new photographers, staying current with news, and trying new things – and he isn't afraid of feedback or advice. The advice he gives budding photographers and Imagery Specialists is to practise all the time. Feedback is the breakfast of champions! Richard tends to shoot things other than landscapes, and says aspiring photographers shouldn't hesitate to talk to their local Imagery Specialist and seek feedback on their images.

Someone who has influenced his thinking, photographing and career path is the American photographer Joe McNally. McNally, who has been shooting for the National Geographic Society since 1987, has been his primary source of photographic inspiration ever since he started photographing people. He uses simple lighting to snap fantastic images of people. Richard's favourite quote of his is: 'If

*HMA Ships Sydney and Gascoyne take centre stage next to the Sydney Harbour Bridge as fireworks light the sky above Sydney Harbour during the RAN International Fleet Review 2013. I had a prime position on a city skyscraper for the fireworks spectacular, the night was clear and crisp ... perfect. I put my camera on a tripod with a remote cable so I was able to watch the show, and after a few shots I was confident about what I would get. This was a massive event for the Navy and a fantastic opportunity for the Imagery Specialists to come together and shine.*





*Royal Australian Navy Clearance Divers emerge from the waters of Pittwater while conducting a surveillance exercise at Palm Beach in Sydney. This is a great example of being in the right place at the right time. Fellow Leading Seaman Imagery Specialist Kayla Jackson and I had gone to Palm Beach for a planned photoshoot with some Clearance Divers on the ocean-side of Palm Beach. We had successfully finished the assigned tasking and, as we turned away to pack up our gear, we both noticed the amazing sky. A quick chat with the divers, and they were happy to get back in the water. The shot was taken at about 1500 hours.*

*HMAS Sydney (IV) rounds the HMAS Sydney (I) memorial on Bradley's Head, Sydney Harbour, for the last time before being decommissioned. It was a miserable day; the rain was bucketing down. I knew when Sydney was due alongside, but only had a rough idea when she was coming around the headland. I just love the feel of a warship coming out of the mist - I think I captured that in this shot.*







you want to take more interesting photos, put yourself in front of more interesting things.'

'When I take a photograph, I want, as best as I can, to tell a story,' Richard says. 'Sometimes the subject tells the story on its own, like a ship at sea. But most of the time it needs more. The background, foreground, light and shadow all play a part in helping you tell that story.'

Being an Imagery Specialist isn't all 'glam and glitter', and there have been some difficult assignments. Navy Imagery Specialists perform their roles at sea, on land and in the air, in often challenging and sometimes dangerous environments.

'The most difficult tasking I have had was an archaeological trip to Guluwuru Island, north of Nhulunbuy in the Northern Territory. The problem was that there was nothing left to dig up. We were looking for the remains of a

'Anyone who knows the landing craft, with their flat bottoms and square bows, knows that they don't ride well.'

World War II sailor, Stoker Percival Cameron, who was buried under rocks on the beach 70 years earlier. The trip was based on an aerial photograph of the site, but years of cyclones and king tides, along with crocodiles and other wildlife, greatly reduced the chances of us finding anything.

'After a week of digging, it was finally called off. The crew of HMAS *Brunei* were in bad spirits: The extreme heat had taken its toll on people and equipment, with problems arising. We still had a seven- to eight-day transit back to Cairns and the weather was picking up. Anyone who knows the

landing craft, with their flat bottoms and square bows, knows that they don't ride well.'

'Looking back, every image I've chosen has involved sacrifice from my family' he says. 'The firefighting was a whole Saturday away from home, and my family sat on the foreshore of Sydney Harbour without me while I photographed the fireworks. I've never marched with my kids on ANZAC Day and, when the march is over, I still have a couple of hours' work to do. I was away from home for 11 months of the year while in the Middle East.'

A true work of art is needed to win the Rosemary Rodwell Memorial Prize for Photography, and for the second year in a row Richard chalked up another fine win. The prizewinning photograph for 2018 portrays HMAS *Warramunga* conducting a night replenishment with the former HMAS *Success* off the NSW coast. This image can be seen in Richard's collection.

*Commanding Officer HMAS Stirling, Captain Brian Delamont, RAN, Commander 13th Brigade, Brigadier David Thompson, AM, and Commanding Officer 25 SQN, Wing Commander Peter Kershaw lead the Perth Anzac Day parade on Barrack St. I love this shot. It's up there with my all-time favourites. Just a drenching-wet day in Perth, with three stoic-looking senior officers from all three services leading the ANZAC Parade through the crowds.*







*Leading Seaman Aircrew Liam Carruthers mans the 12.7 mm Mounted Machine-Gun inside the cab of HMAS Perth's embarked MH-60R Helicopter as the ship begins its first patrol in the Arabian Sea. While this shot is sort of cool, it signifies what it's like for me on an extended deployment – in this case, to the Middle East. It's long and hard, you're a long way from home, and even though there's a ship full of mates just over there, you often feel alone.*



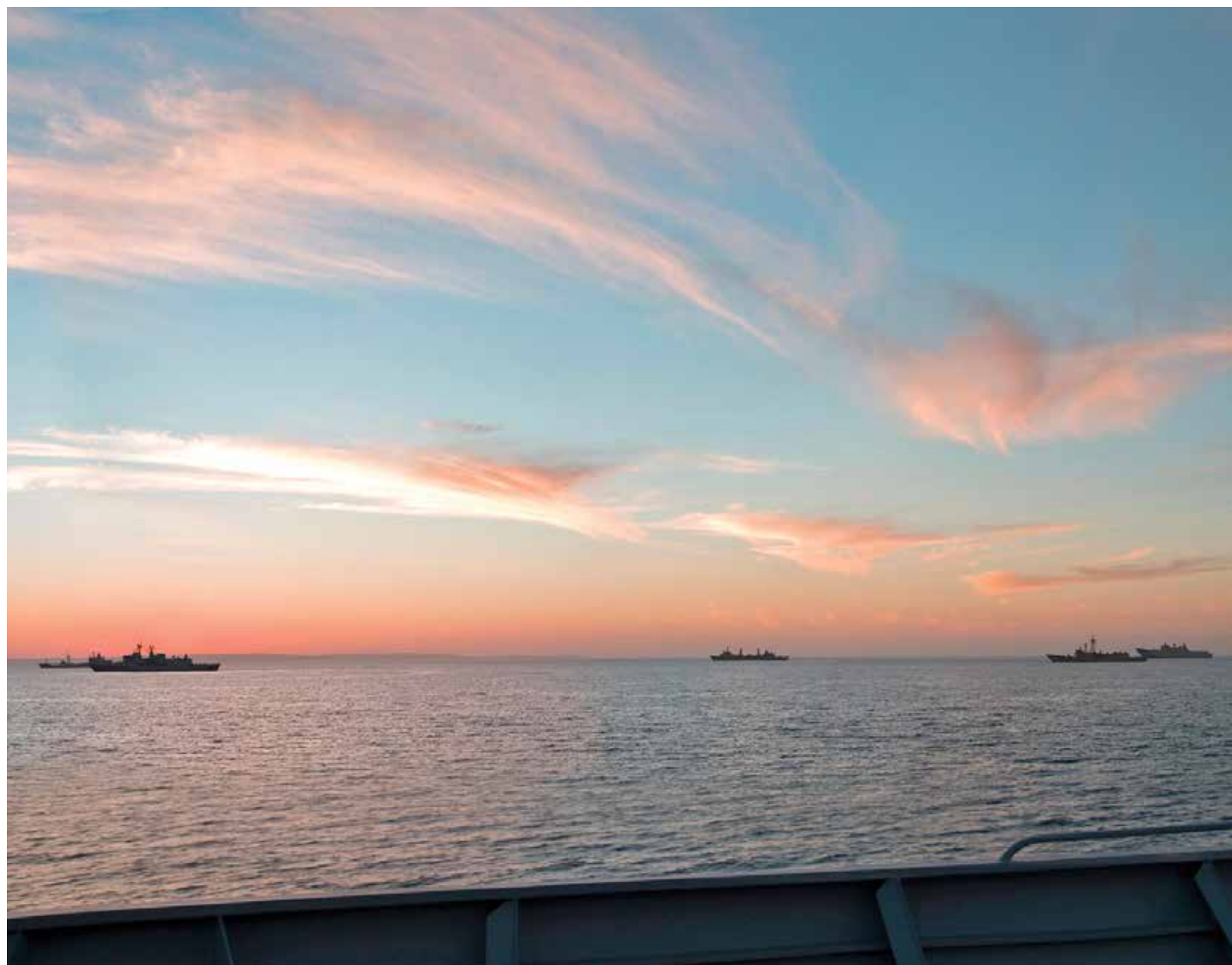
*Participants in Exercise EXECUTIVE STRETCH are put to the test in firefighting training on the Helicopter Crash-on-Deck simulator at the RAN School of Survivability and Ship Safety on HMAS Stirling. This photo, like its components –, the colour, the sun, and the size of the flame compared to the people who are fighting it – is a good indication of training in the Navy and the insurmountable tasks we are put against that help prepare us for life at sea.*

*Lieutenant Catherine Ginty oversees a passenger transfer by winch from HMAS Adelaide's MRH-90 helicopter on to the flight deck of HMAS Parramatta during Exercise OCEAN EXPLORER 17. I really like the viewpoint of this shot as we see LEUT Ginty talking to the Operations room and letting them know how the passenger transfer is progressing. As a Navy Imagery Specialist, getting access to places, talks and events that not many get to attend is something I really enjoy and is one of the highlights of my job.*





*HMAS Parramatta positioned in the middle of a formation anchorage, with the other participating units of Exercise OCEAN EXPLORER 17. For me, this was a typical life-at-anchor photo. On the forecastle of HMAS Parramatta there are people texting loved ones, a group of friends taking photos together with the beautiful sunset and, in the background, a task group of other Navy ships taking part in Exercise OCEAN EXPLORER. Chief of Navy took the time to write me a letter commending me for capturing the task group, showcasing the future direction of the Navy. This photo took out the 2017 Rosemary Rodwell Memorial Prize.*











***HMAS Warramunga (right) conducts a night replenishment with HMAS Success off the New South Wales coast.** Shooting at night brings a lot of challenges. At sea, we use the absolute bare minimum of lighting to help maintain our night vision. A long exposure like this of two independently moving objects while onboard one of the moving objects excites me. I love the technicality of this type of shot. The lights, water, everything; I love shooting this sort of stuff.*





**HMAS Perth's starboard RHIB (Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat) hangs alongside and waits for the boarding party to load on before conducting night-time boarding training during the ship's Mission Readiness Workup.** HMAS Perth was in the middle of readiness evaluation to prove she was ready to deploy to the Middle East. It was getting pretty dark and we had to conduct a training boarding at night in Cockburn Sound (that's Fremantle in the background). The sea-boat was only lit by the glow of the dashboard and a couple of dim red lights on the ship's waist. I used a slow shutter to create a sense of action and came away with a shot I'm pretty proud of.

**HMAS Bundaberg, crewed by Ardent Four and Commanded by Lieutenant Commander David Ince, sails past the Sydney Opera House during a port visit to HMAS Waterhen, Sydney.** I love this shot! HMAS Bundaberg moved where I wanted it, the RHIB driver moved me into the position I needed, it was a gorgeous night on Sydney Harbour. It all came together and I got one of my all-time favourite shots.







## Chapter 2:

### Petty Officer Imagery Specialist

Thomas Gibson

# *Kahuna with a camera*

The thought of experiencing and photographing things 'only a select few' motivated Tom Gibson to move from a two-year career in freelance photography to the Royal Australian Navy. Unlike freelancers, Imagery Specialists provide support to Navy operations in both the domestic and joint deployed environments.

Tom grew weary of the subjects he was photographing, and upon discovering that the Navy had positions for photographers, he thought he'd try something new.

Being a photographer in the Navy couldn't be more exciting, in his eyes, and he's proud of the fact that, as an Imagery Specialist, he is part of one of the smallest branches, not only in the RAN but also in all Defence, and it contributes to almost all the major events Defence is involved in.

RAN Imagery Specialists provide professionally captured stills and video-imagery product in support of Whole of Government objectives, military operations, exercises and

activities. They are critical enablers of Military Public Affairs within the Navy and directly impact the Navy's brand and reputation. Photography not only records history, it also helps change its course, as well as stimulating public debate and awareness about the Navy and its mission.

'The tireless contribution our small branch provides to the ADF is nothing short of a miracle, and I couldn't be prouder to stand with my fellow Imagery Specialists,' Tom says.

Leaving his family and longboard behind on the Central Coast has its bittersweet moments. The love of the job is enhanced by travelling to amazing places like the Middle East, Asia and Europe - but also means leaving loved ones for extended periods of time. 'I couldn't ask for a better support network at home. It is heartbreaking seeing their tears when you leave, but the smiles and hugs when I return keep me going.'

