

Barry Petersen: Man of mystery.

The Sydney Morning Herald

[Arthur Barry Petersen](#) was an Australian army captain who led top secret CIA operations in the highlands during the Vietnam War until, like Marlon Brando's character Colonel Kurtz in the movie *Apocalypse Now*, he got too close to the natives and the CIA wanted him out, dead or alive.



Petersen was sent to Vietnam in 1963 as part of the elite Australian Army Training Team to train the South Vietnamese army in tackling guerrilla tactics used by Viet Cong insurgents. Like most of the AATT, Petersen had served in the Malayan Emergency, training Malays to counter guerrilla tactics of the communists. His easy rapport with the Malays was noticed and he was seconded to the CIA to set up and lead a militia of highland Montagnard natives to fight the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese army coming down the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Petersen got on well with the Montagnard, particularly the Rade tribe who lived around the highland city of Ban Me Thuot. He learnt their language, honoured their customs and traditions, including drinking the potent rice wine. He paid them well with CIA money and armed them with CIA-supplied guns. Even though he was operating alone in the mountains, Petersen was so successful that within a year he had more than 1000 Montagnard militia fighters using the same guerrilla tactics as the Viet Cong – ambush the enemy, hit hard and disappear into the jungle.

The communists learnt to go around Petersen's territory rather than take him on. They put a price on his head, but his militia kept a close guard on him.



He was extremely popular with his men. They declared the Australian officer a demi-god and showered him with honoured brass armbands denoting him a tribal chief. At his home he kept a pet sun bear and a baby leopard he'd been given by one of his men. Petersen's militia became known as the Tiger Men because of the striped jungle camouflage uniforms he'd obtained from the CIA warehouse. He had snarling tiger head badges made for their berets to make the various Montagnard tribes in his units feel united.

But after almost two years in the highlands with the Montagnard tribesmen, Petersen's relations with the CIA soured. Some CIA agents thought Petersen was becoming too successful and getting too close to the Montagnard.

The Montagnard had been suppressed and abused by the Vietnamese for hundreds of years, and South Vietnamese generals feared a well-armed and trained Montagnard militia could rise up against them.



In late 1964, the Montagnard did rebel against the South Vietnamese regime, taking over several military camps, executing Vietnamese troops, and demanded autonomy. Petersen confronted his angry Tiger Men and convinced them to stay out of the fighting. He was awarded the Military Cross for his action. The rebellion was quickly crushed by American forces.

But Petersen's sympathies for the Montagnard were treated with suspicion by the Americans, and downright hostility by South Vietnamese regional commanders. His CIA handler derisively called him 'Lawrence of the Highlands' as, like Lawrence of Arabia, he was seen as having gone native.

The crunch came when the CIA told Petersen to train his men as brutal and deadly assassins, to use the same Viet Cong tactics of terrorism to win the fight for the rural villages. It was called the



Phoenix Program, a controversial attempt to destroy the Viet Cong through torture, summary execution and terror. Petersen refused to have anything to do with it. Not because he was averse to killing or assassination, he felt the Montagnard might use the training to turn on the South Vietnamese army. He also felt it breached Australian military rules of engagement.

As Petersen said: "If I trained them to act like assassins they could turn on the South Vietnamese and use it on them. They hated all Vietnamese, be they from the north or south. They had to be a properly regimented militia or we could lose control of them."

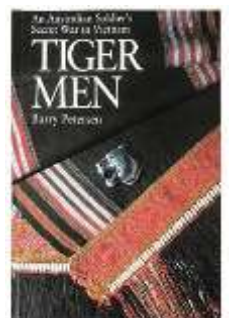
It was the final straw for the CIA. They wanted Petersen out of the highlands by whatever method necessary. When Petersen protested, asking why remove him when he was doing a good job, some in the CIA warned he could meet with an accident and leave in a body bag.

