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Australian Tactical Loads and their Operational Impacts

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Science and Technology

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<https://bond.edu.au/tru>

HISTORICAL CONTEXT – MILITARY

Background

- From the early Assyrian spearman of antiquity (circa 800 B.C.), soldiers have been required to carry external loads consisting of weaponry, equipment and food

(Orr, 2010; Knapick et al., 2012:2004)

- Downstream effects of these loads have been shown to impact on the tactics of warfare, cause injury and reduce fighting force size

(Lee, 2007; Breen, 2002; Lothian, 1921)

HISTORICAL CONTEXT – MILITARY

Viet = Vietnam; Falk = Falklands; Gren = Grenada; IQ = Iraq; Som = Somalia; E Tim = East Timor; IQ/AF = Iraq/Afghanistan

(Orr, 2010; Orr et al., 2015)

CURRENT CONTEXT – AUSTRALIAN ARMY

On Operations (2001-2010)

- PO loads
 - $M=28.4 \pm 10.0$ kg
 - heaviest mean load in 2008 ($M=36.9 \pm 10.8$ kg)
- MO loads
 - $M=56.7 \pm 15.3$ kg
 - heaviest mean load in 2009 ($M=65.1 \pm 16.3$ kg)
- OVERALL loads
 - 47.7 ± 21.0 kg, (mean range over 10 years = 40.7 kg to 50.9 kg),

(Orr et al., 2015)

CURRENT CONTEXT – AUSTRALIAN ARMY

- Approximate relative load carried by Roman Legionnaires = 56%
- Australian Soldiers in East Timor = 56%
- *US Soldiers in Afghanistan = 57%*

1 Joint Public Affairs Unit - Achieves

ABSOLUTE VS RELATIVE LOADS

- Currently female soldiers carry lighter absolute loads than male soldiers but only slightly heavier relative loads

Orr et al (2015).

ABSOLUTE LOADS*

FEMALE: $M = 26.4$ kg

MALE: $M = 39.0$ kg

$p = .045$

RELATIVE LOADS

FEMALE: $M = 43\%$

MALE: $M = 47\%$

$p = .55$

ABSOLUTE VS RELATIVE LOADS

- Currently lighter soldiers carry the same absolute loads as heavier soldiers but heavier relative loads

Orr et al (2015).

ABSOLUTE LOADS

Light 20%: $M = 34.7$ kg

Heavy 20%: $M = 35.7$ kg

$p = .902$

RELATIVE LOADS

Light 20%: $M = 49\%$

Heavy 20%: $M = 36\%$

$p = .0509$

HISTORICAL CONTEXT – LEO

[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-xHtSiLRFIMQ/UfewLRnEgAI/AAAAAAAAAPc/54yapn_ibtE/s1600/Curious+Black+&+White+Photographs+of+The+Police+Officers+from+1890-1930+\(28\).jpg](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-xHtSiLRFIMQ/UfewLRnEgAI/AAAAAAAAAPc/54yapn_ibtE/s1600/Curious+Black+&+White+Photographs+of+The+Police+Officers+from+1890-1930+(28).jpg)

[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-HO26ffMhgS4/UihKehycroI/AAAAAAMR4/qGsg2ryfWKA/s640/Pictures+of+Life+of+the+New+York+Police+Department+in+the+1970's+\(7\).jpg](http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-HO26ffMhgS4/UihKehycroI/AAAAAAMR4/qGsg2ryfWKA/s640/Pictures+of+Life+of+the+New+York+Police+Department+in+the+1970's+(7).jpg)

<http://images.smh.com.au/2012/12/04/3861588/art-police-uniforms-620x349.jpg>

<http://images.smh.com.au/2009/03/09/410908/policebelt.jpg>

http://www.gunblast.com/images/WBell_PoliceHolsterHist/Police-Holster-History-012.jpg