Tom acknowledges that the places have all been made special by



*A World War II veteran waves to the crowd as his granddaughter pushes his wheelchair through Martin Place during the 2014 Anzac Day parade in Sydney, NSW. In typical ANZAC Day Sydney fashion, the weather was rainy and windy - not the best for our veterans to march in or for us to photograph them. However, this photo has always had a special place in my heart. I set myself a challenge to use our unit's Canon 8-15 mm wide-angle lens on my second camera body. I was kneeling at the time I took this shot and was about 3ft away from them when the photo was taken. I just think it's a beautiful moment between an Aussie hero and his granddaughter.*



'The tireless contribution our small branch provides to the ADF is nothing short of a miracle, and I couldn't be prouder to stand with my fellow Image Specialists.'

the servicemen and women he has travelled with to these areas – once-in-a-lifetime experiences he can only have in the Navy.

Unlike working in an office environment with fast data speeds and connectivity, working at sea has its challenges too, like the transmission of images to meet clearance pressures and news-cycle deadlines. Navy's Imagery Specialists play an integral role in delivering capability by enabling Military Public Affairs within Navy and supporting operations. Transmitting large packages of images to clearance authorities, who require product urgently, causes many sleepless nights – fuelled by countless coffees. Tom focuses on the mentorship of Imagery Specialists who have inspired him during his career, especially when the situation becomes difficult.

He has been lucky enough to learn from these men and women over

many years, and lifelong friendships have resulted. When the going gets tough, Tom remembers what these people have taught him and what they would do in that situation. He considers being extremely lucky to have had such great mentors during his Navy career.

Tom has enjoyed some assignments that were memorable for different reasons, but each was special due to the people and the adventures he experienced on location.

'It's hard to select only a few memorable taskings but I guess if I had to choose, then ANZAC Day in Gallipoli, Cyclone disaster relief in Vanuatu, and my most recent deployment to the Middle East aboard HMAS *Warramunga*.'

Tom employs new innovations, from 'throw-and-shoot' drone cameras to the ever more impressive GoPro action cams. 'I love the fact that



'I just consider myself extremely lucky to have had such great mentors ...

technology is changing so rapidly' he says. 'With each new piece of equipment or software, our job gets more and more exciting, creating endless possibilities for our creative product in video and stills imagery.'

Continuing professional development is important to him because it ensures he continues to be competent in this field – it's an ongoing process throughout a career as an Image Specialist.

'I always try to learn from others in my branch. We have so many talented people in our branch, all with different skills and strengths. Learning off each other enables me to grow as a photographer faster than I would by doing

courses. I enjoy viewing images from my work colleagues and from world-renowned photographers. I try to understand both the technical and mental aspects of capturing those images.'

The essential purpose of photography is communication. Few people take pictures solely to please themselves. Most of us take them because we want them seen by others.

Tom admits that military photography can be a tough career, but has some stellar advice for the enthusiast with an eye on this profession: 'Dive in with an open mind and say yes to every opportunity that comes your way.'

Some of the most enjoyable tasks were ones he wasn't sure he wanted to do, due to nerves. But looking back, they are the ones he's enjoyed the most.

This line of work is demanding on their personal life and being in this profession means harnessing a bit of luck, patience, and humour, without which the job can get you down in the hard times.

'It's important to engage with people. Some of my most memorable photos are of people I have encountered on my many journeys. When you have a connection with your subject, it really comes out in the image. I want them to tell the story of what I'm photographing and want my work to do justice to all the hard work our servicemen and women do daily. If my images can show the hard work and sacrifice these people make daily, then I'm happy. I try to achieve this by taking the time to understand what they are experiencing, walk in their shoes for a bit.'

**Members of 816 Squadron conduct morning maintenance on a Royal Australian Navy S-70B-2 Seahawk Helicopter during Exercise KAKADU 2014 at RAAF Base Darwin, Northern Territory.** *The idea of this photo was the brainchild of ex-Imagery Specialist Petty Officer Imagery Specialist Paul McCallum, who came up with the idea to photograph a Royal Australian Navy S-70B-2 Seahawk Helicopter at sunrise during Exercise KAKADU at RAAF Base Darwin, Northern Territory. Sadly, he was unable to complete the task, as he was sent to sea and I was tasked to fill in. I enjoy this shot because it involves the challenges of organising everything in the dark, shooting at sunrise into the direct sun and using multiple flashes to fill in the subject. Add in a tight timeframe to capture the shot before the sun rises too much, giving you a window of about 5 minutes. All in all, this shoot encapsulates everything I love about photography, capturing an image in a very tricky situation.*





**Top left: Sapper Leslie Tawhara from the New Zealand Army's 2nd Engineer Regiment rides in the back of an Australian Army Black Hawk helicopter during Operation PACIFIC ASSIST 2015.** This photo was captured inside an Australian Army Black Hawk helicopter with members of the New Zealand Army 2nd Engineer Regiment as they fly to a remote island in Vanuatu during Operation PACIFIC ASSIST. The purpose of the Operation was to provide a contribution to post-disaster recovery operations in Vanuatu following Tropical Cyclone Pam. I managed to capture this image during the flight – it shows just how random and interesting our role in the ADF is. This image showcases how members of Foreign Defence Forces come to the aid of our regional partners in their moments of need.

**Bottom left: Australian Army soldier Private Jack Baker, 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, lines up his target during the Australian Army Skills at Arms Meeting sniper match held at Puckapunyal military area, Victoria, May 2015.** This photo was taken with a Canon 70-200 mm lens and a portable flash to fill in the subject. I took this photo by lying down in the grass, so the viewer feels right in the action. This is one part of the job I enjoy the most, and even though I'm a photographer in the Navy, we still get the opportunity to photograph all types of Defence members doing their work.



**Opposite: The bow of HMAS Arunta ploughs into a wave as the ship sails through rough weather off the coast of Victoria.** The question I get asked quite a lot by friends outside of the Navy is, 'Have you ever been in rough seas?' To respond, I show them this photo. It is taken from the bridge of HMAS Arunta. The reason I like this photo is for the challenges involved in capturing it. I spent roughly two hours in the bridge waiting for the right wave, right timing, right light and – given that I was shooting through a window – the right time when there was no water on the window and the windscreen wiper was out of the way, all while trying not to fall over. The photo reminds me how much fun being at sea can be.









*Top left: A member of the Royal Australian Air Force pays respect as the Australian national anthem is played during the ANZAC Day dawn service held at Martin Place, Sydney. The ANZAC Day Dawn Service at Martin Place is, to me, the best Dawn Service in Australia. The environment created by a large number of people surrounded by the tall buildings of Sydney's CBD gives me goosebumps every time I'm there. The Dawn Service is always a hard service to photograph purely because of the lack of light. I enjoy this photo because of the colours and how the wide-angle lens draws the viewer's eye towards the centre of the photo.*



*Bottom left: HMAS Warramunga's boarding party member, Leading Seaman Clearance Diver Luke Woodcroft numbers parcels of seized narcotics during the Ship's deployment on Operation MANITOU. HMAS Warramunga completed a 9-month rotation of Operation MANITOU where they seized over 2 billion dollars' worth of illicit cargo. This achievement is a direct result of the hard work the entire ship's company put in day in day out. This photo is of one of HMAS Warramunga's boarding party as they number parcels of seized narcotics onboard the suspect vessel. This photo was taken at 2am after a 7hour boarding. The sweat and emotion on the sailor's face is nothing compared to the effort he and his team put in that day. I captured this image using multiple Canon wireless flashes. Keep in mind photographing subjects in the darkness of night on a small rocking boat in the middle of the ocean whilst laying on large parcels of illegal drugs is never the best shooting environment but its moments like this I consider being an Imagery Specialist in the RAN the best job in the world.*

*Opposite: HMAS Warramunga's boarding team member, Able Seaman Electronic Warfare Aaron Richardson climbs up onto a vessel of interest during a flag verification boarding during his Ship's deployment to Operation MANITOU. This ship conducted a highly successful nine-month deployment to this Operation, due to the efforts of the crew. This photo shows how challenging boardings at sea can be. Trying to use a Canon 5D MKIII with one hand while holding on with the other so I don't fall in the water - all while bumping up and down with the sea-state and knowing I'm next up the ladder - is a lot to deal with. Still, it will always be a great memory for me.*









*Fleet Dental Officer Lieutenant Commander Daniel Allan, RAN (Right) conducts surgery on an Australian Defence Force (ADF) member with assistance from Doctor Karen Such (Left) in the ADF Ward at Saint Luke's Care Hospital, Potts Point, Sydney. Being an Imagery Specialist can be extremely unpredictable. This photo is a perfect example of this. I arrived at our office on a Monday morning only to be informed that I needed to make my way up to St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney to photograph a Navy Dentist conducting surgery. Now I avoid hospitals at the best of times, so let's just say this isn't my dream tasking. However, this image is a great reminder of how diverse my role in the ADF is.*



**Upper-deck sentry during Operation MANITOU.** *This photo is of a close friend from the Royal New Zealand Navy closed up as upper-deck sentry during a deployment to the Middle East for Operation MANITOU. This photo, though nice to look at, will always bring back positive and negative memories. During this deployment, there were times I needed to be closed up on the upper decks*

*from sunrise to sunset to capture any imagery that was tasked. I lost count of how many times I conducted this task, and standing on the upper decks of a warship during a Middle Eastern summer for over 12 hours is never fun. However, one thing I will never forget is the friendships I made during this time and the amazing scenery I witnessed. This image captures that memory.*







Chapter 3:  
**Chief Petty Officer Imagery Specialist  
Damian Pawlenko**

# *Living the childhood dream*

Officer-In-Charge of Navy Imagery Unit-West, Chief Petty Officer Damian Pawlenko couldn't ignore his calling to join the Navy after listening to his best friend's yarns. He decided he needed a job that would extract him from the rut he was in – something completely different, outside his comfort zone, that enabled him to travel and make new friends. Upon reflection, Damian admits that joining the Navy was the best decision he ever made – it gave him a career that he still passionately enjoys today.

The Perth local reflects on his 'green-fingered' pre-Navy years when he worked in retail and wholesale plant nurseries after completing a Horticulture course at TAFE. 'I ended up being the manager of a franchise nursery in Western Australia for a while, which was a big learning curve for me, being in my late teens at that stage. I backpacked around Australia with my best friend for about a year, which was an amazing experience. I look back on it often today with good memories.'

It's fair to say that Pawlenko's passport has been frequently stamped since this working holiday. He was fortunate enough in 2005 to be the only Imagery Specialist on HMAS Anzac for its Operation NORTHERN TRIDENT world deployment.

'As a child growing up, the two main things I ever wanted to see around the world were the Eiffel Tower and the Pyramids. On that trip, I had the opportunity to see both while conducting photographic duties as part of my job ... One of my most

memorable assignments was flying to Bahrain in 2001 as part of a team to cover HMAS Anzac conducting operations in the Persian Gulf for Operation DAMASK. I considered it a great opportunity as it was the first time I really worked as part of a Public Affairs team, which included a senior Imagery Specialist and Public Affairs Officer.

'Another highlight would be East Timor in 1999 and seeing first-hand a multinational military operation working together for a cause. To be able to be there and capture



'As a child growing up, the two main things I ever wanted to see around the world were the Eiffel Tower and the Pyramids. On that trip, I had the opportunity to see both while conducting photographic duties as part of my job.'

**HMAS Brisbane deploys.** This image was captured on a very wet day at Fleet Base East in Sydney as the Guided Missile Destroyer HMAS Brisbane was preparing to depart for a deployment. There were families on the wharf saying goodbye to their Navy loved ones before departure. It was a very bleak day with constant drizzle, but the one thing I noticed was the colour in the umbrellas and raincoats that people had, which I could use to my visual advantage. I noticed a sailor saying goodbye to his daughter and I seized the moment, as it had great composition and colour.

those moments during that time in Australia's military history was a privilege to me.'

Damian reckons that being an Imagery Specialist is an extremely rewarding job because of the ability to capture memorable moments for both immediate and historical purposes. He is proud to be part of this small, unique, specialised group of Navy professionals, and says having a job that produces an end-result or product for people to see both now and in the future is very fulfilling.

Early in his career Damian worked with two photographers, Phil Hillyard

and Trent Parke from the *Daily Telegraph* in Sydney, who were both positive influences on his career.

'To observe these photographers on the job was a great privilege. It taught me to think quickly on my feet when there isn't much time and to work with your surroundings effectively. I found this to be extremely important as I progressed in my career. One of my favourite photography books is by Trent Parke – *Dream/Life*.'

A skill he learnt early in his photography career was to make the subject feel comfortable. This can be achieved by chatting



with them and joking a bit to get people to open up a little. Damian found this tip to be very important in obtaining a natural smile and relaxed persona, thus avoiding wooden or fake smiles.

He likes the idea of capturing the Navy today for future generations to see, and for historical purposes. Even the photographs he has captured in his career now seem like from a bygone era, as the Navy changes quickly. 'People in the future will look at the images I take today and get an idea of what the Navy is like now - that makes the job worthwhile.'

