



Department Of Defence Use Only

## Training for Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Relief operations

As military budgets were trimmed within the last decade, planners have been using Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations to justify the procurement of military equipment from transport planes to landing ships. The planners claimed that these combat support equipment could easily be utilised for HADR operations even for those far away from the home base. In the current fiscally challenging environment, politicians have also used the same argument to justify the funding of the armed forces struggling to find new roles.

In recent times, military forces have been called upon to perform a multitude of operations, from preserving peace and sovereignty to fighting in a full conflict war. These operations are expected to be performed by an organised military with sound planning, reliable efficiency, and watertight effectiveness. The current operating environment (COE) also calls upon the armed forces to perform operations between both ends of the spectrum such as Peace Enforcement,

Counter Insurgency (COIN) and Counter Terrorism.

The military also has been increasingly tasked as the first "on-scene" responder during natural calamities, such as earthquakes and hurricanes. The reason for this is because a military force, especially one that is highly mobile and responsive, can provide the much needed first level HADR, especially if it involves massive destruction to infrastructure and lines of communications.

Yet, there is a lack of emphasis in HADR operations at all levels of military because the armed forces have traditionally viewed it as "someone else's job" and that its responsibility resides solely in winning a war and not winning the peace.

Given its mobility in an austere environment, and its ability to respond swiftly, the military should consider HADR as one of its core competencies and expand its capabilities for such operations. By honing this skill set, it will ensure that operations which are diffi-

cult to plan, execute, and train for, can be conducted with ease, expertise and proficiency.

HADR operations are fundamentally similar with all other military operations: They are all complex evolutions involving many dynamics, and often with unforeseeable ramifications. However, two characteristics inherent to a natural calamity have a significant impact on the success of a well-executed HADR operation. In a full conflict campaign, one can expect a period of unrest, political instability and peace negotiations prior to the declaration of war. Natural disasters, however, can occur without warning. The Boxing Day Tsunami in 2004 happened in an instant and took many by surprise. It claimed over 180,000 lives from 11 countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, India, and Sri Lanka.

As speed is the "key" to saving lives and reducing suffering in the early stages during a natural disaster, military leaders often have to plan and coordinate relief operations within a very short time frame. From activation to execu-



*Continuous training and exercises will ensure smooth operation during disaster relief operation*

tion, time is at a premium in the planning domain.

Adding to that, the lack of information due to the destruction of existing communications and infrastructure in a HADR situation also requires military leaders to make astute assumptions - a "skill" which can only be acquired from experience and training. In addition, the extent of devastation in which a natural disaster can inflict cannot be accurately predicted.

Such unpredictable characteristic of natural disasters compounds the already dysfunctional environment that military planners conducting HADR operations often face: the inability to quantify absolute and tangible end-state, until the damage has been ascertained, and all these being planned in a time compressed environment.

#### **Training for HADR Operations**

Military training has traditionally been geared towards a major theatre of war. As the current operating environment develops into an asymmetrical warfare scenario, it continues to place demand on military troops. This focus limits a combat unit the opportunity for training and resources to be honed in HADR operations between deployments.

Hence, modern military training is centred on fighting the current fight. As a consequence, units tasked with

HADR operations have to re-learn and re-invent the requirements of a successful HADR operation, even though previous units have the tried and tested formulas. At the operational and tactical level, the lack of training creates a few intrinsic problems:

- 1) Military medical personnel sent to a disaster area are more accustomed to treating healthy combat soldiers. These soldiers do not suffer from malaria or malnutrition - health is-

sues that are common in an under-developed third world country. In addition, military medical units and apparatus are designed to deal with combat casualties of fit, young soldiers and not infants or pregnant woman.

- 2) The lack of cultural awareness of other countries may also complicate the speedy provision of medical care to the host nation. For example, rendering medical assistance or examining a female patient by a male medical professional is forbidden in certain cultures.

The above highlights the need for methodical planning and organisation of a specifically trained HADR unit. Such difficulties cannot be overcome when a military unit performing HADR is tasked organised only when the need arises.

Adding to this, it must also be recognised that employing current military assets and equipment with the current knowledge for HADR operations may not be the most cost-effective and efficient manner. For example, using the reverse osmosis water purification unit (ROWPU) to produce potable water may cost more and is less effective than pouring chlorine at a water collection point. Such limitations cannot be resolved at the tactical level and have



*Soldiers are put to test in real-life demonstrations*

to be dealt with at a strategic and/or operational level force-building and procurement.