HISTORICAL CONTEXT – LEO

- Police are becoming Christmas trees

http://img.dailymail.co.uk/i/pix/2008/04_03/TabGunGirlLEWIS_468x715.jpg

HISTORICAL CONTEXT - LEO

- Increasing levels of threat

Photograph taken by author

HISTORICAL CONTEXT – AUSTRALIAN LEO

ILAV type (A-C) & Normal station wear (N)	ILAV Weight (kg)	Duty load Complete (kg)	Total load including officer weight (kg)
A	4.12 ± 0.65*	11.53 ± 0.77‡	88.03 ± 20.49
B	3.54 ± 0.70*	11.01 ± 1.01‡	87.51 ± 20.60
C	3.24 ± 0.48*	10.77 ± 1.16‡	87.27 ± 20.66
N	NA	8.69 ± 0.68	85.19 ± 20.24

* Significantly different (p<0.05) between vests:

‡ Significantly different (p<0.001) from normal station wear

(Orr et al., 2016)

CURRENT CONTEXT – AUSTRALIAN LEO

	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE
ILAV type	ILAV + Duty Loads (kg)	ILAV + Duty Loads (kg)	%BW	%BW
A	11.14	11.85	16.90	14.90
B	10.80	11.18	16.43	13.91
C	10.24	11.22	15.60	13.95
N	8.68	8.70	13.20	10.92
	*p=0.225		*p=0.009	

(Orr et al., 2016)

ABSOLUTE VS RELATIVE LOADS

- The LEO study found female officers carried the same absolute loads compared to the male officers
- However when expressed as a percentage of their body weight female officers carried significantly more relative load than male officers

(Orr et al., 2016)

CURRENT CONTEXT – AUSTRALIAN LEO (TOU)

	Mean $\pm$ SD	Range
Absolute load carried (kg)	22.8 $\pm$ 1.8	20.6-25.6
Relative load carried (%BW)	25.9 $\pm$ 4.0	21.2-28.8

(Carbone et al., 2014; Carlton et al., 2014)

SEX DIFFERENCES IN LC INJURIES

Orr et al (2016).

- Mean ARA population over 2 years = 24,876 personnel
 - Female n= 2441 (10%): Male n= 22435 (90%)
- 401 reported injuries associated with load carriage
 - Female n=40 (10%): male n= 361 (90%)
 - RR = 1.02 (95% CI 0.74 to 1.41)
- SPI
 - Female n=6 (15%): male n= 23 (6%)
 - RR of SPI = 2.40 (95% CI 0.98 to 5.88)

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IMPACTS ON PERFORMANCE - MARKSMANSHIP

- Decrements in performance:
 - ↓ Marksmanship (Knapik et al., 1990:1991:1997: Rice et al., 1999).

IMPACTS ON PERFORMANCE - MARKSMANSHIP

- **Reduced performance**
 - Survey of 218 soldiers on operations

(Orr et al., 2013)

IMPACTS ON PERFORMANCE - MARKSMANSHIP

- Distance to centre of target
 - DCOT
- Horizontal shot spread
 - X-Dispersion
- Vertical shot spread
 - Y-Dispersion

Carbone et al., 2014

IMPACTS ON PERFORMANCE - MARKSMANSHIP

- Mobility Task

Carbone et al., 2014

IMPACTS ON PERFORMANCE - MARKSMANSHIP

- Marksmanship

Carbone et al., 2014

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25

IMPACTS ON PERFORMANCE - MARKSMANSHIP

- No significant difference when TL

Table 1. Primary weapon marksmanship results from all four conditions

Task & Loading Condition	DCOT (mm)	X-Dispersion (mm)	Y-Dispersion (mm)
Short Forward Movement			
Fatigues Only	75.93 ± 17.97	112.50 ± 31.35	143.58 ± 44.88
Tactically Loaded	70.48 ± 19.57	76.42 ± 46.99	168.42 ± 50.39
Mobility Task			
Fatigues Only	74.83 ± 36.95	116.67 ± 70.05	173.25 ± 139.65
Tactically Loaded	100.10 ± 20.14	112.50 ± 51.59	213.67 ± 70.99

