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## EDITORIAL

This final edition of the *Australian Army Journal* for 2007 maintains our recent focus on lessons from operations, especially in Afghanistan. The grim reality of the risks entailed in all military operations has been brought home to all of us by the deaths of three soldiers in Afghanistan and another in Timor-Leste in the weeks preceding publication of this issue. Those losses remind us that the profession of arms is a serious business and that the soldier has entered a covenant of unlimited liability with his or her nation.

As the Chief of the Army Lieutenant General Peter Leahy frequently reminds us, the ultimate benchmark for the performance of those serving at home in Australia is the degree to which our efforts are supporting our mates engaged in operations overseas. They face implacable and dangerous enemies in harsh environments.

For this reason the *AAJ* aspires to be a forum in which soldiers of every rank and specialisation can analyse and debate their experiences on operations. Our enemies are adaptive. We need to match them in this regard. The Centre for Army Lessons performs excellent work in disseminating the hard-won lessons of deployed soldiers to others preparing for operations. The *AAJ* seeks to complement this valuable work while providing a forum for discussion of issues of a strategic or historical nature. We reiterate our request to those with recent operational experience to commit their reflections to paper. This should not be an abstract exercise. It might save a mate's life.

In that spirit we publish an article by Lieutenant Colonel Mick Ryan, who commanded the inaugural Reconstruction Task Force in Afghanistan, about the application of adaptive counterinsurgency techniques against the Taliban. His article is essential reading and has applications more broadly in other theatres where irregular enemies are operating in complex terrain against us and our allies.

Similarly, we are pleased to announce that the winner of the 2007 Chauvel Essay Prize is Major Michael Scott. Selected by the *AAJ*'s Editorial Advisory Board, his article, 'Rebuilding Afghanistan One Mud-brick at a Time: Lessons from an Aussie Engineer', appeared in the *AAJ*'s Autumn 2007 edition. This clear and well-presented

## EDITORIAL

exploration of the issues surrounding coalition reconstruction efforts is timely. The eminence of the judges highlights the utility and applicability as well as the relevance of the lessons Major Scott presented. We recommend it to you.

The oft-neglected area of logistics is the subject of the article by Brigadier David Saul, who examines the benefits and risks involved in the reliance on contractors in the battlespace. Contractors are now an integral part of our operations in all theatres and awareness of both the limitations and opportunities associated with their use is essential to commanders.

And as recent controversy surrounding the private security firm Blackwater demonstrates, the proliferation of contractors is not confined to logistic support. Contractors like Blackwater are engaged in highly visible close protection tasks in areas where our troops are operating. They frequently use lethal force. This inevitably will affect perceptions of all forces operating ‘amongst the people’—to employ the phrase made famous by British General Sir Rupert Smith.

Unique rules of engagement, differing perceptions of threat and incompatible methods of dealing with local populations may all conspire to complicate the relationship between conventional military forces and security contractors. This is an area in which our doctrine, tactics, techniques and procedures may need to rapidly adapt to the changing battlespace. Antony Trentini reviews some of the recent literature about this controversial subject in this issue.

This year has seen the *AAJ* successfully increase its publication schedule to three editions. That this has been achieved is a credit primarily to the officers, NCOs and other ranks of the Army who continue to submit high quality, thoughtful articles for publication. It is also a credit to the staff of the Land Warfare Studies Centre particularly Dr Albert Palazzo, Mr Scott Hopkins and Ms Natalia Forrest, who work tirelessly to produce it.

This issue will appear on the eve of Christmas. We wish all of our readers a safe and happy holiday season. To our comrades deployed on operations, we wish you a safe return to your families. Finally, to the families and loved ones of Sergeant Matthew Locke, Trooper David Pearce, Private Luke Worsley and Private Ashley Baker, who died on operations in recent weeks, we offer our sincere condolences and respect at this time of inconsolable loss.