## Real HADR exercise

A three-day humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) scenario was a highlight of bilateral naval exercise, Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) Thailand 2013. Building on the previous year when HADR events were first incorporated into CARAT, the US Navy, Royal Thai Navy and Royal Thai Marine Corps and civilian agency participants focused on refining cooperation procedures, sharing medical best practices and integrating new technologies.

For CARAT 2013, the Royal Thai Navy led the HADR training scenarios, managing disaster response planning and requesting assistance from the US military forces and civilian agencies in response to a simulated earthquake and tsunami. The HADR scenario culminated with a combined US-Thai amphibious landing on Hat Yao beach, that brought construction engineers, civil affairs teams, explosive ordnance techni-

cians, diving and salvage experts, and medical professionals to clear debris, deliver supplies and respond to medical casualties, June 7.

"Thailand has experienced its share of natural disasters," said Rear Adm William McQuilkin, commander, Naval Forces Korea and CARAT Thailand 2013 executive agent. "The likelihood of future events makes the HADR scenario in CARAT highly relevant, and we are building on the capacity and the complexity of last year's exercise to enhance our ability to work together." The scenario incorporated planning sessions with Thai civilian agencies and medical first responders that would be involved in real world HADR events.

"From my experience with tsunamis, when one area is affected, people from many areas come to support," said Dr. Atchariya Panagma, director, Thai Bureau of Emergency Medical Systems Management. "For the volunteer, we have a lot; manpower, we have a lot. We already have a humanitarian assistance mind set, but something we need from you might be special equipment, which I'm not sure would be what because it

depends on the type of occasion."

From the combined Red Horse command centre, representatives from the Royal Thai Navy and Marines, the US Navy, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) coordinated the HADR efforts. "The only way for US naval forces to be involved in a HADR effort is if the host nation makes a formal request for assistance, or if we are already be in the area to save lives within the first 72 hours," said Lt Eric Rubado, Maritime Civil Affairs and Security Training Command (MCAST). "But unless lives were at risk, we can't just come in and help after that first 72 hours. Naval forces can then only provide unique capabilities, like heavy lift by large aircraft or civil engineering support by Seabees. The Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC) manages HADR support because it encompasses divers, explosive ordnance disposal units (EOD), Seabees and MCAST, all of which contributed to the exercise this year. In HADR scenarios, NECC assembles a response group with these capabilities and sends them to the affected site as an adaptive force package.



*The combat element is rarely missed out in HADR trainings.*

NSU - 0061

Dept. of Defence use only

Date 22 SEP 2008

# Operation Sumatra Assist – Joint Force Support Group Maritime Element

BY LCDR GREG CRASS

– 07 January to 26 March 2005

## BACKGROUND

Operation SUMATRA ASSIST was the code name for the ADF contribution to a whole of government operation to provide assistance to the Indian Ocean/South East Asian region in the aftermath of the earthquake/tsunami on 26 Dec 04. The earthquake/tsunami impacted on approximately 400km along the northwest coast of NORTHERN SUMATRA/ACEH as well as other nations around the Indian Ocean rim. The provincial capital of BANDA ACEH (BA) and the regional population centre of MEULABOH was severely damaged with massive loss of life and a levelling destruction of property and assets. Many of the smaller coastal villages were almost completely destroyed by the tsunami. The coastal road servicing the region was cut in several hundred places and in some areas, due to changes in geography, is now beyond the shoreline. Fatalities directly resulting from the earthquake/tsunami have been estimated in excess of 200,000.



DEVASTATION IN BANDA ACEH

In response to the massive loss of life and scale of devastation, government, non-government and military forces from many countries launched international disaster relief (DR) and humanitarian assistance (HA) efforts. The Government of Australia (GOAS) agreed to provide HA to Government of Indonesia (GOID) in Sumatra to help alleviate suffering and promote regional stability. This was achieved by assembling and deploying Force Elements (FE) to provide HA to the people of ID together with effective liaison to determine the most effective means of optimising the ADF contribution to the humanitarian effort and executing in coordination and cooperation with other Government and non-Government Agencies.