A key skill is the ability to properly capture the critical moments of an event or activity, so planning is critical to the mission. 'I tend to self-doubt myself at times so, prior to any photographic task, I will cover all aspects and scenarios, ensure my equipment is in good working order, and the fully rehearse sequence of events in my mind. Ensuring all these boxes are ticked stands me in good stead to cover the task effectively without any unforeseen surprises.'



'I am proud to be part of this small, unique, specialised group of Navy professionals.'

*Royal Australian Navy Catamaran HMAS Jervis Bay (AKR 45) has conducted a transfer of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) to Landing Craft Heavy (LCH) HMAS Balikpapan off the coast of East Timor, which proceeded to Suai soon thereafter to offload the people at their place of residence.*

*I got up on the highest forward point of the LCH to capture this image. I spent a day onboard HMAS Jervis Bay with the IDPs prior to this moment and it was a real eye-opener for me to experience their hardship and displacement during this difficult time.*



'As an Imagery Specialist,  
you must have a thick  
skin – don't let the  
hardships of the job  
affect you.'

'I always remain professional in my job and try to put 100% into every photographic task I do. But sometimes the going gets difficult and things don't work out the way you thought they would. I make sure I always keep my eyes on the prize, remain focused and adapt as best I can in changing situations.

'There's no question that technology has made the Navy more portable than ever. The equipment itself is far more sophisticated and capable – we Imagery Specialists can see what we are shooting in real time and can fine-tune everything to whatever the needs are. Images and vision can be from anywhere with an internet connection.

'It's part of our job to adapt to the changing world and its modern-day photographic expectations. I was trained in the pre-digital world using film and processing the images we took in chemicals and using enlargers to print, sometimes

at sea. I had to transition from that to working with digital cameras and computers. Photographs required for immediate use in all types of social-media platforms, including the use of drones, is another evolutionary step that our trade needs to take to stay current in the 21st-century digital-age world.'

Staying on top of the game means keeping up with the latest releases of industry-standard technology, staying informed as to what is currently out there. Damian says networking with fellow Imagery Specialists is an important part of this.

'Looking back on my career, my first real mentor was a fellow photographer at the Navy Photographic Unit in Sydney, as it was called back then. It was the Unit I joined straight off Basic Photographic Course in 1997. His name was Simon Metcalfe and I was absolutely astounded by the standard of his photography: it

**New South Wales floods.** *This image was taken at Kempsey Airport during major flooding in New South Wales during the summer of 2000/01. The Defence Force at the time contributed humanitarian aid support by providing Navy and Army helicopters to be used for evacuation purposes and for the transport of much-needed supplies. I was tasked to photograph the activities involving these Defence aviation assets. My staging point was Kempsey Airport, and this particular photograph was taken just on sunrise as the aviation maintainers were preparing the aircraft for the day's activities. This shot shows a Navy Aircraft Maintainer checking the tail rotor of an S-70B-2 Seahawk Helicopter as part of the pre-flight checks. I thought the sailor was in the perfect position in relation to the row of helicopter tails – it created a good compositional effect.*



was always consistently high. He was often critical of my work and, looking back, it made me a better photographer. He had great camera technique and compositional skills and always thought outside the box when taking photos. I still try and copy his work even today from that time in my life over 20 years ago.

Damian suggests that an Imagery Specialist must be thick-skinned, and uses the phrase 'water off a duck's back' to let a bad situation go and not stress over things when they get tough. Professionalism, integrity and the ability to adapt to changing situations are, he adds, essential traits in a successful Navy Image Specialist.

'The ability to create work when nothing is happening comes from self-motivation. This is very important, especially when posted to a ship on deployment for lengthy periods. You often must create work to keep busy – very different to

most other members on board the ship, who have planned watches throughout the day,' he says.

Continuous improvement of the craft means thinking about good composition in the photographs captured, what's in the background, and utilising the things around the photographer with the aim of creating leading lines with good subject placement. It's also imperative to decide whether to use natural light or to create artificial light in the right way to produce a perfectly exposed image.

Being in the Navy means plenty of travel while the family copes with these periods of absence – understanding and communication is essential. Damian has a young family – a wife and two boys. They understand that while he is wearing the uniform, there will always be a requirement for him to go away for duty, which can sometimes be at short notice. While away, he

stays in touch with them at every opportunity, telling them how his days are going and hearing how they are managing in daily life.

'It can be really hard at times, as some of the deployments I have been on have put me in very dangerous situations, with the potential of serious injury or death, during lengthy periods of not being able to communicate with home,' he admits.

Paulenko was deployed to the United Arab Emirates and Afghanistan as the Operation SLIPPER rotational Senior Imagery Specialist for the region in 2011. This job entailed him travelling all over the Middle East Region, including to Iraq, and on the ships in the area at that time. When stationed at Tarin Kot in Afghanistan, he had the opportunity to accompany various patrols from forward Operating Bases around the area. This involved walking through sometimes very

*Sea Knight helicopter from USS Bridge (centre) transferring stores to HMAS Manoora (right). USS Lake Champlain is at left. HMAS Manoora is moving up to RAS (Replenishment at Sea) with USS Bridge. The Persian Gulf. I was on HMAS Manoora in the Persian Gulf on deployment for Operation SLIPPER when I took this photograph. It shows a USS CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter from USS Bridge (centre) transferring stores over to Manoora during a Replenishment at Sea (RAS) evolution. USS Bridge and USS Lake Champlain are seen moving into RAS position in the background. I was photographing the evolution all around the ship at the time and, as always, was on the lookout for good compositional angles. I noticed the helicopter was moving back and forwards from USS Bridge to Manoora, so I waited for it to fly towards my direction as I positioned myself on the boat deck of the ship. I photographed the image just as the helicopter was right between the two US ships, and I used Manoora's port-side boat deck to frame the picture. I believe the clouds make the image more than anything, and they look even better in this black-&-white version than in the colour alternative. This image won the Rosemary Rodwell Award for 2002 for the most outstanding photograph by a RAN Photographer that year.*







**Guided Missile Destroyer HMAS Brisbane firing an SM-1 surface-to-air missile off Jervis Bay, New South Wales.** I captured this photograph in a Sea King Helicopter, sitting in the cab looking out the open door. I was using a film camera, so I had only 36 frames to use. I set the camera to photograph at the highest frame rate. My main concern was, if I happened to press the shutter too early, I could face the possibility of shooting the whole roll of film before the missile even fired. I had to be patient and hope that I pressed

*the shutter at the exact right time, which I eventually did. Another problem I faced was with the Sea King helicopter itself. The exhaust vents of the helicopter were forward of the cab, and sometimes the exhaust drifted across the open doorway when the helicopter was stationary in the air, which created a major problem. If you were to photograph through the exhaust fumes, the image would look all blurry and out-of-focus. At the time the missile was launched, I had a small window with no exhaust drifting across, which was lucky.*

tough terrain with Australian Army soldiers as they conducted searches through villages. This was a great opportunity for him, as it was nothing like he had ever experienced in the Navy.

'Photographing soldiers doing their job and risking their lives like this was important to me. I remember it was very difficult for me to carry not only what a soldier carries – including body armour, webbing, weapon, water and rations – but all my camera gear, too. There was a constant pressure to stay alert and be aware of your surroundings and

never a moment for complacency. I somehow was able to endure these patrols and capture some good imagery and video that I was happy with.

'My tour had some great experiences, even though a lot of times it was very difficult. But in the end it taught me to appreciate different aspects of the Australian Defence Force and the people who work within it.'

**Poaching duty for Guided Missile Frigate HMAS Canberra.** The ship was in the Southern Ocean at the time, tasked to assist the Australian Fisheries Management Authority in capturing foreign fishing vessels poaching Patagonian Toothfish in the Heard Island and McDonald Island Exclusive Economic Zone. HMAS Canberra was in consort with Oil Tanker HMAS Westralia while conducting this operation. I was on the Port waist of Canberra waiting for the Rigid-Hulled Inflatable Boat (RHIB) containing members of the ship's boarding party to come back from the recently captured Russian fishing vessel 'Lena'. I was using a Nikon D1x camera with a 70-200 mm lens and I photographed the image as the RHIB travelled at high speed towards the ship. I only had a few seconds of opportunity before the boat got too close for the lens I was using. I remember we were in freezing conditions down there, and the sea-state and swell were often high.







***HMAS Melbourne coming back from a Gulf Deployment of around six months.***  
*Melbourne was due alongside at Garden Island Naval Base at 1000 that morning. I finished my job on time and decided to walk over to Middle Head from HMAS Penguin to see if I could view the ship coming through the Heads. I could see it had gone through already and was about to make a turn to*

*follow the harbour in towards Sydney. I had just enough time to pull my camera out of the bag, choose a lens, adjust the exposure and take the shot. I converted the image into a black-&-white format to give it more feeling, as the return home from such a long deployment would have been quite an emotional experience for the crew of the ship.*

***Pictured is the carrier group, containing (L-R) Turkish ship TCG Orucreis, British Aircraft Carrier HMS Illustrious, United States Naval Ship USS McFaul, British Ship HMS Westminster and Danish Ship HDMS Ravnem. I was on HMAS Anzac for its Northern Trident deployment in 2005 when I took this photograph. The Operation NORTHERN TRIDENT deployment was a round-the-world voyage intended as a flag-showing cruise to the northern hemisphere. As part of this deployment, Anzac was involved in ceremonies for the 90th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings and participated in the fleet review for the bicentenary of the battle of Trafalgar. This image was taken in the North Sea, with HMAS Anzac participating in a naval exercise with a range of different nations in the region. While taking the photographs, I noticed the sun creating shafts of light through the overcast skies at random moments. I waited for a while until the ships looked in a good formation sequence and for the light to shine through. The light only lasted for a few seconds, but it was enough for me to capture the image I wanted.***









**A United States Air Force (USAF) B-2 Bomber makes its approach towards a USAF KC-10 Tanker to refuel. The bomber will position itself in line with the refuelling probe.**

**The aircraft are taking part in the United States Strategic Bomber Training Program conducted in the Northern Territory.** I was working with the 1st Joint Public Affairs Unit, a tri-service Unit based in Canberra, at the time and was tasked to be part of a team to cover Exercise PITCH BLACK 06 in Darwin. Exercise PITCH BLACK is Air Force's largest and most complex air exercise and is held every two years at RAAF Base Darwin. During the exercise, I had the opportunity to get on a USAF KC-10 Tanker to refuel a B-2 Bomber in mid-air. The aircraft was taking part in the United States Strategic Bomber Training program being conducted in the Northern Territory at the same time. We planned to meet up with the B-2 Bomber around sunset, and took off from RAAF Base Darwin well before that. A videographer and I were allowed to sit in the refuelling viewing area in the aft end of the KC-10, where the refuelling officer was positioned. I remember my first sight of the B-2 Bomber when it was just a dot, then it moved closer and closer towards the refuelling probe. It was like nothing I have ever seen before. This strange winged aircraft coming out of nowhere at sunset was an exciting moment in my photographic life. I remember the viewing window was quite small and there wasn't much room to move, so I had to squeeze into a tight position to be able to take the photographs I wanted.



**Able Seaman Acoustic Warfare Analyst Submarines Liam Shelley throws a heaving line to a tugboat as HMAS Waller prepares to come alongside Fleet Base West.** This photograph was taken during the late afternoon in Cockburn Sound just outside HMAS Stirling on Garden Island. I was on Collins Class Submarine HMAS Waller as it prepared to come alongside its home port of Fleet Base West. I had been on board the submarine all day, and asked if I could go up on the casing as it came into berth. I

thought it would be a good idea to get some photographs of the submariners conducting line-handling on the upper decks to add to the images I'd taken inside the submarine throughout the day. I noticed a tugboat coming close to the submarine to receive lines in order to assist the boat in moving alongside the wharf. I knew that various lines would be thrown across, so I positioned myself at the forward end of the boat in the hope of capturing a line being thrown. I waited a while for this, and hoped to capture

the line thrower as a silhouette with the sun behind him. Fortunately, this eventually happened, and I managed to capture the shot I'd envisaged. The camera I used was a Canon 5D Mark III with a 16-35 mm lens. This is one of my favourites because I wanted the shot and waited for it and put myself in the best position on the boat to capture it. Also, as I don't tend to take many photographs any more, it's nice to get out and use these opportunities to create good photographs.



## Chapter 4

### Chief Petty Officer Imagery Specialist Paul Berry CSM

# *Tassie's tri-service journeyman*

Paul Berry played drums in a band, did bar work, waited tables and generally had a good time for a few years before completing the paperwork to join the Navy at the local Recruitment Centre. His passion for photography began while studying it as a part of an architecture degree in Tasmania. Paul deferred his studies and moved to Melbourne, hoping to get some money together to study photography more thoroughly.

His father, who was in the Navy in the late '50s and early '60s, told him many times while growing up that the Navy was a good life. This stuck in Paul's mind, but he never seriously considered joining until his mid-twenties.