## The Publisher

## STRATEGY

# PARTNERSHIP OR MEMBERSHIP?

## AUSTRALIA AND NATO IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR\*

JEFFREY GREY

### ABSTRACT

As the Australian Defence Force overseas deployments grow in size and tempo, Australian strategists and planners must consider the growing number of organisations our troops will work alongside, and in concert with. This article explores the relationship between Australia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an issue that is particularly pertinent considering current commitments in Afghanistan.

\* An earlier version of this article was published as a discussion paper to accompany the NATO Summit in Riga. Jeffrey Grey, 'Future Directions for NATO: An Australian Perspective', in Ronald D Asmus (ed.), *NATO and Global Partners: Views from the Outside*, German Marshall Fund of the United States, Washington DC, 2006, 26–33.

The end of the Cold War came quickly, and unexpectedly. Talk of ‘peace dividends’ on a massive scale proved premature, at best, as the victory of Western interests over those of the former Soviet bloc gave way instead to a ‘new world disorder’ exemplified by the vicious implosion of the former Yugoslavia. The succession of small wars and ethnic and religious violence in the Balkans during the 1990s raised fundamental questions about the capacity, and willingness, of the United Nations, the United States and the European Union to enforce and maintain peace and security in a continent where such conflict was widely believed, till then, to be a thing of the past. Many, including some of the organisation’s leading members, cast NATO’s capability, indeed its future viability, in doubt.

Such gloomy forecasts proved premature, but NATO was forced to undergo a wide-ranging examination of its purpose and the circumstances in which it might act in future, given that the contingencies for which it was originally fashioned had evaporated. Perhaps unexpectedly, it also became an important part of the process of progressively incorporating newly independent former Soviet bloc states in central and eastern Europe into the mainstream of European and Western affairs through the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. While many European member states were unwilling to follow the United States into its war on Iraq, a clear NATO presence was established in Afghanistan following the initial overthrow of the Taliban regime in late 2001, suggesting new future directions for an alliance originally focused entirely on European affairs.

At the NATO summit in Riga, Latvia, in November 2006, the Partnership for Peace program was extended to include Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia, while continuing operations in Afghanistan received considerable attention, especially over the issue of national ‘caveats’ limiting the type and range of deployments that can be assigned to various national forces working within the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Less prominent because less immediate, but with significant medium- and long-term implications, was consideration of a vastly expanded and altered NATO, encapsulated in the phrase ‘global partnership’.<sup>1</sup> The changes wrought by the end

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of the Cold War and the new global disorder reflected in the 'War on Terror' will continue to shape traditional security arrangements among democratic nations, but older patterns of thought and behavior will undergo revision, and the security architecture that has served Western interests from the early Cold War will face challenges that its architects did not envisage and did not plan for. This is the context in which NATO is examining suggestions for the most fundamental refashioning of the Alliance since its inception in 1949.

In the half-century during which the Cold War was fought and won by the West, Australian interests and commitments diverged from those of Western Europe in all but the most general of senses. Australia is a middle power with a European heritage, Western and liberal-democratic in its orientation, but with an increasingly diverse multicultural population and with key determinants of its security policies governed by geography and its location at the foot of South-East Asia. The foundation of its security and foreign policies has been, and remains, the alliance with the United States underpinned by the provisions of the Australia–New Zealand–United States (ANZUS) Treaty of 1951. The decolonisation of Europe's Asian empires resulted in a loosening of security ties between Australia and the major European states in the post-1945 world, including Britain, as a result of the latter's withdrawal from 'East of Suez' and its concentration on European affairs through membership in NATO and, ultimately, the European Community.