Petersen obeyed orders from the Australian commander and left the Montagnard with a heavy heart. They gave him a remarkable tribal farewell ceremony. He dressed in tribal clothing, wore dozens of brass armbands and reclined to accept gifts like a chief. It confirmed for many in the US and Australian military that the young captain had gone native.



Petersen remained ostracised by many of his military colleagues. He did a second tour to Vietnam as a major and was mentioned in dispatches for his bravery. But he was told he'd never rise far in the Army and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. He always felt most comfortable in Asia and settled in Bangkok where he established a firm that assisted foreign businesses to set up in Thailand.

In 1988 he published his autobiography Tiger Men. He used his skills behind the scenes to help Montagnards who fled Vietnam and remained an international man of mystery, with contacts deep inside the foggy world of spies and secret agents.





Former governor-general and one-time commander of the elite SAS unit, Major-General Michael Jeffery, said for a documentary: "Barry Petersen was one of the very best of the Australian military profession because he took on such a difficult and unique task."

Arthur Barry Petersen ("never call me Arthur"), born in Sarina, Queensland, died aged 84 in Bangkok on February 28 after a long battle with cancer he believes was caused by Agent Orange. Petersen never married but regarded the staff of his Bangkok firm as his family. He is survived by two sisters.

The Pale Blue Dot!

Voyager 1 had completed its primary mission and was leaving our Solar System when, at the request of [Carl Sagan](#), it was commanded by NASA to turn its camera around and take one last photo of Earth across a great expanse of space (6 billion kilometres).

The attached video's accompanying words spoken by Sagan and written almost 24 years ago, are still relevant today.

See [HERE](#).

When I ask for directions please don't use complicated words like "east".

Believe it or not!

37-year-old Megan Barnes catapulted to instant fame for an alleged multi-tasking mash-up that earned the bottle-blonde's mug shot a spot on hundreds of Web sites.

According to a startled Florida Highway Patrol trooper, Barnes was shaving her bikini area while driving south on the famed Overseas Highway when she crashed into the rear of an SUV.

In the police report, the trim job was apparently essential because the arresting officer, trooper Gary Dunick, said the Indiana native told him she was heading to Key West visit her boyfriend.



"She said she was meeting her boyfriend in Key West and wanted to be ready for the visit," Police said.



It gets weirder. In order to pay full attention to her sensitive regions, police say Barnes enlisted her ex-husband, Charles Judy, who was riding shotgun, to hold the wheel. Their tag-team driving went awry when an SUV driving in front of them slowed to turn. Barnes' 1995 Thunderbird smashed into it. Two of the SUV's passengers suffered minor injuries, police say. Barnes shouldn't have been driving that Thunderbird, since she had been convicted the previous day for driving under the influence and driving with a suspended license. According to the arrest report, it was the sixth time her license had been suspended.

After the accident, Barnes and ex-husband Judy drove off, police say. The Thunderbird limped a few hundred yards before the couple switched seats. "She jumps in the back seat and he moves over, it was like the old comedy bit, 'Who's on first?'"

But the attempt to claim that Judy, not Barnes, was driving was also doomed. Judy had visible burns on his chest he claimed came from the exploding airbag, but only the passenger side airbag deployed, according to the police report. So Police charged Barnes with driving with a revoked license, reckless driving, leaving the scene of an accident with injuries and driving with no insurance. Judy was not charged.

According to the arrest affidavit, the trooper asked her afterward why she didn't hit the brakes when she saw the SUV. She answered bluntly, "I told you, I was shaving." "If I wasn't there, I wouldn't have believed it," the policeman said.

I don't remember much from last night
but the fact that I needed sunglasses to open the fridge this morning tells me it was awesome.

How to Fix Squeaky Brakes.

Squeaky brakes are a common automotive nuisance, but fortunately it's a fairly easy and affordable fix.

Squeaky brakes are a serious automotive annoyance but are squeaking brakes dangerous and how much does it cost to fix them?

What Causes Brakes to Squeak?

Don't expect brakes to be totally quiet, sometimes, they're going to make some noises but don't panic because a squeaky brake can stop a car just like a silent one can.