Despite joining the Navy, he found adventure and new experiences through wearing 'purple' during many tri-service postings at 1 Joint Public Affairs Unit and the

Service Papers. 'When I first started at 1 Joint Public Affairs Unit, it was incredibly refreshing. The culture was accepting and encouraging, and everyone was striving to improve and work together. But it still had a healthy competitive spirit where we were all challenging each other to take the best shots. It's a unique unit in Defence, and working with those excellent people over many years has influenced and pushed me to become a

better photographer.'

Influencers like Australian landscape photographer and filmmaker Murray Fredericks had a profound impact on Berry's photography. Instructors like Kev Berriman and Steve Given, who were on his Basic Photo Course back in 2004, also had an impact on him. They were passionate and encouraging, and it seemed there was nothing they didn't



'As an Imagery Specialist, you get to see the best the ADF has to offer. If something cool is happening, they send an IS to cover it.'

know about photography, always having the answers to his endless questions. Former Warrant Officer, Steve Dent, was also influential and encouraged Paul throughout his career.

Before taking a photograph, Berry considers the nature of the story and how he can best tell it: through images or video.

'Getting to the "why" of the task informs what I want to communicate in my imagery and how I shoot. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. But being there with a camera in your hand is the most important part. You have to make sure you get something,' he says.

Paul's travels have led to some unique experiences in Afghanistan, Iraq, Timor-Leste, US, NZ, France, Belgium, Germany, throughout the Middle East (including Lebanon), Greece, Japan, the Southwest Pacific Islands and every state

in Australia – and to sea in a submarine.

'I absolutely love being a Navy Imagery Specialist. If I wasn't an IS, I probably would have left Navy by now. I've had an amazing career and experiences with a camera in my hand, covering Defence actions that have made history.

'As an Imagery Specialist, you get to see the best Defence has to offer. If something cool is happening, they send an Imagery Specialist to cover it. My career has afforded me the most exciting and unique opportunities that I never would have dared dream about.'

Paul admits he is incredibly fortunate to be the first Defence Imagery Specialist to be posted to the Office of the Governor-General, where he works in the highest office in the land, travels with the Governor-General and meets amazing Australians daily.

*At first light, soldiers from the 1st Mentoring Task Force step off on patrol through the Mirabad Valley region of Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan. Combat Engineers lead the patrol, scanning the path for improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Combat Engineers can be seen sweeping the terrain with metal detectors ahead of the patrol, searching for IEDs. On almost every patrol I went on, the Engineers found an IED, saving countless Afghan and Australian lives, including mine. They are heroes. I still think about the toll of that task on those soldiers – where every step could be your last. The heavy responsibility put on those young men every day, on every patrol for over six months. They found a large IED on this patrol, hidden in a wall of rocks by a road in a small village. Impossible to see if you just walked by. The Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team were called in to detonate it. This photo was picked up by many news agencies at the time and I'm pleased it highlighted the brave and important role the engineers have played in Afghanistan.*







***We will remember them.*** Two wounded soldiers quietly farewell their mates, Private Tomas Dale and Private Grant Kirby, before their memorial service at Multinational Base Tarin Kot, Afghanistan. I was in the hangar, setting up a video camera when the wounded soldiers came in to say a quiet goodbye to their mate. This was a terrible, heartbreaking day. PTE's Dale and Kirby were the eighth and ninth Australian soldiers killed in three months. As we prepared for their memorial service and ramp ceremony, the Battle of Derapet was raging in Deh Rawud. News came through that an Australian soldier was being medivac-ed from the battle, displaying no signs of life. The medivac helicopter landed next to the hangar as the memorial service was about to begin. Lance Corporal Jared 'crash' MacKinney was the soldier stretchered from the chopper and pronounced dead shortly after.

His posting to Government House, working for the Governor-General, Australia's Commander-in-Chief, is an incredible privilege.

The impact of the technology explosion on photography and journalism has been profound. We can step back, see that the world has 'gone digital', and appreciate that this transition, in a sense, affects everything. It is awe-inspiring to note how far we have come.

'I love the changing technology landscape. New tech like drones, hand-held gimbles and action cameras like GoPro's are affordable tools we can employ to get dynamic shots that weren't previously accessible.

'Social media has given IS a great platform for imagery. It's global. It's changed the way we do business. In my early days, we were shooting film, developing and printing. Video tasks were much slower. Now, I can

shoot a photo or video task, edit and post to social media the same day and watch it reach upwards of thousands of people within hours. There is a massive appetite for imagery and particularly video now. In my view, Imagery Specialists are now more important to Defence than we've ever been.'

Professional development and growth as an Imagery Specialist mean staying abreast of technology, equipment and software updates and using them in the work where appropriate. Paul likes to discover new photographers and videographers and really dissect their work – and he remains critical of his own work, which pushes him to a higher level.

Paul cites Timor-Leste in 2009 as one of his favourite assignments because that is where he met his wife, Simone – an Australian Army Public Affairs Officer. 'Everyone was fantastic to work with, from the Commander of the International

'Now, I can shoot a photo or video task, edit and post to social media same day and watch it reach upwards of thousands of people within hours.'



'It was an honour to be on that plane with those brave men and the incredible Air Force medical team who brought them home.'

Stabilisation Force down. The Timorese are great people and the work the ADF did there made me proud to wear the uniform.'

The military always has a need for creating visual records of its activities. After all, someone needs to take pictures of the troops in action, gather evidence during operations in foreign lands, and take pictures of the daily ins and outs of military life for various reasons. Berry has deployed to Afghanistan, covering soldiers on patrol and having the privilege to witness their professionalism and leadership first-hand. He covered the Australian Artillery Regiment's historic first operational deployment with a British Artillery Unit into Helmand Province - which was a hotbed of Taliban activity at the time.

'Deploying with the 1st Mentoring Task Force in 2010 was the most difficult deployment I've done. We lost 10 soldiers over a two-month period. Covering those ramp ceremonies alongside soldiers who had lost their brothers was heartbreaking. Thinking of their families who had lost sons, brothers, husbands, fathers. It was a real war, and I came home a bit of a mess.'

He admits that when the going gets tough, he manages to pull through by 'doubling-down' and working harder - thriving on the challenge.

In 2011 Berry was deployed to the Middle East region as a reporter assigned to fly to Germany in a Globemaster C-17 aircraft to cover the repatriation of the three Australians soldiers who were killed

following a green on blue attack in Afghanistan. It was an honour to be on that plane with those brave men and the incredible RAAF medical team who brought them home following the attack.

'Covering Centenary of Anzac commemorations in France and Belgium in 2017 was also memorable. We did some battlefield tours during those trips and it was sobering to tread on the sacred ground where so many Australians lost their lives.

Tasmania-born Berry lives with his wife, Simone and their two children in Canberra. This passionate Essendon Bombers supporter loves live music and travelling with his family.

***The Royal Australian Navy Crest is projected on to the Sydney Opera House during the International Fleet Review 2013 Pyrotechnics Display and Lightshow Spectacular.*** The image of the Royal Australian Navy Crest projected on to the Sydney Opera House was a fitting end to the magnificent 2013 International Fleet Review (IFR) celebrations. The IFR saw all available IS on deck to cover endless events and celebrations to mark the centenary of the first RAN fleet into Sydney Harbour. It made me very proud to be a part of it, to wear the RAN uniform and to be an IS capturing an important moment in the history of our Navy.





**Afghan National Army soldiers take aim under the watchful eye of Australian mentor Lance Corporal Simon Ison.** I was very happy with the composition of this image and, more importantly, the message. It was taken during my 2010 deployment with the 1st Mentoring Task Force. The image illustrates Australian soldiers mentoring Afghan National Army soldiers in marksmanship outside a patrol base in the Mirabad Valley in Afghanistan. I thought this shot summed up our mission.



**Artillery supporting Operation HERRICK.** In 2008 I was a member of a small team sent to Helmand Province, Afghanistan to cover the first deployment of Australian Artillerymen since Vietnam. The Artillery soldiers deployed under the British as part of Operation HERRICK. The entire trip was an adventure you could write a book about. It involved many coalition flights, delays, 15-hour road moves in Danish armoured vehicles, unexpected overnight stays, 0300 starts, being woken by jets dropping bombs nearby – all this before we even made it

to the Aussies. We eventually arrived at Forward Operating Base Armadillo, which was the subject of the Danish documentary *Armadillo* a few years later. It was the wild west. I'll attempt to paint a picture: The base was one of three in a valley on the edge of a green zone that saw a lot of fighting. Almost every day we could hear the sounds of gun battles and watch coalition jets and Apache helicopters firing on the enemy just kilometres away. The base had no running water, only rationed bottled water, and it was very difficult to get supplies

in. There was no accommodation – the men slept on stretchers next to their guns. They ate ration packs every day of their nine-month deployment. Couldn't wash their clothes due to water restrictions. No toilets – do your business in a bag and burn the box of bags at the end of each day. No computers, phone reception or internet. I imagined it was as close to Vietnam/World War II conditions as you could get, except it was hot and dusty instead of wet and muddy. The soldiers were all lean, tanned and very well drilled on the L118 Light Gun.

They could get rounds down-range in support of coalition soldiers in minutes. This image was taken toward the end of a fire mission that lasted hours. The gunners sent down 159 rounds in support of coalition troops engaged in a rolling battle with the Taliban. It was loud, hot and brutal. The images ended up causing a furore at home and most were not cleared due to the state of dress of the soldiers, but I'll challenge anyone to do a better job in those conditions. Those artillery soldiers have my deepest respect.





***USNS John Ericsson pulls away from HMAS Sydney in stormy conditions following a refuelling Replenishment at Sea.*** I was on HMAS Sydney, en route to Japan to take part in the JMSDF International Fleet Review in 2012. We were conducting a RAS-refueling with USNS John Ericsson. The weather was sunny and clear, but the black storm

*clouds hanging on the horizon were on us more quickly than anyone anticipated. The weather became wild very quickly and an emergency breakaway was initiated. The rain was horizontal, and waves were crashing over the forecastle. The upper decks were piped out of bounds due to the weather. I knew the emergency breakaway would make a great*

*photo, so I rushed from the bridge to the flight deck. It was raining heavily; I was drenched, and my lens filter was covered in water. I gave up trying to get the water off the lens and took a series of shots as John Ericsson moved away from Sydney. I think the water on the lens acted like a filter, giving the photo an oil-painting quality.*





**Medical Assistant AME Team 4, Leading Aircraftman Jackson Fletcher keeps a watchful eye on his patient during the Aeromedical Evacuation (AME) mission for seven wounded Australian soldiers. During a 2011 deployment as a Military Reporter for the Service Papers, I was in theatre when a horrific green-on-blue attack occurred in Afghanistan. Three Australian soldiers were**

*killed and seven wounded when an Afghan National Army soldier opened fire in a patrol base in Kandahar Province. Subsequently I was tasked to travel to a US Medical Centre in Germany in a RAAF C-17 to photograph the repatriation of the seven wounded Australians. The C-17 was impressively fitted out with medical equipment and the AME teams were thoroughly professional. It was the first trip of its*

*kind for the C-17. Being tasked to photograph badly wounded soldiers is a tough ask. I keep a respectful distance and asked to take photos on many occasions. I wasn't allowed to show the faces of the injured. A number of things struck me during this trip:*

- *How badly wounded and seriously ill the soldiers were following the shooting. Being shot is not like it looks in the movies!*

- *The wonderful professional care given by the AME teams on the flight.*
- *The capability of the C-17: it was decked out as a flying hospital.*

*It was an honour to be on that flight with those brave survivors and the AME teams. It was one of the most memorable tasks I have been on.*





**An Australian Army soldier from Special Operations Task Group stands watch overnight in northern Uruzgan province, Afghanistan.** In 2009 I spent a month with the Special Operations Task Group in Afghanistan. SGT Neil Ruskin and I went out on a large-scale week-long patrol to the Kush Kadir Valley, in the remote north of Uruzgan Province. Frankly, I was terrified. Stepping out on an operational patrol with elite soldiers is serious business. I was truly out of my depth, but I wasn't going to pass up the opportunity. This was once-in-a-lifetime stuff. I was experimenting with long exposures one night while we were chatting with a few soldiers. I asked one of them to be in a shot. He put on his night vision and stood very still for the four or so minutes it took to create the exposure. Neil and I had taped over all the lights on our cameras, so they wouldn't give our position away at night. To review the image, I had to dive into my sleeping bag. The green night-vision goggles give the soldier an alien appearance. I was happy with this one, and it was used a lot for Special Forces Recruiting. It still gets a good run on Instagram. The photo was taken on the site of a fierce night battle the Task Group had waged a year or so earlier. I'm glad they told me this after we had moved on!