More important than the legacy of direct military interaction between Australia and Europe for the consideration of any increased NATO–Australian relations are the twin characteristics of alliance behavior and defence of the national interest beyond immediate territorial bounds. Throughout its history, Australia has always acted within an alliance framework, Imperial with the British and quasi-imperial with the Americans. The Global War on Terror has re-emphasised the strategic alliance with the United States, to the extent that following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington DC, the Prime Minister, John Howard, invoked Article IV of ANZUS that declares that an attack on either party may be regarded as an attack on both<sup>2</sup>, in the same manner as the European partners invoked the North Atlantic Treaty. He stated that

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‘Australia stands ready to cooperate within the limits of its capability concerning any response that the United States may regard as necessary in consultation with her allies.’<sup>3</sup>

A theme laced continually through Australian security debates in the course of the twentieth century pitches those who espouse the direct defence of Australian territory against those who believe that Australian national interests should be defended regardless of where they are threatened. For most of its history this has meant that Australia has either fought, or undertaken to fight, in defence of common interests with alliance partners in often-distant parts. In the Cold War this was characterised as ‘forward defence’ and, although the defeat in Vietnam in the early 1970s saw a renewed emphasis on ‘continental defence’ of the Australian mainland, this posture eroded rapidly in the latter half of the 1990s. Even before the attacks of 11 September 2001, the Australian Government showed its willingness to reflect these two traditions in security policy, notably through creating and leading the coalition of regional and other partners that participated in the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) in East Timor in 1999 to 2000.

The shift in the security environment since 2001 further underlines the point that ‘homeland defence’ and a capacity and willingness to fight ‘anywhere and everywhere’ if needed are no longer, if they ever were, ‘either/or’ propositions. Equally, the security arrangements that worked so well during the Cold War may no longer be appropriate or sufficient for dealing with a new and very different enemy and a range of threats on a global scale. The Bush Administration’s initial apparent preference for short-term ‘Coalitions of the Willing’ over larger, more ponderous multilateral alliance partnerships has not been sustained into the President’s second term, and it seems reasonable to think that the United States will continue to use traditional alliance structures as vehicles for the promotion and defence of broader US and Western interests.

The nature, composition and purpose of those alliances will change, however, and fundamentally. The US Ambassador to NATO, Victoria Nuland, stated explicitly, in January

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2006, that NATO is to become 'first and foremost a political alliance devoted to strengthening and defending our democratic values at home and around the world'. This will involve the creation of a 'globally deployable military force', a 'common collective deployment at strategic distances', and the Alliance is to be broadened to include other democratic allies of the United States such as Japan and Australia in some form of 'advanced partnerships'.<sup>4</sup> Nuland's was merely the most recent contribution along these lines to a debate that has been in train for at least a decade.<sup>5</sup> Others have advocated the abandonment of NATO's traditional transatlantic character and the opening of its ranks to 'any democratic state in the world that is willing and able to contribute to the fulfillment of NATO's new responsibilities'.<sup>6</sup>

Concern that NATO had no further useful purpose after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and would wither and die of its own accord, has been overtaken by the fear that NATO is stretched meeting the variety of tasks presented to it since the mid-1990s and the intervention in the former Yugoslavia. As NATO forces have deployed, of necessity, further afield on what were formally 'out of area' tasks, such as in Afghanistan or in Darfur, they find themselves operating alongside or in support of forces from non-NATO partners, such as Japan, Australia and South Korea. Indeed, the new security agenda has already placed Australian forces in some new and unexpected situations, such as providing force protection for the six hundred-strong engineering unit from the Japanese Self-Defence Force in southern Iraq.

The new direction in relations between Australia and NATO was flagged in May 2004 when the Minister for Foreign Affairs Alexander Downer delivered the first address by an Australian foreign minister to the North Atlantic Council, followed by a joint press conference with the Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer.<sup>7</sup> Downer argued that international security 'is indivisible' in a world of failed and failing states, international terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Having noted NATO's development and widening membership since the end of the Cold War, he then listed in some detail the trends and existing and emerging threats confronting Australia in the Asia-Pacific region, most of which in fact had little

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application outside that region except in a generic sense and was careful to speak of a 'partnership' between the two sides rather than anything more specific or formal. In the view of the Australian Government, strengthened cooperation with NATO was something it was 'keen to pursue' through heightened consultations on a range of issues, a proposed information security agreement (successfully negotiated and signed in 2005, this allows easier transfer of classified material), and through what Downer described as 'more structured frameworks for cooperation' in the fullness of time.