As part of the Australian assistance to the Government of Indonesia, the ADF immediately commenced OP SUMATRA ASSIST (the ADF component of the Whole of Government OP TSUNAMI ASSIST). On 27 Dec 04, Combined Joint Task Force 629 was established to provide transport of humanitarian aid, health and engineering support in Northern Sumatra. The Task Force comprised a Headquarters, Maritime, Engineer, Health Support, Air, Joint Force Support and Communications groups.

The Joint Logistics Force Group Maritime Element (JFSG ME) for OP SUMATRA ASSIST was deployed on 6 Jan 05 and redeployed back to Australia over a trickling period from 22 Feb 05 to 26 Mar 05.



## Summary of Operations – Joint Force Support Group 629

### Phases of the Operation

The operation was divided into four phases:

- Phase 1: Activation and Deployment;
- Phase 2: Establishment;
- Phase 3: Support / Sustainment; and
- Phase 4: Transition and Redeployment.

### Phase 1: Activation and Deployment

On order from MC JOC, KANIMBLA conducted pre sailing preparations 30/31 Dec 04. The LCMBs were already onboard, and the ship embarked two SK50 Seakings, MCD support, DGST equipment and RANTEWSS and PCRf elements. The ship sailed from Sydney for Darwin on 31 Dec 04 in order to embark the 1 CER Engineer Group (1 Bde) and equipment and remaining PCRf personnel.

A maritime logistic support team of five personnel was assigned to the Joint Force Support Group (JFSG) staff initially deploying to Butterworth (BW) on 07 Jan 05 and then allocated to the Force Support Elements (FSE) in BW, Banda Aceh (BA) and headquarters in Medan (MD) on 10 Jan 05.

Our small team consisted of:

LCDR Greg Crass, RAN	SO HMAS MANOORA
SBLT Amanda Kerr, RAN	HMAS WATERHEN
CPOSN Grant Leepere	JLU-W
POSN Sten (Barney) Karlsson	HMAS WATERHEN
LSSN Tim Parkes	HMAS COONAWARRA

As outlined above, the need for speed and effective assembly and deployment of a relief force was of essence to provide the people of Indonesia, primarily in the Aceh region with much needed humanitarian aid.

The call for our small group of navy supply personnel to support KANIMBLA came on 4 January with FHRM making the dreaded call to duty late afternoon. I was preparing my small but faithful 5m fishing boat for some overdue deep sea game fishing and had fueled and berley up and geared up to enjoy a few well earned days just relaxing and hopefully catching the odd scaly creature. Amanda Kerr was steeling herself for a few weeks of family get togethers, Grant Leepere was doing his normal "leper" activities of song, dance and partying, Barney Karlsson and Tim Parkes was home enjoying the luxuries of their devoted families.

The requirement was to report to MCJOC at 0900 Wednesday 5 January for a full briefing on the situation and pre-deployment preparations. A hint for all those wishing to be available for deployment at short notice - ensure you have your passport, next of kin details and all the normal deployment necessities in order at all times. This will save you a lot of heartache for deploying at short notice, even when at sea or ashore.

A mad rush followed to obtain visas from the Sydney Indonesian Consulate, battle the kitting up of army fatigues and field kit etc through Randwick and waiting for movement orders. The lucky ones in Sydney deployed on Friday 7 January by RAAF B707 via Darwin direct to RMAF Butterworth. CPOSN Leepere and LSSN Parkes followed on 12 January by a long and painful C130 from Darwin.

### JFSG Organisation

JFSG 629.5 was established to provide the full range of logistic and administrative support services, tailored and targeted logistic and administrative support to CJTF 629 Force Elements (and other agencies as directed).

The JFSG Maritime Element's (ME's) role was to provide forward logistics support to HMAS KANIMBLA and provide maritime logistic advice to JFSG and CJTF 629 force elements (FE).

HQ JFSG was co-located in Medan with HQ CJTF 629 with the following three nodes established within the AO:

- Force Support Element – Medan (CTG 629.5.1)  
OIC ME - LCDR Greg Crass, RAN (SO HMAS MANOORA),
- Force Support Element – Banda Aceh (FSE-BA) (CTG 629.5.2)  
RANLO-BA - SBLT Amanda Kerr, RAN (HMAS WATERHEN)  
POSN Sten Karlsson (HMAS WATERHEN),
- Force Support Element – BUTTERWORTH (FSE-BW) (CTG 629.5.3)  
CPOSN Grant Leepere (JLU-W)  
LSSN Tim Parkes (HMAS COONAWARRA)

All personnel rotated through each node on a \_ team per three week basis as the operation dictated with fatigue and stress a determining factor.