Data are mean ± standard deviation

Table 2. Secondary weapon marksmanship results from all four conditions

Task & Loading Condition	DCOT (mm)	X-Dispersion (mm)	Y-Dispersion (mm)
Short Forward Movement			
Fatigues Only	107.35 ± 37.68	178.33 ± 81.62	206.33 ± 85.87
Tactically Loaded	112.60 ± 44.37	128.83 ± 59.55	188.25 ± 60.23
Mobility Task			
Fatigues Only	128.23 ± 33.20	157.00 ± 70.43	274.08 ± 176.61
Tactically Loaded	108.70 ± 52.48	176.25 ± 70.13	212.08 ± 131.60

Orr et al., Unpublished

IMPACTS ON PERFORMANCE - MARKSMANSHIP

Subject Number *ST*

- Visual Analogue Scale (VAS)

How do you think tactical load impacts on your marksmanship with the pistol when compared to carrying no load:

How do you think tactical load impacts on your marksmanship with the rifle when compared to carrying no load:

Orr et al., Unpublished

IMPACTS ON PERFORMANCE - MARKSMANSHIP

- Perceived significant improvement in marksmanship when TL
 - Primary – VAS $+3.00 \pm 2.53$ ($p = 0.016$)
 - Secondary – VAS $+2.83 \pm 2.93$, ($p = 0.039$)
- Correlations between perceptions of load carriage impacts on performance and actual marksmanship scores
 - Primary: Short move: $r = -0.347$, ($p = 0.500$) and mobility task: $r = -0.401$ ($p = 0.431$)
 - Secondary: Short move: $r = -0.631$ ($p = 0.179$) and mobility task: $r = -0.306$, ($p = 0.555$)

Orr et al., Unpublished

IMPACTS ON PERFORMANCE - MARKSMANSHIP

- GD police (n=11)
 - Average marksmanship scores (p=.118)
 - ILAV B – smallest SD,
 - ILAV A: a negative impact, -2.1 (95% CI -5.5 to +1.3)
 - ILAV B: a positive impact, +2.7 (95% CI +0.4 to +5.0)
 - ILAV C: a negative impact, -1.7 (95% CI -4.4 to +0.9)
 - Normal station wear: a positive impact, +1.4 (95% CI -2.2 to +5.0)

Schram et al., unpublished

IMPACTS ON PERFORMANCE - MOBILITY

- Decrements in performance:
 - ↓ **Mobility**
 - Impeded mission success (Breen 2000)

IMPACTS ON PERFORMANCE - MOBILITY

- Victim Drag (10m)
- Police Vehicle Exit and Sprint

Schram et al., unpublished

	Victim Drag	Vehicle Exit
Condition	Time (s)	Time (s)
ILAV A	5.74±0.28	3.49±0.94
ILAV B	5.47±0.23	3.41±0.87
ILAV C	5.50±0.38	3.40±1.06
N	5.56±0.43	3.41±0.85

IMPACTS ON PERFORMANCE - MOBILITY

	Unloaded	Loaded
10m sprint (sec)	2.40 ± 0.22	2.46 ± 0.15
10m dummy drag (sec)	6.89 ± 0.44	7.79 ± 0.75*
Total time (sec)	9.29 ± 0.53	10.25 ± 0.77*

* Indicates statically significant differences between unloaded and loaded, $p < 0.01$.

Carlton et al., 2014

ENCAPSULATION

- Loads for both LEO and Army are increasing
- Female soldiers carry lighter absolute but similar relative loads
- Female LEO carry similar absolute but heavier relative loads
- There are differences in injuries sustained based on sex
- There are different impacts of load on marksmanship (primary / secondary weapon)
- Soldiers think load reduces marksmanship, LEO varies but appear accurate
- Load impacts on mobility – but the load may need to reach a threshold

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References avail on request from
tru@bond.edu.au

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A photograph of a soldier in full tactical gear, including a helmet with a night vision device and a rifle, set against a green background.

<https://bond.edu.au/tru>