Australia has enjoyed membership of technical committees and has worked at a relatively low level with NATO for some time, but as Downer observed in the press conference afterwards, 'the relationship between Australia and NATO didn't amount to much' during the Cold War. Equipment compatibility and the general interoperability of forces have been the key issues for Australia, with the emphasis very much on the forces of the United States and the United Kingdom. Downer's visit to the Council and de Hoop Scheffer's reciprocal visit to Australia in April 2005, the first visit by the organisation's Secretary General, clearly signaled interest in raising the level of cooperation and activity on both sides. Accordingly, during the visit the Australian Minister for Defence, Senator Robert Hill, announced that under a new agreement Australia would post a defence attaché to NATO Headquarters in Brussels to help 'improve communications in the war on terrorism'.<sup>8</sup> A further sign of developing cooperation came in July 2006 with the deployment of an Australian Reconstruction Task Force (RTF) to Afghanistan, as a contribution to the Netherlands-led Provisional Reconstruction Team (PRT) that would in turn provide force protection. Australian special forces have been operating in Afghanistan under NATO command in ISAF, but in discrete units.

Increasingly, 'NATO is everywhere', as Jean-Yves Hine of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London has noted with pardonable exaggeration.<sup>9</sup> What does this mean in practical terms and what are the benefits and the implications of greater cooperation with the transatlantic organisation for non-NATO parties like Australia?

The type and level of cooperation that Australia currently undertakes, over which everyone is in broad agreement, often extends from pre-existing

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agreements with individual NATO members, chiefly the United States and the United Kingdom. Broadening these to cover common efforts against terrorism, illegal immigration and the spread of pandemic diseases such as avian flu, involving greater cooperation and interaction between law enforcement agencies and embodying a 'whole-of-government' approach, is generally uncontroversial. Some of this involves Australia and NATO members in non-NATO instrumentalities such as INTERPOL. It is much less clear that heightened security cooperation of the kind envisioned by senior figures in the Bush Administration, such as Ambassador Nuland, involving a potential expansion of NATO membership through the abolition or substantial modification of Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty, is either politically possible or desirable.<sup>10</sup>

Greater security cooperation with NATO would clearly carry some positive benefits for the Australian Government, allowing it to be seen legitimately as more of a global player and enabling greater access to intelligence-sharing arrangements, though here again there are pre-existing mechanisms such as the United Kingdom–United States–Australia (UKUSA) agreement. In Afghanistan currently, the existing agreements, command and control and chain of command issues seem to work well in coordinating the activities of the Australians deployed there as part of ISAF, which has involved heavy and sustained combat through the middle months of 2007, and before. The current campaigning season that began with the spring thaw in March and April 2007 saw further protracted, high-intensity conventional combat, especially in the southern provinces, and it may be that more formal and more extensive arrangements are needed under such circumstances. Australian special forces were withdrawn in late 2006 and then redeployed in an increasingly high-tempo role on 15 May 2007. The recent, current and projected likely commitments for the Australian Defence Force within ISAF do not suggest any significant shortcomings in the way in which the 'in the field' relationship with NATO is currently handled.

There are potential downsides to more formalised Australian involvement in NATO. Australia has spent decades building bridges within its region (broadly defined), from the Colombo Plan beginning in the 1950s through the Whitlam Government's recognition of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the abolition of restrictions on immigration based on race or ethnicity (the notorious 'White Australia' policy adopted by the first Federal parliament in 1901, which was dismantled in the late 1960s). In more recent decades, and especially during the Hawke–Keating Labor Governments between 1983 and 1996, there has been a concerted

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push to integrate Australia more securely within its region, especially within South-East Asia. This has been attended by considerable success in some areas, but there remains deep underlying suspicion and ignorance of Australian intentions, both at the official and popular levels within various South-East Asian countries. While the more extreme critique and outright insults proffered by the former Malaysian prime minister, Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad, are not representative, they nonetheless give an indication of the tensions and hostilities that bedevil Australia's relationship with at least some member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). High-profile engagement with NATO would simply confirm what the more extreme critics of Australia's position in Asia already profess to believe, and would certainly be utilised by Islamist jihadist organizations in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and elsewhere in their propaganda attacks on Australia specifically, and Western interests more generally. This is not insignificant in terms of recruiting for terrorist organisations like *Jemaah Islamiah*, the perpetrators of the Bali bombings in 2002.