### Phase 2: Establishment

The RAN FSE Detachment was integrated into the Joint Force Support Group, which was responsible for the co-ordination and management of all equipment, stores and personnel movement in, out and within the Area of Operation (AO).

The supply chain in support of this operation was established as a "purple" organisation with combined Navy, Army and Air Force HQ elements developing very quickly into a very cohesive command team. This team proved to be cooperative and focused on the mission requirements whilst learning and adapting to each components processes.

### RMAF Butterworth

A close liaison was established by the FSE Butterworth team with the local RAAF Detachment 324 Combat Support Squadron (CSS) for the provision of basis logistic support routines for personnel transiting through Butterworth both ways either to Medan or Banda Aceh, or back to Australia.

324 CSS provided office space and hanger facilities to base the operation's rear activities from and personnel transient / permanent accommodation for approximately 180 personnel every night for the duration of the deployment. The accommodation was in the form of eight person cabins for permanent personnel and a 100 person accommodation barrack style block for transients. These personnel included FSE, Operational Cell, Movement Coordination, Cargo handlers, Aircraft handlers and Maintainers, Aircrew and Security personnel.

A full well balanced three square meals a day was provided by 324 CSS



OFFICE SPACE AND HANGER FACILITIES AT RMAF BUTTERWORTH

at the "Boaties" complex with a bus routine established to ferry personnel to and from the accommodation areas.

Acknowledgment must be given to the personnel at RMAF Butterworth. The operational rate of effort achieved for the operation could not have been as successful as it was without the dedication and professional abilities of all the personnel at RMAF Butterworth. The achievements of the operation below outlining the rates of effort for the provision of services to the land based forces and HMAS KANIMBLA could not have been achieved without the effort sustained by the personnel in the rear.

#### Banda Aceh

The living conditions and facilities in Banda Aceh were to say the least mediocre. For accommodation, all personnel were initially accommodated in 14ft x 14ft tents at the BA Airfield. On 13 Jan 05, FSE-BA personnel relocated to a building in the Banda Aceh Township known as SMK3. This building was in close proximity to other land based FE and was also utilised for the FSE-BA HQ.



APOD

**Rations.** Banda Aceh based personnel were provided with Combat Ration Packs for the duration of the deployment. Supplementary rations breaks in the form of fruit, bread, fruit cake and popper juices were provided on a 2.2.3 cycle. Additionally, a fresh ration break was provided to each person every three days in the form of a hot box meal prepared on HMAS KANIMBLA. 5925 hot box meals were provided by KANIMBLA. This was a mammoth effort considering the limited resources available and the huge resource drain on the Seaking and whole ships company to provide such a simple thing as a hot meal. The troops on the ground new that the last flight of the evening was the "tuck truck" flight. The huge value this added to the morale factor to the troops on the ground in Aceh was well worth the effort.

**Water.** Water in Banda Aceh was not potable and therefore personnel were restricted to consuming bottled water only. Water produced at the engineering water point was utilised for washing clothing and showering.

**Sanitation.** A camp shower located at SMK 3 was established and used for the duration of the deployment. No hot or running water was available at SMK 3. Porta Potties were provided for use in theatre, however due to chemical solution requirements and the size of the porta potties, use became problematic and the majority of personnel utilised the larger makeshift camp toilets located at the Anzac Field Hospital. A sewage system was not available at SMK 3.

**Laundry.** All BA based personnel were provided the opportunity to have 2 sets of DPCUs and limited personnel items (socks, t-shirts and undergarments) laundered on KANIMBLA every four days.

#### Phase 3: Support/Sustainment

The focus of JFSG ME was to establish routines to support the forces ashore with hot food, laundry, and the opportunity for personnel to rotate through KANIMBLA for temporary respite from the difficult living and working conditions ashore.

The prime focus of the RAN Log element was the support of HMAS KANIMBLA to ensure that all priority stores and personnel movements were controlled in a cohesive and cooperative manner. All provisions, fuel and canteen stores were managed by RANLO Singapore.

**FSE-BA Role.** The FSE-BA was initially established on 10 Jan 05 at the Air Point of Departure (APOD) in BA and then relocated on 13 Jan 05 to a building in the main township known as SMK3 which was in close proximity to other AS FE (Anzac Field Hospital and 1 CER). The FSE-BA operations room went live for 24 hours support on 16 Jan 05.