**Australian soldiers cover some rough and steep terrain, with temperatures exceeding 50 degrees Celsius, patrolling in the Deh Rawood region of Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan.** In 2010 I deployed with the 1st Mentoring Task Force in Afghanistan. The Netherlands forces were pulling out of Uruzgan province, and we were taking over their patrol bases. I moved with the first Australian push to Deh Rawud, a few hours west of our main base in Tarin Kot. The patrol base was very basic. Water restrictions

meant a shower every three or four days. The temperature was in the high 40s, and a couple of days it topped 50. The patrol base was on top of a big hill at the foot of some steep Afghan mountains. This shot was taken during our second patrol. We stepped off in the late afternoon and covered around 8 kms. We were all drenched in sweat, carrying weapons, gear and body armour. Nearing the end of the patrol we struggled up the steep terrain to the patrol base. The soldiers in front of me were silhouetted against the mountains

and orange sunset – proud and professional Australian Army soldiers facing an uphill battle, trying to win over the Afghan people in the counter-insurgency push, and mentor the Afghan Army to take on the Taliban. I returned to the main base in Tarin Kot shortly after this to cover the ramp ceremony for PTE Nathan Bewes. CPL Dan Keighran was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions in a battle here two weeks later.



**Australian Army soldiers from Special Operations Task Group (SOTG) prepare to board CH-47 Chinook helicopters during a night-time operation in Uruzgan province, Afghanistan, in June 2008.** I was part of a three-person PA team deployed to the Middle East Area of Operations for a few months in 2008. Our primary task was to spend two weeks with the Special Operations Task Group in Afghanistan. The SOTG had allowed photographers on only one or two previous occasions. When we arrived, we discovered we were there to capture the night departure of one of the largest operations they had undertaken to date. Almost the entire task group was being airlifted to a nearby provincial town to capture some key Taliban leaders. The night prior, I tested my kit. It was cloudy – pitch-black darkness. I couldn't use flash, as it would affect the soldiers' night vision and light up the entire airfield. I tested

night-vision scopes on one camera, and used a tripod and experimented with long exposure on another camera. I sticky-taped the focus ring at an appropriate focal length so that I didn't accidentally bump it – auto-focus doesn't work with no light. On the night of the operation, the clouds cleared, the stars were out, and there was beautiful moonlight. My two-minute exposure tests from the night before could be wound back to 30 seconds due to the moonlight. The long exposures made the Special Forces soldiers appear as ghostly shapes. A lot of the images from this task were not cleared for operational security purposes, but this one was. It became widely used, and still is. A print of it covered a big wall at the War Memorial for the Special Forces display, and they made some SF Recruiting merchandise from it – I still have a few fridge magnets! The photo became known as 'Ghosts'.









Chapter 5:  
**Petty Officer Imagery Specialist**  
**Phillip Cullinan**

# *Wet, homesick and frightened*

Being embedded with the 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (5RAR) motorised infantry battalion of the Australian Army for six months in Iraq was in the blood for Phil Cullinan. With a family history in Defence, joining the Navy was inevitable for the Blue Mountains sailor, especially after watching an advertisement in a cinema with the recruitment grab 'wet, homesick and frightened'.

Prior to joining the Navy, Petty Officer Cullinan worked in a security role at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre while waiting to become a Fire Controller. The process took longer than usual because his first choice of trade was no longer offered, which opened another trade opportunity – as a RADAR Plotter.

'I used to tell my mother that they trained us by throwing a torch

in a dryer, and we had to watch it go around and around,' Phil jokes. 'Navy Imagery Specialists are the experts, and as soon as we step into the area we have to photograph, we have to make decisions then and there. We face challenges like when you are assigned to photograph something and then find out you are the pool photographer for the whole country, as no other photographers can attend the function/operation.

The pressures of getting it right can be challenging, so preparation is essential – I go through my checks and equipment thoroughly to make sure everything is working so I can get the shot.'

'An Imagery Specialist should have a sense of humour. With the number of hours we work and the taskings we do, you must be able to laugh. Things change so fast in our field that you could be having



**HMAS Anzac conducting Naval Gunfire Support in the Al Faw Peninsula.** This is one of the most historic and famous photographs I have taken in my career. I was honoured to be in the Gulf in HMAS Anzac back in 1996 when the conflict with Iraq commenced in 2003. As I was transferred to HMAS Anzac to capture any significant events that might happen, I received word that we might go on the gunline to conduct Naval Gunfire Support to help troops on the ground in the Al Faw Peninsula. This was the most important event that I could photograph, as we had not conducted NGS since the Vietnam war, so I decided to capture it. The only problem I had was that we could be called upon at any time to fire our rounds in support. I stayed on the Gun-Direction Platform for two days then the call came in that we would be firing. I knew exactly what shot I needed to get and managed to capture it in one of my most celebrated images

**Two Australian Light Horse re-enactors lead the Australian Army Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopters followed by other in-service helicopters in an advance formation during the handover ceremony at Oakey Army Air Base.** Being a member of a Tri-service unit as a photographer gives you the opportunity to witness some events I would not normally photograph in the Navy. One such event was when two Australian Light Horse re-enactors led the new Australian Army Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopters out during a handover ceremony at Oakey Army Air Base. My idea for this photograph was to show the old and the new of the Australian Army. I wanted separation between the two subjects and had to wait patiently until the perfect shot appeared.

'Navy Imagery Specialists are the experts, and as soon as we step into the area we have to photograph, we have to make decisions then and there.'

coffee in the office one moment and then suddenly you're on notice to move anywhere in the world within 4-12 hours. You must be able to remain flexible enough and be able to shrug anything off.

'Being an Imagery Specialist in the Navy means I am entrusted to capture the history of the Navy - like the conflict in Iraq, where I captured '5-inch Friday' firing in the Persian Gulf.

Cullinan's experience in the Persian Gulf rekindles great memories for a couple of reasons. 'Firstly, it was the first time since the Vietnam War that an Australian warship has conducted a real Naval Gunfire Support mission. Being able to capture that moment in time where you can see the shell coming out of the barrel made it even more special.

'Secondly, my wife was pregnant and about to go into labour with

our first child. Not knowing if I was a father yet, due to a communications blackout, played on my mind, as the Persian Gulf War was in full swing. Having photographed this firing one day and then being a father the next day will forever be a memory for me.'

Navy's Imagery Specialists work in all climates, conditions and situations, and they need to be able to work with the elements - so their camera equipment needs to







'Having photographed this firing one day and then being a father the next day will forever be a memory for me.'

**(L-R) Flight Lieutenant Matthew Nunn and Flight Lieutenant Wayne Baylis in the cockpit of an Australian Air Force C-130H Hercules aircraft transiting to Banda Aceh Airport with much-needed aid for the local population.** Working with the Royal Australian Air Force after the 2004 tsunami in Aceh, I had the opportunity to photograph in the cockpit of a C-130 Hercules. The sun was setting as we headed in to hand over humanitarian aid, and I was thinking of how I could light the cockpit and have the sunset off in the distance create a nice visual effect. The only way I could capture the whole cockpit was to use a 14 mm lens. I was not allowed to use any flash, as it might blind the pilots – that was fair enough. The only way I could get the image I'd imagined was to have a slow shutter speed to allow the natural light to enter the lens. The only problem I now had was that the C-130 was vibrating a lot, as they do. I managed to capture the image by hand-holding the camera at 1/4 of a second – after a few attempts it finally worked.

as well. Whether it is the humid and damp conditions of a rainforest, heavy snow or rough seas, the kit must be able to cope. This means all photographers know how to get the best from their cameras and how to look after them. They contend with freezing conditions, so it's imperative to keep kit, especially batteries, warm by keeping them close to your body. In dusty deserts, keeping equipment clear of sand and grit is challenging. And when shooting out of a helicopter, photographers must make sure their kit is secure.

Often, photographers must carry all the necessary camera gear (lenses, microphones, lights, tripods, reflectors, memory cards, batteries,

chargers, wires) as well as the other kits they need to survive. When out on deployment – whether with a motorised infantry battalion of the Australian Army, the Fleet Air Arm or Royal Navy ships – they must be able to look after their kit and themselves.

In these live-action scenarios, such as operations or exercises, they have one chance to get the picture. They must be able to make quick decisions about which camera to grab, which lens to attach, and the best exposure to get the ultimate shot. They rely on their knowledge and expertise to make the call – and they usually get it right .

'The other memory that really stands out is when I was

embedded with 5RAR in Iraq for six months. Being deployed with an Army unit on the ground conducting patrols was an eye-opener for a sailor. The training that was involved with this and the way the Army soldiers conducted themselves gave me a new respect for them, instead of the old rivalry we always have.'

An unforgettable part of Phil's Iraq deployment was being attacked by small arms and a rocket-propelled grenade while filming the soldiers who had dismounted their vehicles to deliver stores and equipment to a village. 'While I was filming, one of the Australian Light Armoured Vehicles (ASLAV) in front of me was struck with a rocket-propelled grenade, but due









'Being deployed with an Army unit on the ground conducting patrols was an eye-opener for a sailor.'

***An Australian UH-1H Iroquois helicopter from the 5th Aviation Regiment conducts a humanitarian-aid distribution flight to the isolated people of Banda Aceh.***

*Being deployed to a disaster zone tested my abilities, both mentally and physically. Not only were we all dealing with multiple casualties, we also had to assist with distributing aid to the people of Aceh. At the start of this disaster, the only one way to do this was by using an Australian UH-1H Iroquois helicopter from the 5th Aviation Regiment. As we flew in close formation, I chose to take this image, as it not only showed the Australian Defence Force conducting this tasking, it also showed how much of the area had been destroyed by the tsunami*

to the armour on the side, the rocket did not detonate – much to my relief. This was all captured on film while I was conducting my duties.'

But Phil's fondest memory of all is being at ANZAC Cove for the ANZAC Dawn service – it was the most amazing place he'd ever seen. He thoroughly enjoyed Villers-Bretonneux for ANZAC Day services: the people were so happy to have them there and treated them like royalty. Seeing Paris was also amazing.

'One of the surprise visits I have loved was a trip to Jordan and a quick side visit to Petra to see that terrific architecture,' he says.

Imagery Specialists rapidly acquire public-speaking skills, show confidence, and must be able to take charge of any situation. Taking control of large groups of different people, from a recruit to an Admiral, is part of the trade.

'To continue to grow as a photographer, I am always scouring for new ways to better myself in my field, from easier ways to carrying the camera to the different ways I shoot. I am always learning new things with photography from people who have just joined the branch as well as from members that have been in longer than me. Also, new technology appears so fast that it is very hard to keep up. You don't want to get left behind, as you always have to be at your best to do the job properly.

'One of the main things we have to be very cautious of,' Phil adds, 'is that it is instantaneous for imagery to be up, and we have to ensure that the security of our people always comes first.'







**Australia's Federation Guard awaits the arrival of Chief of Navy Vice Admiral Tim Barrett, AO, CSC, RAN, and Chief of Staff of the French Navy, Admiral Bernard Rogel, during a visit to Canberra.** The image of the Navy contingent of Australia's Federation Guard is one of my personal favourites, as this was not planned at all. I was in my office of Navy Communications and Media on Level

4 of the Russell offices, and I looked out the window to see what the weather was like. I saw the Guard starting to form up and off in the distance I could see dark clouds rolling in quite fast. Being a photographer allows me to pretty much go where I need/want to go to get the shot. I walked up to the podium, where they were waiting for a dignitary to arrive, and captured this image.

**HMNZS Te Kaha (F77) conducts a replenishment at sea with HMAS Sirius during Exercise TRITON STORM 2.** Royal Australian Navy ships and submarines and Royal New Zealand Navy ships, with over 1300 sailors and officers in all, participated in a comprehensive maritime-training exercise called Exercise TRITON STORM 2 off the coast of Western Australia. When you are deployed

at sea, you soon realise you take many of the same shots as your fellow photographers. Trying to capture the same event from a unique angle is one of the hardest things to come up with. I decided I wanted to slow my shutter speed down to create a moving effect of the ships and, as luck would have it, the ships just happened to move in the same direction at the same time.







**Special Operations Task Group soldiers conduct clearance drills at a training facility at the Multinational Base - Tarin Kot.**

*While in Afghanistan, I had the opportunity to photograph Special Forces soldiers conducting training. This image was taken as they conducted a door entry on a compound training facility. It was a unique opportunity for a sailor to not only witness this, but also to be taken in by them and allowed to photograph them.*

**Special Operations Task Group soldiers and their partners from the Provincial Response Company - Uruzgan (PRC-U) arrive back at Multinational Base - Tarin Kot after conducting a PRC-U-led security operation in Uruzgan Province, Southern Afghanistan.**

*Photographing these soldiers and their partners created many unique opportunities for me. Having permission to photograph them on completion of a mission, after conducting a PRC-U-led security operation in Uruzgan Province, Southern Afghanistan, gave me the chance to see how they were upon return. Many things were going through my head as I watched the Chinook land: if there were casualties, how would they react to me photographing them?*







*Trooper Lachlan Hawker keeps a watchful eye as Australian Light Armoured Vehicles (ASLAVs) while Combat Team Courage takes a break during a patrol of Al Muthanna province in southern Iraq. This image was taken while I was deployed in Iraq with Overwatch Battle Group 3. As I was patrolling with the soldiers, we stopped to take a break and conduct some searches. As I disembarked the bushmaster, I turned around and saw this soldier sitting on top of his ASLAV with the Australian Flag flying. I thought to myself, if this doesn't say we are Australians, then I don't know what does.*



*Royal Australian Navy ships and submarines and Royal New Zealand Navy ships participating in Exercise TRITON STORM 2 off the coast of Western Australia. This image showcases the amazing light in the middle of the ocean. As I was on the upper deck, HMAS Perth sailed past in the distance, creating a spectacular silhouette.*





Chapter 6:  
**Leading Seaman Imagery Specialist**  
**Kayla Jackson**

# *Demolition mines topped with maple syrup*

Highly creative individuals like Kayla Jackson typically display a great deal of curiosity and are constantly asking questions about anything and everything. Before joining the Navy as a communicator, Kayla worked in a few novelty jobs: barefoot-bowls instructor, rookie tennis coach, bartender, barista, and as a commissioned artist producing artwork on surfboards.