Opinion in Australia is divided over the potential impact of closer integration in NATO on perceptions in Beijing, and the relationship with the PRC is another of the crucial issues facing Canberra for the coming twenty-five years.<sup>11</sup> Australia and the United States already differ on some aspects of the relationship, especially since President Bush took office. Future Chinese intentions towards Taiwan remain the major area of divergence and Canberra tends to emphasise the opportunities presented by the 'rise' of China rather than seeing this solely in terms of strategic-level challenges or threats. Beijing has issued various veiled warnings about the closeness of Australian–American policy under ANZUS in the event of a crisis in the Taiwan Strait and it is reasonable to conclude that the leadership in Beijing would view an increasing closeness with NATO in a similar light, especially if it seemed to imply a greater European or Western involvement in Asian affairs.

In any case, it is difficult to see a role for NATO in Asia in any foreseeable future. The legacy of colonialism and the anti-colonial struggle is still strong culturally and symbolically

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in domestic politics. Governments in China, South Korea and throughout South-East Asia react negatively to talk of an enhanced role for the Japanese military in the region post-11 September 2001, reflecting popular memory of the brutality of Japanese occupation. Suggestions of a closer engagement between NATO and Japan, which has sparked debate in that country between those who see Japan's strategic policy as best focused on the United States and those who want to see a lessening of that relationship, might prompt similarly negative reactions in the region, although it would have fewer implications for Japan's relationship with Australia. Following the appointment of Shinzo Abe as prime minister, and reflecting the sorts of considerations behind the push for a 'global NATO', the Japanese Government has acceded to US wishes to declare NATO, Australia and New Zealand as possessing 'common values' as part of a far-reaching revision to Japan's defence forces and strategic posture more generally.<sup>12</sup>

While it has not been put to the test in recent decades, there seems little reason to imagine that the re-appearance of European military power in the Asia-Pacific region would be any more welcome than a resurgent Japanese presence and would provide further opportunities for successful Islamist jihadist proselytising among the dispossessed and disadvantaged in those societies. In addition, a change of government in Australia would see greater emphasis on the primacy of regional concerns from a newly-elected Labor government. This would not rule out further collaboration with NATO in Afghanistan, for example, where Labor has said it is committed to remaining, but would almost certainly see a withdrawal of Australian forces from Iraq in favor of securing Australian interests closer to Australia's shores.

While some have advocated the abandonment or rewriting of Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty to enable the membership of like-minded liberal-democracies outside the mid-Atlantic/European territory, such a move poses as many problems as it does opportunities, if history is any guide. The Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) provides a cautionary tale for those who would seek to combine geographically disparate states around an allegedly common purpose. Formed in 1955 through the Treaty of Manila in response to the failure of the Geneva talks and concerns about

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communist threats in South-East Asia, it brought together the United States, Britain, Australia and New Zealand, Thailand and the Philippines, and (somewhat bizarrely) France and Pakistan. Ostensibly united over the communist Cold War threat, in fact the concerns and interests of member states diverged considerably over time, with both the French and Pakistanis destabilising SEATO's processes and capacity to react when it became clear that their needs were not reflected in the organisation's own, and that other member states would not bend in their direction. When the circumstances for which SEATO had been formed actually arose (successive Laotian crises and the growing war in Indochina), it was hamstrung by differences between its members. The organisation was disbanded as an irrelevance in 1973.

