

Nothin' like a good brew

Soldiers from 2FSB join with AAFCANS to run first bush café on Exercise Hamel

Cpl Sebastian Beurich

EVERYONE loves a good coffee when they are out in the field, whether it's first thing on a cold morning or to keep you going on a night shift, there's nothing better.

Usually soldiers resort to bringing coffee sachets with them to get their favourite flavoured brew in the field, but what if barista made coffee was right around the corner?

Soldiers working at Cultana got to experience freshly ground coffee, made by personnel from 17 CSS Bde's 2FSB for the first time during Exercise Hamel this year.

'Kevin the Café', as the container is known, is an Army-owned, completely deployable and self-contained AAFCANS café, jointly designed by 17 CSS Bde and AAFCANS.

Café manager WO1 Ken Weir said the concept had been in the wings for the past five years.

"Two months ago we trialed the container at the Australian Army Skill at Arms Meeting – after a few changes, Exercise Hamel was our big reveal," WO1 Weir said.

"Soldiers get qualified as baristas and in the AAFCANS food-handling procedures and point-of-sale terminal.

"2FSB Amenities Pl ran the day-to-day operations of the café and AAFCANS was responsible for management oversight.

"Soldiers could grab a coffee, hot food and sit down and have a chat.



'Kevin the Café' was a popular morale boost for troops on Exercise Hamel this year. Photos by Cpl Nunu Campos

All of sudden, morale was up and they were ready to go and fight the next battle."

The entire café is housed in one shipping container, with an integral water tank mounted on top and separate containerised fridges for storing goods. A companion generator supplies power to the whole set up.

"The container can be used in the field, such as it was on Hamel, or it can be landed overseas during a humanitarian aid mission or similar," WO1 Weir said.

"AAFACANS will still control the lines of supply if we are deployed overseas, but our products can be transported via Defence's normal sup-

ply lines for foodstuffs."

Reservist Pte Fiona Johnson, of 2FSB, said it was nice to get away from normal life and do something different.

"This job is awesome – all of our customers go away happy," she said.

Spr Jack Salmon, of 1 Int Bn and a customer at the café, agreed.

"It's great to chill out, have a brew and get away from work for a while," Spr Salmon said.

Commander 17 CSS Bde Brig Paul Nothard said the trial of the new amenities container was a great success.

"Our partnership with AAFACANS couldn't be stronger," he said.

"They bent over backwards to ensure we provided a quality product to soldiers on Hamel, but equally they stand ready to support the ADF in a deployed environment as well."

Managing director of AAFACANS Stewart McGrow echoed the success of the trial.

"The collaboration with the team at 17 CSS Bde to get this project off the ground has been a rewarding experience for me personally and my team," he said.

The container grossed more than \$225,000 in sales, with profits being disbursed in accordance with the priorities set by the AAFACANS board of directors.

The "tip jar" also collected \$286.15 which will be donated to Hobart Legacy later this month.

OUR ONLY MISSION IS TO LOOK AFTER YOU.



When you join Defence Health, it's our job to take care of you like part of the family. And we love our job. We understand the lifestyle of serving members, which is why we offer tailored health cover with higher benefits exclusively for ADF and Reservist families. Our ADF Total Package includes higher benefits on dental, speech therapy, physiotherapy, psychology, antenatal and postnatal services and more.

Join the family. Call 1800 335 425 or visit defencehealth.com.au

