

Marking a centenary of service

The Army and Air Force Canteen Service celebrates providing 100 years of support to the ADF, **SGT Dave Morley and Donna Browne** report.

THE Army and Air Force Canteen Service (AAFCONS) celebrates a centenary of serving the ADF this month and will be providing 50,000 opportunities to help recognise this milestone, according to managing director Stewart McGrow.

He said a special in-store scratch-it promotion had been in place since late September to mark the occasion.

"Customers have the chance to take part in an 'instant win' free products prize pool to the value of \$38,000, and the chance to win the major prize draw of a \$5000 travel voucher," he said.

"It will be an exciting moment for the lucky customer who will win the \$5000 travel prize, which also comes with free travel insurance."

Mr McGrow said 100 years was a huge achievement for the organisation.

"AAFCONS is all about its customers, so it's a pleasure being able to put the focus of this celebration and milestone in their hands," he said.

"We have been overwhelmed with support from our wonderful promotional partners and are grateful for their assistance in making this happen."

While the organisation's operational name has changed over the past 100 years, its purpose has remained as strong and relevant since its inception, according to Mr McGrow.

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— Stewart McGrow
AAFCONS Managing Director

"The organisation has operated in a support role to Defence, providing much-needed amenities and convenience products and services for our troops, both domestically and overseas, and exists solely to help enrich the lifestyle and contribute to the welfare and wellbeing of our ADF personnel," he said.

To score a free scratch-it card, visit one of AAFCONS canteen outlets or mobile food vans and spend \$10 or more on food and beverage, scratch off the 100-year celebration panel to reveal either an instant prize or special unique code.

Enter this code via the online entry form on AAFCONS website for the chance to win a \$5000 travel voucher prize package sponsored by Defence Health.



Mobile canteen driver LAC H. B. Hoskins hands out refreshments to members of the RAAF during WWII. Photo: Australian War Memorial

100 YEARS AND COUNTING

AAFCONS was established in 1915 as the Australian Imperial Forces (AIF) Canteen Services.

Before then, the canteen service had always been a part of military life, but its structure and purpose changed in 1915.

The change was largely inspired by an Australian mother, Dame Alice Isabel Chisholm, who sailed to Egypt in mid-1915, concerned for the welfare of her son Bertram, who was serving as a light horseman in Gallipoli.

Bertram was wounded in action, but later returned to his regiment. Once in Egypt, Mrs Chisholm, and later Rania MacPhillamy, an Australian nurse she met in Cairo, set up and operated canteens to help Australian soldiers with basic amenities and a few home comforts.

Profits from their operations were used to fund more services and amenities for the men. The structure of the new AIF Canteen Services was formed based on their endeavours.

Over the years the canteen service has served alongside troops through

both world wars and on many overseas deployments including Korea, South Vietnam and Timor-Leste.

The service has provided and operated wet and dry canteens, mobile canteens, milk bars, snack bars, canteens on board troopships and in POW camps, service clubs and hostels.

It has provided ADF members with a destination to rest, recoup and meet with colleagues.

Premises often incorporated recreational equipment and facilities, reading rooms, letter writing rooms and even a full library in Melbourne in 1943.

AAFCONS now provides services to 33 Army bases, Air Forces bases and joint ADF facilities throughout Australia.

It has provided grocery and general stores, adventure wear and disposal stores, postal services, financial institutions, barbers, mechanical services, dry-cleaning, fuel stops, photographic services and news agencies.

For more AAFCONS history, visit www.aafcons.com.au/history

- 1915-1920 AIF Canteen
- 1920-1939 Army Garrison Institutes
- 1939-1943 Australian Defence Canteen Service
- 1943-1959 Australian Army Canteen Service
- 1959-1979 Australian Service Canteen Organisation
- 1979-1998 Army and Air Force Canteen Service
- 1998-2011 Frontline Defence Services
- 2012-current Army and Air Force Canteen Service



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