SEATO is a warning, not a blueprint. Events may suggest that rather than a single, unwieldy and perhaps unworkable strategic alliance of 'Western' interests, a better model may be several, regionally-focused alliances or coalitions acting in concert as opportunity arises and necessity dictates. The Cold War provides an imperfect example of what this might look like, since NATO was the only truly successful Cold War alliance structure to emerge and face the communist threat while, for a variety of reasons, SEATO and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) proved unequal to the task. At the end of the 1990s, the Clinton Administration began to advocate the INTERFET 'model' of a regional power at the centre of largely regional coalitions for specific, urgent tasks (such as the intervention in East Timor or peace enforcement and nation-building missions for collapsed states in sub-Saharan Africa). The Bush Administration moved US policy in different directions, as we have seen, but the idea of aligning regional security coalitions may yet have merit. It could prove more responsive to regional issues and regional sensitivities and minimise the potential for enemy exploitation of Western military involvement in Third World or Islamic contexts. While Downer has observed that security in our times is indivisible, this underplays the different ways in which the global terrorist threat is perceived in a variety of Western states and those other states that are aligned with them (Pakistan is an obvious example). Put simply, for some the threat of jihadist terror is derived from within, while for those such as the United States it is (thus far) an external phenomenon.

Nor is there universal agreement on the nature of the threat and the best response to it within Western countries, as the Spanish election of 2004 illustrates and the continuing differences in Australia over policy on the war

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in Iraq should remind us. The more-or-less complete breakdown of relations between the Bush Administration and European opinion will need careful rehabilitation and realignment of views and interests between Washington and Europe under the next US Administration before any realistic measures can be taken to expand NATO's areas of activity, much less introduce a non-transatlantic membership.<sup>13</sup>

The Australian Government has offered low-key encouragement to suggestions for greater cooperation with, or within, a redefined NATO, an idea that, nonetheless, seems to have occasioned greater enthusiasm in some quarters of NATO and the Bush Administration than it has in Australia. Despite Downer's address to the North Atlantic Council and de Hoop Scheffer's visit to Australia, there has been little public exposure of the proposed closer ties or debate about them. In more than two years since Downer's address, not one of the principal strategic policy think tanks in Australia (a limited number in any case, but including the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University, the privately-endowed Lowy Institute in Sydney and the government-funded, stand-alone, Australian Strategic Policy Institute) has provided a major analysis of the proposals or their implications for Australian security policy. All continue to produce regular and sustained comment on the strategic relationship with the United States, the region, the Global War on Terror, the concomitant expansion in the Australian Defence Force and the costs and consequences of 'homeland security' initiatives (an additional AUD\$2 billion in the two years after the 11 September 2001 attacks alone).

Enhanced ties with NATO apparently have yet to resonate with those outside government circles. This is true of the opposition as well. The then-Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and International Security, Kevin Rudd, a former diplomat and a highly visible and well-informed spokesperson on the issues encompassed by his portfolio responsibilities, spoke regularly and at length on issues confronting Australian security and foreign policy. NATO rarely featured in his

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remarks, except in passing when noting the role of Australian Defence Force units under NATO command in Afghanistan.<sup>14</sup> In a major public speech in September 2006, asserting a redefined foreign and security policy for Australia under a future Labor government, neither NATO nor a putative Australian role within it received any mention at all.<sup>15</sup>

In this overall context, arguments for revised NATO procedures that would allow Australia, or other non-NATO partners, a deliberative role in NATO's political decision-making governing, for example, future operations in Afghanistan or elsewhere, seem rather irrelevant. This is not to suggest that involvement in political and strategic decision-making is not important. Historically, its absence severely tested the Anglo-Australian relationship in the Mediterranean theatre during the Second World War, and Australian governments have worked hard for decades to increase such access and influence within the ANZUS partnership. Practical, less formal and wide-ranging arrangements are favored currently, at least at the official level in Canberra. Given that the key relationship for both Australia and NATO is that with the United States and given that Australian involvement in operations as part of the Global War on Terror will almost certainly be predicated on US involvement, a focus on NATO decision-making practices perhaps misses the point. To the extent that it can, Australia will seek to exercise influence upon US decision-making processes and the success or failure of those efforts will be determined in Washington, not Brussels. Equally, opinion in NATO itself is clearly divided over the desirability of extending formal access to its internal processes to non-NATO partners. This point has been reinforced by the French Minister for Defence, Michele Alliot-Marie, in a clear statement of French attitudes ahead of the Riga Summit.

