



Robert McRae, Helicopter Maintenance  
on HMAS *Tobruk*, Darwin Harbour, Timor  
Crisis, watercolour on paper, painted in  
Darwin in 2000

(Accession number 91456)  
Australian War Memorial

## Helicopter Maintenance on HMAS *Tobruk*, Darwin Harbour, Timor Crisis

Robert McRae



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painted in Darwin in 2000  
acquired in 2001

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### About the artwork:

Sixteen vessels of the RAN, along with ships from nine other navies, took part in Interfet in East Timor. They provided essential logistic support to the operation, transporting men and supplies to various points on the East Timorese coast, giving security to the force, and providing other services ranging from clearance diving teams to hot showers. The heavy landing ship HMAS *Tobruk* has provided support to a number of other peacekeeping operations, including those in the Sinai, the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Bougainville and the Solomon Islands.

At the time of the East Timor deployment, McRae was teaching art at Northern Territory University in Darwin. In this painting, the artist's careful attention to detail on the ship, helicopter and ensigns, combined with the use of crisp, naturalistic colour, helps create a documentary record of routine but essential maintenance work.

### Questions:

1. Can you find the Royal Ensign?
2. There is another symbol in this painting. What is it?
3. How do helicopters fly? Test your Internet skills.
4. What part of a ship is the "bridge"?
5. List the maintenance jobs to be done around your home or your school.
6. How important are the people who do maintenance on a ship? Why?
7. Find out what grades/subjects you need in Year 12 to be able to join the RAN?