What causes the squeal? Modern brakes use a cast-iron disc squeezed between two brake pads lined with friction material. Under the right conditions, the disc, the pads and the calliper they're mounted in can start to vibrate in exactly the same way a violin's string vibrates when stroked by



the horsehairs on the bow. Most brake squeals occur at a single discrete frequency. The speed of the vehicle and how hard you press down on the left pedal will only change the volume of noise because the pitch is controlled by the stiffness and mass of the pad and disc.

Inadequate development at the manufacturer that leaves brake systems prone to noise can usually be overcome by a Saturday mechanic without totally re-engineering the caliper/mount/pad/disc system. We can try to damp out the noise, or simply change the resonant frequency of the whole arrangement until it stops singing in any audible frequency. Here's how.

Normal Brake Pad Noises.

Many brake pad compositions will make a swishing or grinding noise for the first few stops in the morning until the pads warm up and drive off any moisture they've accumulated overnight. Ever notice a hissing or grinding noise on some rainy or dewy mornings? It's the pads sweeping a thin film of rust that's formed on the iron discs, and it's perfectly normal.



In the past, brake pad friction material relied heavily on asbestos. Unfortunately, asbestos tended to give asbestos workers and brake mechanics lung cancer, so the industry has almost completely changed over to less dangerous alternatives. Kevlar is one material that's seen a lot of use, but it tends to be dusty. Improved brake performance is more important nowadays because of increased safety requirements and equipment and the extra road-hugging weight that comes along with these. That leads to the increased use of metallics and ceramics in the brake pad friction material and this stuff can make the brakes hiss or even grind a little as you slow down. It's a small price to pay for increased performance. So! all pad noise is fine, right? No - there's one brake noise you need to pay attention to right away.

Many brake pads have a small finger of spring steel that will scrape on the disc as the pad reaches its wear limit. This tells you that it's time to change pads for fresh, thicker ones before the friction material wears completely away and you're trying to slow down on the metal backing plates. It's a sound not easily confused with brake squeal, it's more of a ripping-sheet-metal noise, not a single, high-pitched note.

Stop the Squeak

One fix is to simply change pads to a different type of friction material. It's usually hard to beat the original-equipment pads for a good compromise of pad life, noise, grip, dust creation and price, but changing to an aftermarket premium metallic or ceramic pad just might change the interaction that affects the resonant frequency of the pad and disc and, literally, change its tune.

Go into any auto parts store and you'll see a shelf full of potions and widgets claiming to cure squeaks. One class of products you should be wary of is simple aerosols that you spray onto the pad's friction material. We have no idea if they actually make the squeak go away, because we're unwilling to try anything that changes the friction characteristics of the pad. Let's not forget, the



first reason your brake system exists is, in fact, to make your car slow down. Anything that could reduce that system's effectiveness in any way is probably not a good idea.

Still got noise? Or still have plenty of pad material remaining and don't want to drop fifty or a hundred bucks on a fresh set? You may be able to decouple the piston acoustically from the pad by purchasing shims made of Teflon, which are intended to go between the pad and the caliper's hydraulic piston – but be careful, sometimes they work and sometimes they don't.

Warning: Some callipers will not have enough extra travel in the piston bore to allow any shimming without making the brakes drag, at least with fresh, unworn pads.



You can achieve a similar decoupling without Teflon shims by simply coating the back face of the pad's backing plates with high-temp brake grease or even antiseize compound. Unlike shims, this tweak won't last forever, as water and road dirt will wash it away eventually.

There's an old saying, you get what you pay for. It's always a good idea to chose high-end ceramic-based pads as these usually came fitted with Teflon-coated shims already installed.

Whenever you're installing any brake parts, be sure you remove any corrosion or road dirt from the mating parts, the brake pad or calliper housing needs to be able to slide in and out to compensate for wear. Clean up any sliding parts, which may require a wire brush or a file, until you can push the pads in and out with your bare hands. Replace any brake hardware (especially on drum brakes) that isn't in perfect condition—it's cheap insurance and apply a thin film of high-temp brake grease to any sliding surfaces. Obviously, avoid getting anything like grease or anti-seize on the pad or disc and clean any greasy handprints off the disc surface before you hang the wheel on too.