'The thought of being creative in a secure career while exploring new places, making great money and meeting lots of new people resonated with me,' says Kayla. 'I probably could have done with the structure as well.'

Kayla's dad and an ex-serviceman mate believed in her, encouraged her to join the Navy, and pushed

her towards success. 'Dad always encouraged me to do better and has mentored me through a lot of decisions over the years. I bounce ideas off him and he helps me with the practicalities. If I am ever unsure of a situation, I lean on him for guidance and, as clichéd as this sounds, I do want to make him proud. To me, being an Imagery Specialist in the Navy means I





'Dad always encouraged me to do better and has mentored me through a lot of decisions over the years.'

**Australian Army Bagpiper Dave Leaders conducts a rehearsal at the Ari Burnu cemetery ahead of the 2017 Anzac Day commemorations in Gallipoli, Turkey.** *This image is probably more of an emotional choice, as documenting Anzac Day in Gallipoli in 2017 as a whole tasking was a stand-out for me. I grew up attending dawn services and thinking about the magnitude of what the ANZACs experienced and my appreciation for Australian War History was amplified after I joined the Defence Force. To stand on the shore of Anzac Cove in uniform was a moving experience, and when I look at this series of photographs, I instantly hear the water lapping the quiet shore of Anzac Cove while Bagpiper Dave Leaders complements the silence with the sound of his bagpipes as the sun rises. The soft colours of dawn give the image a sense of quietness and reflection. It was a humbling privilege, walking the steps of history in such a way, and a memory that will stay with me for a long time.*

have a unique insight into how diverse the Navy can be – how it varies between jobs, people, locations, taskings, deployments and equipment.'

There are unique challenges to being in the Navy, like not having control over the natural elements, and unexpected short-notice changes, which make it hard on sailors' personal lives. While there may be some physical work on a ship or in a station, the majority of the job is mentally and creatively focused. Imagery Specialists need to be comfortable working independently or with a small team and with little supervision.

On the flip side, the thrill of a short-notice tasking can be addictive and exciting – like being part of a unique assignment such as the demolition tasking of World War II sea mines.

'I had just returned home from a multinational exercise with HMAS *Success*,' says Kayla, 'and was told to keep my bags packed to join HMAS *Gascoyne* with CDT1 [Clearance Diving Team 1] then stand by for more information on the tasking once I had joined the ship. Once I arrived on the ship, I was shown to my bunk - the top rack of the inboard three, the awkward one that has just enough space for you to slide in on a flat back, once you've mastered getting up that high.

'I secured my gear in various nooks around the ship before heading to the wardroom to be briefed on the plan. The sea mines were a few days' sail from where we were, so I had time to create content of the team involved. Once we arrived in the area, we had help from the local maritime police and conducted various safety assessments. Everyone was eager, as we were all putting our training into practice.

'One of the divers cooked up a beautiful fish curry with the few fish that didn't survive the blast impact!'

*Fleet Divisions HMAS Canberra and a sea of white. At times it can be a challenge to capture images in a unique and interesting way when a lot of our subjects are quite similar or, in some cases, repetitive. But I had never seen something photographed like this shot before. After I captured video footage of the Fleet Division's group shot onboard HMAS Canberra, the mass of sailors started to break away. I remember saying aloud, 'How cool does this look!' I switched to stills mode (thanking my lucky stars for DSLR filming) and clicked away as the crowd dispersed down the ramp on their final day of work before the Christmas break. I think the sea of white made for an interesting and unique image.*







*Multinational task force – Exercise KAKADU:  
This image was taken in 2018 while I was on  
assignment with HMAS Warramunga, but I  
also worked directly with the Royal Canadian  
Navy specifically to achieve this photograph.*

'I set up and tested my gear a few times – filming and photographing at the same time can be a little tricky, and I wanted to make sure all of my gear was spot-on, as there would be no re-shoots! The detonations went off and the area was cleared for safety, after which I jumped into the stunning tropical water and got a few shots of the divers finishing up their role before heading back to the police boat and edited my content in the afternoon sun.

'One of the divers cooked up a beautiful fish curry with the few fish that didn't survive the blast impact! That tasty food was the cherry on top of an all-round successful assignment.

Like other Imagery Specialists, Kayla finds travelling around the world performing her job a mixed blessing. 'Being away is the toughest part of the job for me because even though I am visiting a lot of new and amazing places, I always wish my husband

*Royal Australian Navy sailor Leading Seaman Aircrewman Michael Sales watches on from a MH-60R helicopter as HMAS Sirius (centre) conducts a dual replenishment with HMAS Ships Parramatta (left) and Success (right). Still one of my favourite compositions to photograph, I aim to get a shot like this during every flight I go on. I think, in this instance, capturing the dual replenishment at sea makes for a dynamic showcase of the 'working Navy team' from a perspective you don't often see. It's challenging to portray an aircrewman's viewpoint in one image, but I like to think this sums it up nicely.*







**HMAS Parramatta (front) and HMAS Warramunga sail through the Whitsunday Islands at sunset.** One of the best trips I have experienced during my career so far was on HMAS Parramatta. My role was incredibly supported on board and the crew fully embraced my ideas. This image was taken from the embarked MH-60R as the ship came through the Whitsundays at sunset, homeward bound and in company with HMAS Warramunga. For me, the light on the mountain and the reflections on the water provoke a feeling of love for my job as well as the memory of the beautiful places I get to see from unusual and unique perspectives.

**Portrait of Chief Petty Officer Waites.** I first met Chief Waites when I was a seaman communicator, and I told him I would love to take his photograph one day. Over the years we crossed paths many times at sea and ashore, and would laugh about what had become an ongoing joke of how he still had not let me take his photograph. Nine years later and a few days before his retirement, I was FINALLY able to photograph him. It remains one of my favourite portraits.

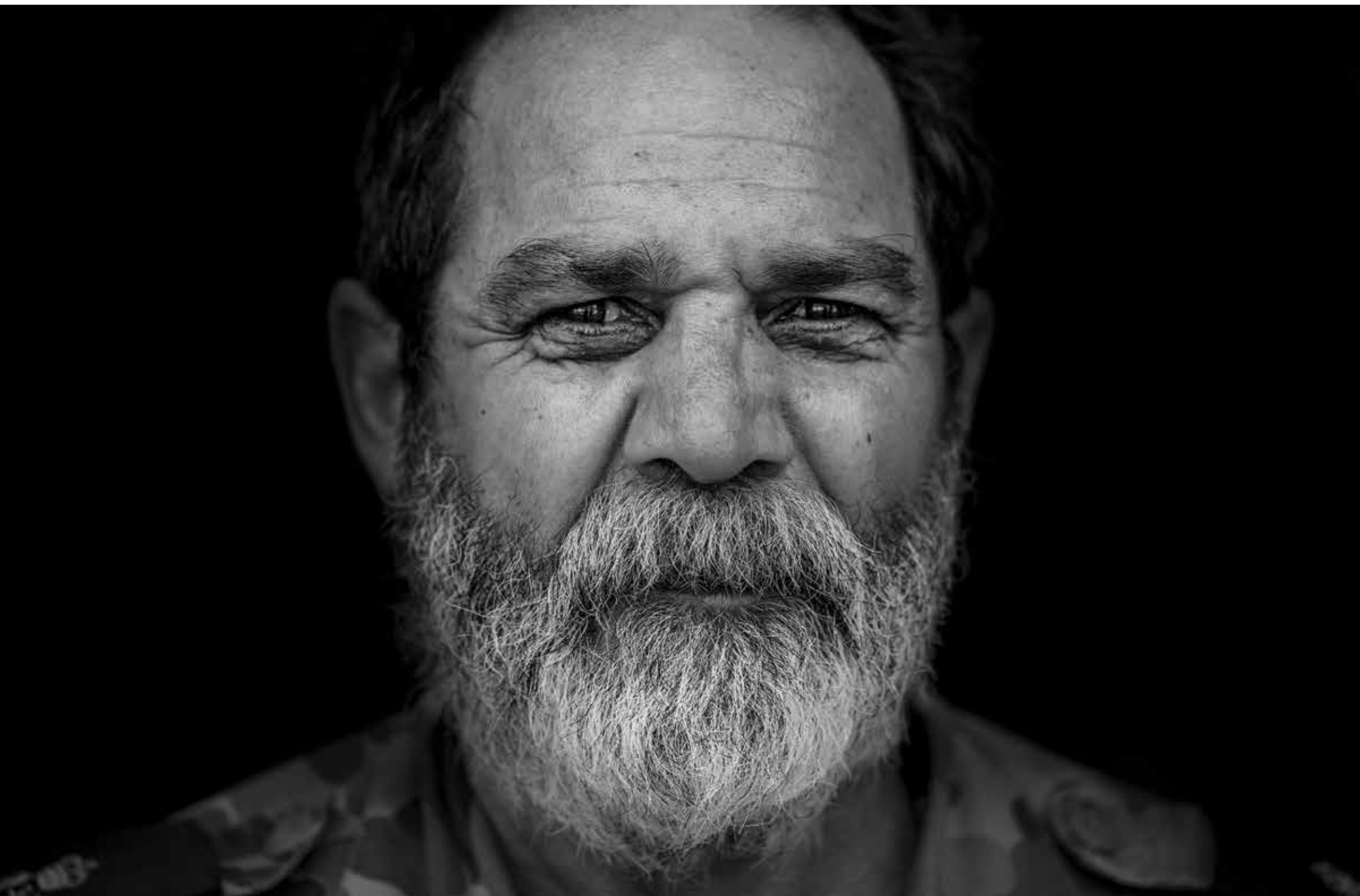
'To stand on the shore of Anzac Cove in uniform was a humbling privilege – gaining insight into a significant piece of Australian history.'

Liam could be experiencing the adventures with me. I also come from a large, close-knit family who always encourage me to step outside my comfort zone.'

Kayla has been fortunate enough to travel to a variety of places – the stand-outs include Seychelles, with its unforgettable sunsets, sparkling water and natural beauty.

'Turkey (Anzac Cove) was so special because of the meaning of the trip. To stand on the shore of Anzac Cove in uniform was a humbling privilege – gaining insight into a significant piece of Australian history.'











*Royal Australian Navy sailor Able Seaman Boatswains Mate Jess Christen keeps watch from the upper deck of HMAS Parramatta in the Coral Sea. The aspect I love most about this image is the light. I love utilising natural light wherever I can, and I think in this particular image it enhances the strong femininity of Able Seaman Boatswains Mate Jessica Christen. I tend to visit the bridge and upper-deck areas for the sunset when I can: there is a general sense of calm at this time of day at sea, and I think that is communicated in this image.*

I grew up attending dawn services and thinking about the magnitude of what the ANZACs experienced.

'A little closer to home, I never get sick of hanging out of a helicopter over the Great Barrier Reef and the Whitsundays. Then there is Oman, Japan, Korea, UAE, the tiny islands off the coast of northern Australia, the Philippines, Hawaii ... The memories are flooding in now – it's hard to choose a favourite.'

Imagery Specialists play an integral role in delivering Navy capability by enabling Military Public Affairs within Navy and by supporting operations.

'Another memorable assignment was on HMAS *Warramunga*. I was called up to the bridge late at night and told that I would be photographing the Multinational Task Force for Exercise KAKADU. I gave the room my photographic opinion in regard to lighting, timing and composition.

'A few days later I left HMAS *Warramunga* via small boat at 0400 and as we approached HMCS *Vancouver* I made out a long, thin ladder they had dropped from quite a significant height above for

me to climb, luckily under the light of a full moon!'

Kayla made the climb and was welcomed at the top with pancakes and maple syrup for breakfast. Then she too embarked in the Canadian Sea King helicopter. They flew off the deck and pulled back the side door; sitting with their legs out of the cabin, they climbed above the fleet and got into position.

'I still to this day have never seen the weather change so much, so perfectly. At first, I was holding my breath thinking that the shoot was about to be ruined, as the fleet I was photographing was headed for an iconic Top-End storm,' she said.

They ended up just sailing through the edge of the dramatic storm clouds and, just as most of the fleet made it through to the other side, a curtain of heavy rain poured down behind them and a perfect rainbow shone over the fleet.

'The way the timings and multiple elements came together perfectly that day still amazes me, and the memory still makes me smile. I love the collection of my images from that day. If that isn't a good day at work, I don't know what is!'