The role of the FSE-BA was defined as follows:

- Provide first line support to JFSG FE 629.5.2,
- Provide second line support to CJTF 629 FE located in BA,
- Provide local purchase capability,
- Receipt, store and manage all classes (less ammo) of supply, including establishment of a Transit Area, CVS Node and SDSS/UNIDS Node,
- Establish Refuelling Point Aircraft (RPA) with min holding 10,000lt AVTUR,
- Establish Kerbside Refuelling Point (KRP) with min holding 15,000lt dieso & 400lt ULP,
- Hold the following reserve stock for CJTF 629 FE located in BA:
  - Class 1: CRP3500 (7 DOS) and Bottled H2O 17500lt (7 DOS)
  - Class 3: Dieso 75000lt, AVTUR 32000lt and ULP 1025lt
- All other classes as directed
- Provide LPO service,
- Provide forward postal service,
- Provide forward financial service,
- Conduct weekly financial reconciliations,
- Establish local contracts/services for Fuel, Waste, Rubbish and Laundry,
- Coordinate brigading of logistic vehicles and equip from CJTF 629 FE located in BA, and
- Provide logistic assistance to other agencies (TNI/AUSAID/NGO) as directed.

To this end, the team provided a proactive involvement in the development and implementation of a number of moral based activities for the troops in Banda Aceh. This included the coordination of the provision of Hot Box meals by KANIMBLA, laundry services and a reconstitution program to provide the troops with the opportunity to receive a hot meal, shower, canteen facilities and relax with movies, internet and phone facilities in a



FSE-BA ACCOMMODATION



SBLT KERR AND CAPT SEAN DARBYSHIRE, OIC FSE BANADA ACEH

clean and safe environment. Details of the volume of personnel and cargo are detailed below. I must acknowledge SBLT Amanda Kerr, RAN who was instrumental in collating this data during her time in Banda Aceh.

**FSE-BA support to HMAS KANIMBLA.** The following logistic support and supply chain services were provided to HMAS KANIMBLA by FSE-BA upon arrival on station in BA 17 Jan 05:

**Stores Receipt and Despatch.** Priority one, two and three stores were received in country predominately by C130 sustainment flight from RMAF BUTTERWORTH. FSE-BA personnel receipted consignments and coordinated onward delivery to KANIMBLA either by SK50 from the APOD or LCM8 from the (Sea Point of Departure (SPOD)). A total 10397kg of consigned cargo were processed through the FSEs.

**Mail Receipt and Despatch.** Mail was regularly received in country by C130 sustainment flights from RMAF BUTTERWORTH. The deployed postal office within the FSE-BA coordinated interim receipt and storage and RANLO-BA coordinated onward delivery to KANIMBLA either by SK50 from the APOD or LCM8 from the SPOD. 68 mail serials containing 845kg of mail and packages were moved.

**Pay Advances.** The cash office within the FSE-BA visited KANIMBLA weekly to conduct cash recycling. The requirement to close the cash flow cycle became evident when personnel proceeding on respite were drawing AUD from the FSE-BA cash office for use in the ships canteen onboard KANIMBLA. To alleviate the requirement to continually have AUD delivered into BA and to provide KANIMBLA with a pseudo banking service, KANIMBLA SCAF cash was remitted to the FSE-BA and a

transaction completed in ROMAN to pay same amount to KANIMBLA SCAF bank account.

**Garbage Removal.** FSE-BA coordinated the removal of non-ditchable garbage (plastics) from KANIMBLA. This was achieved by transporting a truck to KANIMBLA via LCM8 in the evening and then the truck return the following morning via LCM8 with the garbage.

**Support to Land Based FE.** In addition to traditional logistics services provided as detailed above, KANIMBLA provided several support services to Land Based FE in Banda Aceh. JFSG ME with RANLO-BA as point of contact acted as the land based coordinator for these services as follows:

**Laundry.** All land based personnel were provided the opportunity to launder two sets of DPCU and limited personal items (socks, t-shirts and under garments) on a four daily cycle. RANLO-BA coordinated laundry cycles, collection of laundry, transport to KANIMBLA and subsequent delivery of clean laundry to FE.