Watch the video [HERE](#)

The older I get the earlier it gets late.

The Boeing C-17.

The C-17A Globemaster III provides the Air Force with an unprecedented capacity for strategic airlift. It allows Australia to rapidly deploy troops, supplies, combat vehicles, heavy equipment and helicopters anywhere in the world.



Based at RAAF Base Amberley, all eight C-17As are operated by No. 36 Squadron and provide a logistics backbone for Australian Defence Force operations overseas. This has included operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan, as well as East Timor.



Australia introduced an initial fleet of four C-17As between 2006 and 2008. Additional aircraft were acquired in 2011, 2012, and 2015. C-17As have supported personnel on deployments, and been an integral part of disaster relief and humanitarian missions.

The C-17A Globemaster is a high-wing four-engine heavy transport aircraft built by Boeing. It is fitted with a cargo bay ramp that allows it to airdrop cargo in-flight, and can operate from unsurfaced runways as short as 3500 feet. Able to carry up to 77 tonnes of cargo, the C-17A's cargo bay can accommodate loads ranging from:

- an Abrams Tank;
- four Bushmaster vehicles; or
- three Black Hawk helicopters.
- It can also be converted to a medical rescue aircraft.

The C-17A can be refuelled in-flight by the KC-30A, extending its range further.

Specifications:

Crew	Pilot, Co-Pilot, Loadmaster
Length	53 m
Height	16.8 m
Wing span	51.75 m
Weight	128 tonnes (empty); 265 tonnes (maximum take off weight)
Engines	Four Pratt & Whitney F-117-PW-100 turbofans
Thrust	40,440lb Force each
Range	10,390 kilometres with paratroopers
Ceiling	45,000ft
Max Speed	Mach 0.74 (829km/h)
Capacity	134 passengers; 102 paratroopers; six high-dependency medical patients; one CH-47F Chinook helicopter; 18 463L military pallets; more than 70 tonnes of cargo.

Channel 7's Mark Beretta recently fronted a video on the C-17 and you can see it [HERE](#).

I run like the winded.



New Defence ministers announced.

On the 26th May, shortly after being re-elected, the Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced his new government. Senator Linda Reynolds (right) has been promoted to Minister for Defence. New Minister for Defence Industry is Melissa Price, who formerly served as Environment Minister. She also served on the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Parliamentary Committee, and numerous others.

Darren Chester retains responsibility for Veterans and Defence Personnel – however, in a change that probably won't have much practical impact, he is now officially the Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel in a single portfolio as opposed to the dual ministerships of Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel. Mr Chester also had a third appointment as Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC, now concluded.

Forty-one-year-old Alex Hawke is the new Assistant Minister for Defence in the Lower House. Mr Hawke is an experienced politician, first elected to Parliament in 2007. Defence is his fourth assistant ministerial appointment.

Peter Dutton retains the helm at Home Affairs – and former Defence Minister Marise Payne is still the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Linda Reynolds served in the Australian Army for 29 years from 1984 to 2012 in part-time and full-time positions. Following officer training, she became a regional logistical officer as a Second Lieutenant and made Captain in the position. She progressed to training development officer (Captain), commanding officer 5th Combat Support Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel), military instructor at Command and Staff College, senior career manager and Director of Active Standby Staff Group (Colonel). She went on to be adjutant general in the Army Reserve as a Brigadier, where she was awarded the Conspicuous Service Cross for outstanding achievement as the Director of Army Strategic Reform Program. She was the first woman in the Australian Army Reserve to be promoted to star rank.



Melissa Price was a lawyer by profession before beginning her career as a politician. She was elected to parliament in 2013. She served on a range of committees, including Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. She was appointed Minister for the Environment in August last year.