**Royal Australian Navy's Bungaree Dance Troupe dancer, Able Seaman Boatswains Mate Jorde Lenoy displays Indigenous dance moves at HMAS Creswell in the lead-up to a performance for National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week.** *Able Seaman Boatswains Mate Jorde Lenoy is passionate about his ancestry and the RAN Bungaree Dance Troupe. In the lead up to NAIDOC Week 2019, I decided to challenge myself to portray these characteristics of Jorde. I wanted to communicate a feeling of magic or Dreamtime while showing Jorde's strength. To achieve my vision, I had four people to help me light up the coloured chalk and Jorde as well as two others to throw colour bombs, all of us standing in the chilly winter water. The biggest challenge on the day was throwing the three coloured chalk bombs in sync - fortunately, it was a calm afternoon and the shot came together nicely. I love it when something I have imagined comes to fruition, and seeing Jorde's reaction to the image really put a smile on my face.*

As Navy evolves towards content that is photographed and uploaded instantly, the camera grows in importance, and the ability to see through other people's lenses in real time is becoming a powerful force in social media. Kayla feels that future changes in technology could be a double-edged sword.

'It is great that we can promote the positivity of the Navy to a wider network, and it gives us more platforms to tell our own story, rather than a reputation built by media companies alone. On the other side it is a fast-paced beast that continuously needs feeding, and occasionally people feel like they can be keyboard warriors.

'I also like that I can post my own cleared imagery in one place, like a portfolio I am continuously adding to, as well as sharing some of my more creative work that doesn't necessarily meet the tasking or get picked up by Defence Media. It is also really cool how Defence members' social-media accounts can be effective recruiting tools, by showcasing life within the Forces.'

The path to mastery for Kayla involves keeping a 'little ideas

journal' and researching the 'best in the business' for new photographic and videography ideas. She thrives on telling stories with emotive images, loves photographing in natural light, and always prefer if shoots can be arranged for sunrise or sunset.

'If there is a quiet day at work or if I know of something interesting coming up, I add it to the list. I try to create a few ideas a month depending on how much time I have or what tasking I am on. I watch YouTube videos and keep in contact with other Military Photographers from around the world whom I have met on my travels. We bounce ideas off each other.

'I am my own harshest critic when it comes to my work and I am always looking for new ways to create better images and get photographic ideas from all different mediums, galleries, books, art and design. I find the more creativity I surround myself with, the better my work is.'

Kayla cites Matt Porteous and Felipe Dana as major influences on how she crafts her work. 'I find their work inspiring: it is a documentative style but refined with an aspect



**A Clearance Diver's Office.** This image is from a demolition tasking of World War II sea mines, which was an exciting assignment for me to capture, as my father had been a Clearance Diver for 32 years. This particular shot was taken once the Clearance Divers had carried out the explosive ordnance disposal. Beneath the surface the visibility was breathtaking, as was the light and colour. The contrast between the CD's black diving gear and the infinite blue is my visual expression of the uniqueness of the Clearance Divers' 'office' and is just how I imagined my dad at work when I was a young child.

**HMAS Anzac boarding party:** I like the striking simplicity of this image of HMAS Anzac's boarding-party team as they depart for a boarding exercise with the Philippines Navy during one of my South-East Asia Deployments. The composition of the image and the contrasting texture of circular whitewash against the deep blues of the Celebes Sea depicts a sense of movement. I like that it shows a glimpse of the playful side of Navy life: water doughnuts.

'I love trying to photograph people with their guard down. In a portrait environment I usually try to make them laugh by saying something that generally isn't very funny, aiming to capture them in a candid state.'

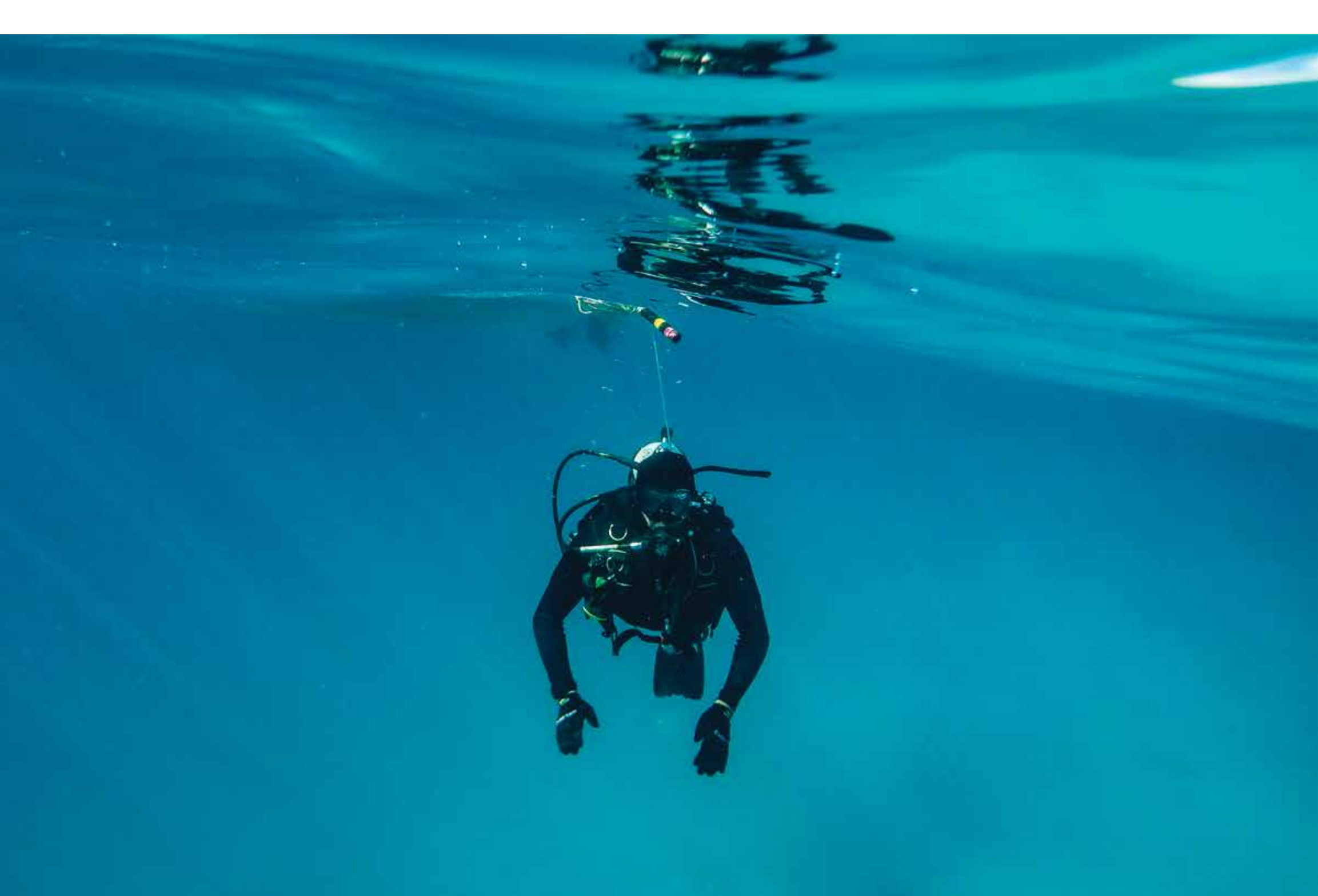
of beauty. Their subjects aren't always glamorous, but I am drawn to their work through the way they make their images so interesting to the viewer. I am influenced by the shape and form of their imagery, and their use of lighting, colour and composition is inspiring. I feel it makes their images more emotive.'

Other people that have influenced her career include the Commanding Officer of HMAS *Parramatta*, Commander Troy

Van Tienhoven, whose leadership refreshed her passion for the job and the Navy. 'Commander Tienhoven and his team worked hard so I could achieve great content that trip. It felt pretty extraordinary to have such incredible support and to be on board a ship whose crew appreciated the value of our work.'

Kayla admits that photography is also a hobby, along with pottery, painting, drawing and anything

to do with the ocean. She was awarded the 2016 Rosemary Rodwell Shield for demonstrating the pursuit of excellence in capturing a memorable photographic image.







## Chapter 7:

# Mastering the craft – The Rosemary Rodwell Memorial Prize

Shutterbugs that strive for the competitive edge while pushing outside of their comfort zone enter the annual Rosemary Rodwell Memorial Prize award—and the competition is stiff.

*Mr Frank Delaney and Mr Warren Usher of Yaiwal, NSW is assisted from an 808 Squadron MRH90 Military Support Helicopter after being evacuated from his remote rural property to the east of the Moreton National Park and in the direct fire front of the Tianjara Fire burning north through ten thousand hectares of national park and bushland. 2019 Winner, Chief Petty Officer Kel Hockey.*

The best five photos are blindly judged by senior Imagery Specialists from across navy, army and air force. The bar is set high, and although they won't admit it, it's like winning the photo 'footy flag' among the shutterbugs!

Seeing how other photographers have interpreted a contest theme leads to inspiration and adapting the ideas of peers, and incorporating them their work which

is a great way to improve. Feedback is the 'breakfast of champions'.

The award is presented to a photographer who best demonstrates the pursuit of excellence in capturing a memorable photographic image. Winners of the competition, be that the overall winner or a top three photo, gives the sailors photography validation and takes their craft to the next level.

The late Petty Officer Rosemary Rodwell, who was born in Sydney in 1939, provided 20 years' loyal service as a writer in the RAN and was tragically killed in a motor vehicle accident in 1987. A trust fund in her honour was established by her family to recognise the Imagery Specialist sailor who best demonstrates the pursuit of excellence.



The following list of Rosemary Rodwell Memorial Prize winners for photographic achievements are recorded for posterity:

Year	Winner
2020	Leading Seaman Imagery Specialist Richard Cordell
2019	Chief Petty Officer Imagery Specialist Kel Hockey
2018	Leading Seaman Imagery Specialist Richard Cordell
2017	Leading Seaman Imagery Specialist Richard Cordell
2016	Petty Officer Imagery Specialist Kel Hockey
2015	Able Seaman Imagery Specialist Kayla Hayes
2014	Leading Seaman Imagery Specialist Brenton Freind
2013	Able Seaman Imagery Specialist Jesse Rhynard
2012	Able Seaman Imagery Specialist Alan Lancaster
2011	Leading Seaman Imagery Specialist Phillip Cullinan
2010	Petty Officer Imagery Specialist Damian Pawlenko

*An MH-60R Seahawk hovers in the vicinity of the HMAS Albatross Air Traffic Control Tower building, whilst an AS350BA Squirrel helicopter conducts advanced aerial manoeuvres in the background. Imagery was taken during the 453 SQN Open Day at HMAS Albatross. 2016 Winner, Chief Petty Officer Kel Hockey*

*HMA Ships Newcastle and Warramunga pull up to station's 1 and 2 for a replenishment at sea from HMAS Sirius, HMNZS Te Kaha takes up lifeguard station to the rear of the evolution. 2015 winner, Able Seaman Alan Lancaster.*







*Australian Army Private Ben Rue from the 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, provides security during Exercise Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2016. 2016 entrant, Leading Seaman Steven Thomson.*

*Members of The Australian Clearance Diver Team 1 conduct beach reconnaissance during Exercise Mulgogger held in Jervis Bay. 2013 Winner, Able Seaman Jesse Rhynard.*













*Above: HMAS Toowoomba at sea in the Indian Ocean in support of Operation SOUTHERN INDIAN OCEAN, the search for missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370. 2016 tied runner-up, Petty Officer James Whittle.*

*Right: Seaman Boatswains Mate Gareth Baker, on watch as helmsman in the bridge of HMAS Larrakia during her South East Asian deployment. 2016 tied runner-up, Petty Officer Yuri Ramsey.*

*Opposite: HMAS Parramatta being prepared to undock after her Anti-Ship Missile Defence upgrade at BAE Systems Henderson Shipyard, Western Australia. 2016 entrant, Petty Officer Lee-Anne Cooper.*







# About the Author

## Lieutenant Will Singer

*Will is an accomplished and multi-skilled Naval Officer with highly developed leadership and innovative skills, and with management experience honed over 30 years in private enterprise and the Australian Defence Force.*

*Will is an accredited Certified Management Consultant and an experienced knowledge leader, having worked for multinational companies across Australasia, Europe and Africa. He served in the South African Mechanised Infantry during the Angolan Bush War and has been commissioned as an Officer in the Royal Australian Navy.*

*Will has a Master's in Business Administration from the Edinburgh Business School (Heriot-Watt University) and contributes to military newspapers, financial journals, small-business media and business newspapers. He has also authored a book called Profit Factory.*

*Will is a keen endurance athlete who has completed eleven 90km Comrades Marathons, dozens of standard marathons as well as the gruelling 226km Busselton Ironman triathlon.*

*Will is a Staff Officer with the Sea Power Centre Australia. He lives with his family – wife Cindy, son Liam and daughter Olivia – in Albany, Western Australia.*

How far back can you remember? Our earliest childhood memories may form before the age of three, but researchers believe people only recall memories from 3.5 years old onwards. I have a vivid flashback from my childhood that is derived from a certain photograph. The black-and-white photograph, edges as jagged as a postage stamp, was a shot of my two sisters and I, rugged-up, rowing down the Vaal River in South Africa. For me, the photograph rekindles the African *highveld* smells, the frosty temperature and the noise of the oars ploughing the water. I was two years old then and it's my earliest memory of 51 years on Earth. Photographs are

truly a return ticket to a moment otherwise gone.