**Reconstitution.** All land based personnel were provided the opportunity to join KANIMBLA for a 36 hour period once every 14 days for rest and respite. FSE-BA coordinated cycles, manifests, and transportation of personnel to and from KANIMBLA.

**Fresh Rations Supplementation.** All land based personnel were provided with a fresh ration break every three days in the form of a hot meal prepared onboard KANIMBLA. JFSG determined the rate of effort required to be maintained in conjunction with the CJCTF629 J1/J4 and HMAS KANIMBLA. RANLO-BA coordinated cycles, receipt of approximately 5500 hot meals from KANIMBLA and delivery to respective FE.

To help celebrate Australia Day on 26 Jan 05, a decision was made to import 1400 Aussie Meat Pies, Violet Crumble Bars and Lamingtons to share with the local identities and fellow foreign military personnel. HMAS COONAWARRA provided valuable support in ensuring these small comforts from home were freighted to RMAF Butterworth in the required refrigerated pallets and then onforwarding to force elements in Medan and Banda Aceh. The simple creature comforts and the expression of gratitude of the troops was a rewarding result considering the logistical effort involved in importing these items and ensuring the security and safe delivery in the right place, at the right time.

Another two unusual requests from HMAS KANIMBLA were satisfied during this deployment. A Coke machine and a large order for cigarettes. The support provided by LCDR Phillips (RANLO DNDSC Moorebank) for all our UND A & B demands, and CPOSTD Manson (AUSFLTCSG) for the cigarette demand are commendable. Without their support and continued understanding of the conditions and urgency of most priority demands, the supportability capacity of the JFSG ME would not have so successful. Although the efforts from all supporting agencies were of the highest order, a valuable lesson was learnt. Never attempt to consign a Coke machine via military means as a "special fridge" and wrap it in thick black plastic and cardboard cartons. A brilliant idea from LCDR Phillips, and one that worked a treat. But never underestimate the curiosity of the RAAF and Army terminal cargo handlers. The term "special fridge" got the better of them and they could not resist opening the consignment and finding out what a "special fridge" was. The Army and RAAF do not have an appreciation of the value of a simple coke machine to a cooped up group of ships company in KANIMBLA's situation.

#### Phase 4: Transition and Redeployment

By early February, the immediate disaster relief and humanitarian assistance tasks had been met or were being assumed by the UN and NGOs. Planning for rotation/RTA of CJTF 629 forces was progressing, based on a deployment of up to 90 days.



SEA POINT OF DEPARTURE

Additionally, GOID had indicated that all foreign forces would be expected to be out of the country by around 26 Mar 05, but that they should plan to depart sooner if their job was done.

Reconnaissance of potential extraction sites was conducted by members of the JFSG and MCC personnel, including the existing BLS and other possible sites in Banda Aceh, Sabang, Malahayati Port and Belawan Port. These assessments indicated the only feasible option for extracting ADF heavy equipment from the BA area was through Malahayati Port. The most likely course of action for extraction of equipment seemed to be by commercial ferry and LCM8 from Malahayati to Sabang, where the equipment would be cleaned to AQIS standards prior to loading in both KANIMBLA and commercial assets for return to Australia.

To meet the desired Force Extraction Plan, a number of manning requirements were considered that would meet all scenarios of the extraction plan. The overall concept was to reduce the footprint whilst maintaining adequate support to force elements, in navy's case HMAS KANIMBLA.

With the restrictions on manning increase to the AO a prime concern, LEUT D. Perry, RAN was identified by MCJOC and deployed into the AO on 18 Feb 05 and assumed the role of Maritime Element Liaison Officer within the Force Extraction Team (FET) Operations Centre. LEUT Perry was tasked with managing the maritime effort in extraction of equipment from Sebang.

The focus changed from sustainment and support to FET, but with KANIMBLA remaining off Banda Aceh until the end of March, JFSG still had a requirement to maintain support to the remaining FEs including KANIMBLA. Accordingly, the FET was tasked to provide support services to FEs that remained in BA, including KANIMBLA. To maintain the throughput of supply chain to KANIMBLA, CPOSN Leepere and LSSN Parkes remained in BA and POSN Karlsson in BW until 18 Mar 05.