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the ANZUS partnership.

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Geographically, we should indeed acknowledge the contributions made to NATO's military operations by non-Alliance nations. This is the case, for example, for Australia and Japan in Afghanistan, operating however according to different modalities. It would be desirable to improve the practical modalities of their association with NATO operations without changing the essence of the organization, which this author believes should remain a European-Atlantic military alliance.<sup>16</sup>

This approach is consistent with Australian thinking and expectations, at least in the short to medium term.

In summary, the notion of an expanded NATO to include Australia in some form of membership is probably optimistic, because there seems little need for it and because even at the governmental level in Canberra, the emphasis currently remains on cooperation, albeit in a heightened form. Much will depend on the detail of what is proposed, on operational needs and developments in the next stage of the Global War on Terror, on attitudes and developments in Australia's own region and on the cycle of domestic politics. A formal alliance of Western nations on a global scale ('global NATO') is an idea whose time is yet to come, at least for Australians. Equally clearly, one would be unwise to dismiss unequivocally such a possibility in a complex and turbulent security environment in the future.

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## ENDNOTES

- 1 'Background briefing by senior Administration officials on the NATO Summit', 29 November 2006. <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/11/20061129-4.html>>.
- 2 The full text of Article IV is: Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on any of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes. Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall be immediately reported to the Security Council of the United Nations. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security. Accessed on 01 November 2007 from: <http://australianpolitics.com/foreign/anzus/anzus-treaty.shtml>.
- 3 The Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. John Howard MP, Joint Press Conference, 14 September 2001, <<http://www.pm.gov.au/media/Speech/2001/speech1240.cfm>>, accessed on 15 October 2007.
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- 5 An early and detailed analysis of the basis for an expanded NATO with responsibilities and missions outside Europe and in a global partnership to defend Western interests is provided by Ronald D Asmus, Robert D Blackwill and F Stephen Larrabee, 'Can NATO Survive?' in *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1996.
- 6 Ivo Daader and James Goldgeier, 'Global NATO', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 5, September–October 2006.
- 7 'Enhanced cooperation with NATO in a New Security Environment', 19 May 2004, accessed at <[http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2004/040519\\_nato.html](http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2004/040519_nato.html)>.

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- 9 <<http://www.iiss.org/whats-new/iiss-in-the-press/press-coverage-2006/april-2006/nato-debates-australian-partnership>>.
- 10 Article 10 of The North Atlantic Treaty states: 'The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty. Any State so invited may become a Party to the Treaty by depositing its instrument of accession with the Government of the United States of America. The Government of the United States of America will inform each of the Parties of the deposit of each such instrument of accession.' *The North Atlantic Treaty*, 4 April 1949, Washington D.C. Accessed at <<http://www.nato.int/docu/basic/txt/treaty.htm#Art10>>
- 11 'Partnership with NATO could hold pros and cons for Australia', 28 April 2006 accessed at <<http://www.cnsnews.com/ViewForeignBureaus.asp?Page=/ForeignBureaus/archive>>.
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- 13 Ronald D Asmus, 'Rebuilding the Atlantic Alliance', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 5, September–October 2003 discusses the breakdown in relations and argues for repairing the relationship through changes on both sides of the Atlantic.
- 14 In a public address in August 2004, Rudd noted in passing that 'there is no NATO in East Asia nor is there an East Asian equivalent of the CSCE', going on to say that stability in the region had been underpinned by 'a strong continuing US strategic presence reinforced by a range of alliance relationships in key regional powers' in Kevin Rudd, 'Australia's Engagement with Asia – a New Paradigm?', Asialink-ANU National Forum, 13 August, 2004.
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## THE AUTHOR