War is changing.



A laser weapon, called The Self-Protect High-Energy Laser Demonstrator (SHiELD) passed a crucial test last month. Designed to defend U.S. Air Force aircraft from inbound air-to-air missiles, SHiELD torched several missiles in flight.



Defensive lasers could revolutionize aerial warfare and lead to a second revolution with even more profound implications for air warfare offensive lasers.

Air-to-air missiles, guided missiles launched by an aircraft at another aircraft, were first developed in the 1940s. Previously, aircraft could only shoot down other aircraft within range of their guns but the advent of jet engines made aircraft faster and able to swiftly move out of gun range. A guided weapon that could chase down even jet aircraft became a priority and soon air forces of the world were fielding both infrared and laser-guided weapons.

Back in April 2019 a ground version of a laser that could someday protect military aircraft was tested at White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico. The Demonstrator Laser Weapon System, a ground-based surrogate for the Self-Protect High-Energy Laser Demonstrator, or SHiELD, shot down several aerial-launched missiles. The goal of the SHiELD program is to equip a F-15 Eagle fighter jet with a defensive laser pod by 2021.



Lockheed Martin is developing the 2021 weapon system. The pod will involve a fibre laser in the “tens” of kilowatts, while Northrop Grumman is developing the beam control system. Boeing will develop the pod that carries the laser weapon.

Active defence lasers like SHiELD promise to seriously upset air warfare. Flares, chaff, and electronic warfare are three ways to prevent an air-to-air missile from hitting its target. They’re also passive defences, making no attempt to actually down the missile but instead to confuse the missile and prevent it from hitting the target. Active defence, actually shooting down incoming missiles, is so hard that until now, nobody has bothered, the small size of such missiles and the possibility that they could come from all directions makes them difficult to shoot down.

Until now!



If the program continues to be successful, an aircraft armed with SHiELD would be protected from incoming missiles like never before. Enemy aircraft might need to fire multiple missiles at laser-protected fighters in order to overwhelm their defences. Aircraft could press their attacks, not taking evasive action, knowing that a weapon like SHiELD protects them.

Lasers can neutralize missiles in a variety of ways. A laser can damage the sensors in a missile's seeker, particularly an infrared seeker, preventing it from following its target. A laser could also damage the body or control surfaces of a missile, rendering it unable to manoeuvre or causing it to aerodynamically fail. Finally, the extreme heat of a laser could ignite any remaining rocket motor propellant or the explosive warhead.

Click [HERE](#) to see a video of Lockheed Martin's ATHENA laser weapon system torching a drone in midair:

A defensive laser like SHiELD would not be limited to fighter jets. All U.S. military aircraft operating in or near combat zones could be outfitted with lasers to protect them from guided missiles, particularly larger, less manoeuvrable aircraft such as C-130J, C-17, and C-5M transports, KC-135, KC-10, and K-46A aerial refuelling tankers and command and control platforms such as the E-3 Sentry AWACS plane.



Russian and Chinese air forces are in the process of developing very long range air-to-air capability missiles. These missiles would be used to down American tanker and AWACs-type aircraft, seriously degrading the fighting abilities of U.S. and allied warplanes, or forcing them to operate farther behind friendly lines. SHiELD could at least partially negate the threat posed by these missiles.



In the future, fighter jets may be forced to carry more missiles than they do now, in order to overwhelm an enemy aircraft's laser defences. Arguably however it may never get to that, because the next revolution in aerial warfare triggered by laser weapons is right around the corner. When aircraft lasers become even more powerful, they could be used in an offensive manner, replacing missiles and guns as the means to down enemy aircraft.

SHiELD is merely the beginning. A fire control system designed to acquire, track, and engage small air-to-air missiles could easily do the same against much larger manned and unmanned aircraft. A laser weapon traveling at 186,000 miles per second moves far too fast to deploy countermeasures, making it difficult to beat. How this affects war in the air is a good question, but its implications for pilots and their flying machines is undeniable.



Egg plants.