**Redeployment.** The JFSG ME detachment commenced redeployed to Australia from Banda Aceh via RMAF BUTTERWORTH on 22 Feb 05 with SBLT Kerr returning after some 48 days continuous service at Banda Aceh. LCDR Crass returned to Australia on 3 Mar 05 once the FET was established and the focus of the operation was transferred from sustainment to extraction. The remaining three personnel, CPOSN Leepere, POSN Karlsson, LSSN Parkes remained in Banda Aceh, Sabang and Butterworth as part of the FET to ensure that KANIMBLA's requirements were sustained and provide any additional maritime support required by JFSG.

One of the highlights during this phase for a member of the JFSG ME was for SBLT Kerr to be promoted in the field to the rank of Lieutenant, RAN by LTGEN P. Leahy, Chief of Army. This promotion ceremony was a great morale booster for all the FSE personnel at Banda Aceh and Butterworth, which promoted the sense of fostering the tri-service nature of the operation and generated an great deal of good will and appreciation of each services effort towards the operation.

## Conclusion

I first saw conditions on the ground in Banda Aceh and down the west coast of Sumatra by air on 15 Jan 05, and I saw them again during Feb 05, just before departing the Area of Operations. While the total devastation of some areas was still obvious, the most striking difference over the month was that huge areas that had been badly damaged and almost completely devoid of people were now busy. Formerly deserted roads now have constant traffic, and people were working in large numbers to get badly damaged homes and businesses going again, and to clear away debris.

The areas where ADF efforts have been concentrated, major changes have been noticeably improved. The hospital is now operational and was rapidly approaching the point where it could transition back to Indonesian staff; whereas almost no Indonesians were in evidence a month ago, there was many of them working to clean up the remaining mud and debris. The 1CER engineers had cleared and reclaimed significant areas, as well as producing much of the clean water that was so essential in preventing the spread of disease. The use of ADF helicopters to transport HA stores was dramatically reduced; the requirement was reduced and there are now other means of transport, by road, sea and civil helicopters to perform the remaining task.

The ADF force elements involved have performed exceptionally well, and the levels of joint cooperation and support was one of the most pleasing success stories. All have been effectively integrated into the joint effort to achieve the mission. With respect to the Maritime FSE Detachment, the initial deployment, sustainment of effort and satisfaction rate at Banda Aceh was a major success, achieved in the face of considerable challenges caused by the devastation of the coastline at Banda Aceh. It is considered KANIMBLA and embarked elements have done an excellent job of supporting the ADF elements ashore, and have also made a considerable direct contribution to the HADR effort through the provision of work and PCRf parties ashore, and the delivery of HA stores by SK 50.

Within this successful joint operation, the differences in the ways the force elements from different services operate have also been highlighted. Units have different operating cycles and routines, which impact on the people that serve in them in different ways. This is reflected in different doctrine, and flows through into different approaches to the management and administration of units and personnel. Personnel had a very good understanding of broad principles of joint operations, but to some extent constrained within limits determined by the various branches of forces assigned to the operation.

The key issues now are the transition of the initial TNI and foreign military HADR effort to the Indonesian civil forces and the TNI effort that will be required to complete reconstruction in Banda Aceh. It will be important to ensure that this transition occurs in a way that reinforces the good relationships between Indonesia and Australia that the operation has fostered to date.

The professional development gained from this deployment in support of OP SUMATRA ASSIST was extremely challenging and extremely rewarding. The personnel assigned to the JFSG ME performed in the utmost professional and dedicated manner throughout the operation. The rate of effort, willingness to accept multiple methods of conducting business from the numerous sub units and the willingness to "get the job done" no matter what the time or day was one of the most gratifying experiences that I have had the pleasure to experience to date.

**About the Author:** Joined the RAN on 13 Jan 1982 as a Writer, served HMAS ALBATROSS (twice) and HMAS BRISBANE. Commissioned in 1986, served HMAS MORETON, HMAS HARMAN (Manager Current Logistics Services (MCLS)), HMAS ALBATROSS (twice again), Directorate of Navy Logistic Services (Joint Movements), HMAS CANBERRA as DSO. I transferred to the reserves in 1995 and spent time once again at ALBATROSS. As a civilian I gained experience as Business Manager for a Retirement Village, Supply Manager for Illawarra Area Health Service and Supply Manager for the Allied Group Pty Ltd, focussing on the coal mining industry. I transferred back to the RAN in Nov 2001, posted to DNPR(E&L) as the Supply Category Sponsor/Development Officer, Supply Officer of HMAS WESTRALIA and HMAS MANGORA.