The word 'photography' derives from 'instrument for recording' and, in my view, a photograph enhances the memory of an experience and, more importantly, documents an event. Photography bears witness. Photographs may speak about something funny, moving, sad or thoughtful. They might capture a mood or put you in a state of contemplation. Old songs (that sneak out during current Netflix movies) remind me of the Engelbert Humperdinck vinyl records Dad played in the lounge room back in the 70's – so music is a bit the same, for me anyway.

It was during my teenage years that I developed an interest in taking 'snaps' of my friends and family. Nothing too poetic, just smiling, happy faces and some blurry sporty shots. My first camera was a trusty Kodak 110 camera that I bought from the local newsagency. The film casing was cassette-like and had to be handed in to the local chemist, where they would develop the film into 24 photographs and a strip of negatives for future reprints. It took ages to view your craft, and developing film was costly due to the labour, chemicals and equipment used. My pocket money didn't extend far enough to make a career of it! You couldn't just delete the bad images either - you had to pay for the duds too! I recall having to capture group-shots (using my fancy US-bought Sigma camera) of my friends after a night out on the town. I needed a tripod, a timer, and Usain Bolt's speed to run and get into the posing position in time. Those photos have discoloured to yellow shade over time due to sun exposure and the acid in the printing.

Today the 'selfie' has become an international phenomenon, with Samsung estimating the average person will take over 25,000 selfies in their lifetime.

Unlike the spoken or written word, photography is a form of communication that can be internationally understood. The essential purpose of photography is communication. Few people take pictures solely to please themselves. Most of us take them because we want them seen by others. We want to inform, educate, entertain or share experiences with others. Pictures are a photographer's means of expression, just as a writer's means are words.

Not long after my 16th birthday, the postman delivered a massive brown envelope featuring the South African coat of arms in the corner. It was my two-year military 'call-up', detailed my posting to 3 South African Infantry based in Potchefstroom. At its peak, conscription in South Africa consisted of two years of mandatory military service,



followed by Citizen Force camps at intervals. Under apartheid, the call-up applied to all white men upon completing their schooling or further studies.

Thousands of young white men, most of them only seventeen, eighteen or nineteen years old, were called on to do compulsory military service in the South African Defence Force. Defending South Africa in a two-way rifle range was

*Will Singer (right) and Signaller Willem Fourie conducting Ratel Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV) pre-checks before heading off on Operations in Angola.*





*Will Singer (middle) and crew topside of his Ratel Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV) while 'standing by' to move in a 61 Mechanised Battalion eschalon during the Angolan Bush War.*

a two-year stint I could live with. I trawled through my kit-checklist, slipped my Kodak in with my steaming kit, and was ready for duty.

It was during Army Battle School that I first came across a team of military cameramen who were filming documentaries for the South African Broadcasting Corporation.

Their footage of the huge training exercise called Exercise SWEEPSLAG captured visuals for the 6 o'clock news, and illustrated articles appeared in the national press and in magazines like Paratus, which was the SADF's official magazine from November 1970 to April 1994. The photographers and journalists would ride in our mechanised vehicles for a few days before

embedding with other Infantry platoons, Eland armoured cars or artillery. I really admired their resilience and patience and the way they quickly built relationships with the troops (with the help of cigarettes, potato chips and Coca Cola - the currency in the bush) to get their product exploited. They also would sneak a few coldies into our tent after a long day! The

'I really admired their resilience and patience and the way they quickly built relationships with the troops.'

I received my deployment orders to join my troops to fight in the Angolan Bush War against 55,000 Cubans already in theatre helping the Angolans in their Marxists sponsored freedom movement.

I joined 61 Mechanised Battalion and served my time fighting both a guerrilla war against the South-West Africa People's Organisation, as well as taking part in conventional operations against Cuban and Angolan forces. Not many people know about the Angolan Bush War (also known as the South African Border War). It was a largely asymmetric conflict that occurred in Namibia (then South West Africa), The South African Border War resulted in some of the largest battles on the African continent since World War II and was closely intertwined with the Angolan Civil War. Our mission was to stage massive conventional raids into Angola to eliminate enemy forward operating bases. To capture the action, I always

*Rest and recuperation: Omuthiya, Namibia, the forward operating base of 61 Mechanised Battalion. A sweat-soaked Will Singer arrives after weeks in theatre without a shower during the Angolan Bush War.*

ensured I had my trusty Kodak 110 camera nearby.

I passed my time doing my job in South West Africa and Angola while snapping candid photos of soldiers at work and often capturing images of fighter jets and battle-damaged tanks. Given the time taken to process the film (which usually happened when we returned home), photography was tolerated without impacting operational security. I am extremely proud of my time in the South African Infantry – it made me the person I am today.

My wife and I immigrated to Australia from South Africa in 1998 because serious crime there was increasing exponentially. The rampant 'crime wave' meant I had to carry a CZ 75 semi-automatic pistol on me for protection. We were always 'on edge'. The popping of a champagne cork, a bursting balloon or a car backfiring would send my heart racing – I felt as if



'... it was time to 'give back' to Australia and volunteer my time doing something fun and productive.'

I was back in the bush. It wasn't uncommon to hear of friends being robbed, carjacked or shot. I was shot at in an attempted carjacking after a Valentine's Day Evening Fun Run in Johannesburg. The bullet ricocheted off the driver's door of my company car – my boss was not impressed. Daytime firefights and shootings in supermarket parking lots were becoming the new normal.

Fast-forward 15 years and after a management career in the petrochemical and consulting industries, it was time to 'give back' to Australia and volunteer my time doing something fun and productive. I thought it would be rewarding to join the local Army

Reserve unit and enjoy the Tuesday night musters and occasional exercises – that would do it for me. At the Officer Selection Board, I was encouraged by the psychologist to consider 'specialising', given my tertiary qualifications, and leaving the General Officer opportunities to the younger folk. In a twist of fate, I ended up in the Royal Australian Navy as a Military Public Affairs Officer. My job would be to plan and coordinate activities to generate an information effect to regional, domestic and internal audiences using traditional and social media. The Royal Australian Navy also uses Reserve Officers with specialist communication skills to fill and supplement its full-time public affairs capability.

I completed my training at HMAS *Creswell* then reported for my first major task: to support Albany's Anzac centenary commemorations. The event honoured the dozens of ships carrying Anzac troops that had left Albany in southern Western

Australia bound for the battlefields of World War I. An estimated 15,000 people lined the streets of Albany for a troop march, followed by a commemorative service at the Anzac Peace Park, where Prime Minister Tony Abbott paid tribute to WWI troops.

My role was to work with the Imagery Specialists and craft stories relating to the various events leading up to and during the centenary commemorations. It was during those activities that I witnessed first-hand the tremendous work ethic of the Imagery Specialists and their colleagues in the Defence Digital Media Unit, who worked around the clock to share the Australian Defence Force's activities with the Australian people.

Wherever you find the Royal Australian Navy on operations, you will also find Imagery Specialists capturing vivid imagery to tell the story. They are charged with photographing the actions of Navy

on operations and exercises and completing training around the globe. It is their knowledge and understanding of what it takes to be in the service that makes them the best-placed to showcase its inner workings.

As I got to know the grey shutterbugs, I realised that not everyone can just pick up a camera and deliver the product that they do. The opportunity to record military action takes special skills and specific training. Navy Imagery Specialists' job is to tell our story and use creativity to educate and inform the public about Australia's Navy.



# Terms and Abbreviations

Term	Meaning
1 JPAU	The 1st Joint Public Affairs Unit (1JPAU) provides the ADF with a tri-service, deployable tactical Public Affairs capability.
5-Inch Friday	The shore bombardment of the Al Faw Peninsula by several warships of the Royal Navy/Royal Australian Navy at the start of the Iraq War was dubbed '5-Inch Friday' – HMAS Anzac fired a salvo from its five-inch armament.
5RAR	The 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment is a regular motorised infantry battalion of the Australian Army.
5th Aviation Regiment	The 5th Aviation Regiment is an Australian Army aviation unit operating helicopters.
61 Mechanised Battalion	61 Mechanised Battalion Group was a unit of the South African Infantry Corps; although it was classed as mechanised infantry, it was a combined arms force consisting of infantry, armour and artillery.

Term	Meaning
AAW	Anti-Air Warfare
AC	Companion of the Order of Australia
ADF	Australian Defence Force
Admiral	A four-star rank naval officer
AM	Member of the Order of Australia
AO	Officer of the Order of Australia
AO	Auxiliary - Oiler (Tanker)
AOE	Auxiliary - Oiler and Explosives
ASLAV	The Australian Light Armoured Vehicle is an eight-wheeled amphibious armoured reconnaissance vehicle used by the Australian Army.
ASM	Anti-Ship Missile
ASMD	Anti-Ship Missile Defence

Term	Meaning
ASW	Anti-Submarine Warfare
ASWO	Anti-Submarine Warfare Officer
CBE	Commander of the British Empire
CDF	Chief of the Defence Force
CIWS	Close-In Weapon System
CN	Chief of Navy (RAN)
CNSAC	Chief of Navy Advisory Committee (previously Chief of Naval Staff Advisory Committee), the successor to the Naval Board
Command	Commanding Officer
COSC	Chiefs of Staff Committee (became Chiefs of Service Committee)
County Class	County Class of destroyers (RN), also known as Hampshire Class
CPO	Chief Petty Officer
CSC	Conspicuous Service Cross
CTF	Commander Task Force
CTG	Commander Task Group
CTU	Commander Task Unit
DD	Destroyer
DDG	Guided Missile Destroyer
DSC	Distinguished Service Cross (British and Commonwealth)

Term	Meaning
ESSM	Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile
Exercise SWEEPSLAG	Integrated conventional warfare training at Lohatla Army Battle School
Executive Officer	Seaman Officer Second in Command and Head of the Seaman Department in a warship
FAA	Fleet Air Arm
FF	Frigate
FFG	Guided Missile Frigate
Fleet Commander	Commander Australian Fleet
GOA	Government of Australia
Gunnery Officer	Seaman Officer with responsibilities for Gunnery and associated sub-department of the Seaman Department
HMAS <i>Creswell</i>	The Royal Australian Naval College commonly known as Creswell is the naval academy of the Royal Australian Navy
IS	Imagery Specialist
INTERFET	International Force East Timor
LCDR	Lieutenant Commander
LCH	Landing Craft Heavy
Leander Class	Frigate of the Royal Navy
LEUT	Lieutenant (Navy)

Term	Meaning
LPA	Landing Platform Amphibious
LSH	Landing Ship – Heavy
LST	Landing Ship Tank
OIC	Officer in charge
Operation MANITOU	Operation MANITOU's goal is to support international efforts to promote maritime security, stability and prosperity in the Middle East region (MER)
OPSEC	Operations security
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
Ratel IFV	The Ratel is a South African infantry fighting vehicle
RADM	Rear Admiral (2 Star)
RANC	Royal Australian Naval College
RAS	Replenishment at Sea
Rear Admiral	A two-star rank naval officer
REOC	Reserve Entry Officers' Course
RIMPAC	Rim of the Pacific (International Naval exercise)
RN	Royal Navy
RNZN	Royal New Zealand Navy
RPG	Rocket-propelled grenade – a shoulder-fired anti-tank weapon system that fires rockets equipped with an explosive warhead, carried by an individual soldier.
SADF	South African Defence Force

Term	Meaning
Sapper	A soldier responsible for tasks such as building and repairing roads and bridges, laying and clearing mines, etc.
Sea King	Medium-lift helicopter
South African Border War	Also known as the Namibian War of Independence, and sometimes denoted in South Africa as the Angolan Bush War, was a largely asymmetric conflict that occurred in Namibia (then South West Africa), Zambia, and Angola from 26 August 1966 to 21 March 1990.
South-West Africa People's Organisation	The South-West Africa People's Organisation, officially known as SWAPO Party of Namibia, is a political party and former independence movement in Namibia.
SPC-A	Sea Power Centre – Australia
Triton Storm 2	Royal Australian Navy ships and submarines and Royal New Zealand Navy ships, with over 1300 sailors and officers in all, participated in a comprehensive maritime training exercise called Exercise TRITON STORM 2 off the coast of Western Australia.
USN	United States Navy
Vice Admiral	A three-star rank naval officer
WEEO	Weapons Electrical Engineering Officer ('The WEEO') – the Head of the Weapons Electrical Department of a warship. Also a qualification.
XO	Executive Officer (second in command)





**NAVY**



