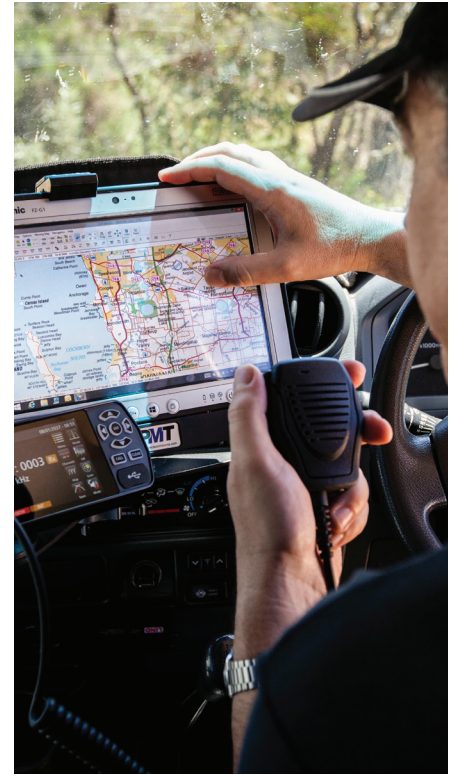




PANASONIC TOUGHBOOK – STANDARD ISSUE FOR THE HARSHTEST ENVIRONMENTS

BARRETT COMMUNICATIONS TURNS TO PANASONIC TOUGHBOOK TO
SUPPORT MISSION-CRITICAL DEFENCE OPERATIONS IN HARSH, REMOTE
ENVIRONMENTS



Barrett Communications has chosen the rugged Toughbook range of PCs and tablets to provide fail-safe operations in the field.

Australian company Barrett Communications – a leading designer and manufacturer of free-to-air long distance radio communications technology with a global market – has chosen the rugged Toughbook range of PCs and tablets to provide fail-safe operations in the field, supporting the delivery of Barrett's mission-critical solutions for applications from disaster recovery to defence and commercial requirements.

For 40 years, Barrett has been working with customers including peacekeeping, NGO, humanitarian and government operations, as well as security and defence organisations. The company travels to remote and challenging environments, from tropical jungles to remote deserts, in over 150 countries – including Asia and the Pacific – delivering training and installing its High Frequency (HF) and Very High Frequency (VHF) radio communications technology solutions.

Meeting the challenge of remote locations

Barrett's solutions can support voice, email, data, fax and tracking over thousands of kilometres. For example, this sees them used by Governments for a range of applications – such as civil defence operations in the area of land based and maritime disaster management and search and rescue; navy patrols; or humanitarian communications to support the delivery of supplies and medical aid to refugees.

Before Toughbook came aboard, Barrett found its team was travelling to isolated locations to discover customers struggling with consumer-grade devices that were failing in the field and did not have the capability to support complex tasks. Environmental challenges, ranging from high humidity to extreme weather or dry and dusty conditions, meant devices were regularly damaged, increasing downtime and compromising operations.

Ben Jackson, International Support Manager, Barrett Communications, said: "Because traditional PC support was not readily available in these remote areas, it meant any damages or faults took days, and often weeks, to solve. There were also issues with limited battery life, which is a big problem for mobile workers in the field with no access to a power supply."

Barrett needed a solution that would better serve end users in harsh, outlying locations. Not only has the guaranteed reliability and durability of Toughbook reduced the risk of failure in the field, it has the capability to support Barrett's key HF data and tracking systems.

"We turned to Panasonic's Toughbook range of PCs and tablets 13 years ago and since then, we have never had any issues and our customers have only ever been positive," said Ben Jackson. "Many of our staff are ex-military and they have seen the range during their service, so understand the benefits first hand. Given Panasonic's expertise and heritage in the rugged market, it was the obvious choice to recommend Toughbook."

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Ruggedised solutions for fit-for purpose applications

Panasonic Toughbooks and Toughpads are specifically used in two Barrett Communications solutions. Ben Jackson explained, "All of our HF and VHF products are ruggedised or MIL-STD and we need a laptop or tablet that is also to this standard. Importantly, they are enabling users to stay connected and secure in remote locations often thousands of kilometres from base camp."

The Barrett 977 HF tracking system is an automatic vehicle and vessel locating and tracking package. The base station currently uses Toughbook CF-20 and CF-19 and Toughpad FZ-G1 products to support a map-based display using GPS tracking software to show the position of vehicles in real-time. Mission commanders can now track and communicate with their field operatives while on the road, using the versatile Toughbook in a variety of modes, such as an in-vehicle configuration, base mounted PC or as a tablet. Vital data, emails and information can now be shared in real-time, so communication is consistent, security is heightened and intelligence is increased.

Secondly, the Barrett 2020 HF data system provides secure internet email connectivity and fax services via HF radio to and between remote base camps with no existing communications infrastructure. The Panasonic Toughbook solution provides a simple automatic interface for speech, data transfer and email among all stations in the HF network.

This includes instances when soldiers parachute into remote locations that can be located up to 2,500 km from base camp and need a lightweight communications kit in the form of a HF portable radio manpack, supported by a Toughpad FZ-M1. This system allows them to stay connected in the field, with the Toughpad enabling them to take photos, share data and reports, and send emails back to base.

Support for customer training

Another critical factor for Barrett Communications was the need for purpose built, reliable and durable technology to use during customer training at its Perth office or at in-country locations around the world. Training is designed to replicate customers' field experiences and the company's demonstration Military Land Rover and Commercial 76 Series Land Cruiser are now fitted out with rugged Toughbooks for demonstrations.

To meet its training needs, the company has invested in military-standard ruggedised Toughbooks and Toughpads, including the newly launched Toughbook CF-20, CF-19, FZ-G1, FZ-M1 and CF-31.

"Toughbook is perfect for remote field operations because it's rugged and reliable to military standards. Often, we're working without mains power and with intermittent generators, so we need technology that has extended battery life. The ultra-bright Toughbook screen can be easily read in the strongest direct sunlight; and the unit can stand up to use in swirling dust, powerful wind and driving rain," Ben Jackson said.

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According to Stuart Buxton, Senior Product Marketing Manager for Toughbook, Panasonic Australia, the versatility of the Toughbook makes it an ideal fit for Barrett Communications. "Selecting the right mobile solution can make all the difference in successfully completing a mission. Over the years, Panasonic has outfitted the defence sector with rugged solutions that meet mission-critical demands in hostile environments where failure is not an option. We're now seeing a move to rugged hybrid tablet technology, with the purpose-built detachable Toughbook CF-20, to provide greater flexibility in the field for defence and government organisations."

Rugged feature set

Toughbook's extraordinary rugged feature set meets every demand from personnel on the ground - from below zero temperatures to baking desert heat. Fully Rugged Toughbooks set the standard for reliability, with a magnesium alloy case and fanless design, and meeting MIL-STD-461F for electromagnetic interference and MIL-STD-810G for drop, shock, vibration, explosive atmosphere, temperature, humidity, rain and sand, as well as waterproof and dustproof ingress (IP65).

Designed for outdoor use from bright sunlight to heavy rain, Toughbooks have multi-touch, high-brightness screens. Support peripherals include vehicle docks with antenna pass-through for the strongest communications signal while in the vehicle; and batteries can be hot-swapped to support continuous use in the field.

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