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## STRATEGY

# PEAK OIL AND THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY

MAJOR CAMERON LECKIE

### ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the impact of the peaking and then decline in world oil production—commonly known as Peak Oil—on the Australian Army from a Raise, Train and Sustain perspective. Peak Oil is described as the implications of Peak Oil at a global and national level. The likely impacts of Peak Oil on the Australian Army are then analysed against four of the inputs to military capability, being personnel, equipment, training and doctrine. The paper suggests a number of actions that can be taken to reduce the impact of Peak Oil on the Australian Army.

### INTRODUCTION

Oil is vital to virtually everything modern industrial societies do, yet it is mostly taken for granted. It provides 90 per cent of our transport fuel, 95 per cent of the goods in shops use oil and 95 per cent of our food products require oil use.<sup>1</sup> Oil is a finite resource—one day we will run out. While this will no doubt be a long time off, what is becoming clear is that global oil production will peak and then commence a terminal decline almost certainly within decades and quite possibly within the next few years.<sup>2</sup> While some official organisations,

such as the US Government's Energy Information Administration (EIA)<sup>3</sup>, make optimistic predictions and see oil production continuing to increase in the short to medium term, there is increasing concern among elements of the oil industry that the peaking in production is imminent or has already passed.

The implications of the peaking in global oil production are enormous. Predictions vary from a global economic recession to the collapse of modern industrial societies. Despite this, there is relatively little emphasis placed on preparing for the onset of Peak Oil by governments, the media, businesses or individuals, with some notable exceptions.<sup>4</sup> In the event of an early peak, this will be to society's great detriment and is something that should be of grave concern to all.

The magnitude of this problem for defence forces is summarised by the following excerpt from a *Boston Globe* report on the US Department of Defence:

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The implications of the peaking in global oil production are enormous.

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A new study ordered by the Pentagon warns that the rising cost and dwindling supply of oil—the lifeblood of fighter jets, warships, and tanks—will make the US military's ability to respond to hot spots around the world 'unsustainable in the long term.'<sup>5</sup>

If rising costs and dwindling supplies of oil have the potential to do this to the US military, it is likely that the Australian Defence Force (ADF) will face similar problems.

The ADF will not be immune to the impacts of Peak Oil. All three Services are heavily dependent upon oil as demonstrated in Financial Year 2005–06, where the Services submitted bids for liquid fuels totalling \$340 million (including unfunded, non-ADF requirements). All three Services are heavily dependent upon oil. Stuart McCarthy from the Australian Association of the Study of Peak Oil and Gas (ASPO) believes that increasing consumption and rising prices triggered by Peak Oil could see ADF fuel costs increase to 4 or 5 per cent of total Defence expenditure in the foreseeable future.<sup>6</sup> The impact of Peak Oil on all three Services is likely to be severe and will challenge the ADF's ability to conduct joint operations. For example, in a liquid fuel constrained environment, the ability to conduct strategic lift and provide close air support could be severely hampered.

Although Peak Oil presents significant implications for the wider ADF and Australia's military strategy, this paper will focus on the implications of Peak Oil for the Australian Army from a Raise, Train and Sustain perspective. If the Army is unprepared for the challenges that Peak Oil presents, it risks becoming 'functionally dislocated', with inappropriate doctrine, equipment and an inability to train or possibly perform the tasks that the Government requires of it. This is the

motivation for this paper—to ensure that the Army does not become ‘functionally dislocated’ and that it can continue to serve the Australian people in the same manner as it has throughout its history. The aim is to provide a starting point from which discussions and informed decisions can be made in planning and preparing for an uncertain future.

### WHAT IS PEAK OIL?

Oil is a fossil fuel and a finite resource. Since its discovery, the production of oil has steadily increased. Table One highlights world oil discoveries and production. Despite significant advances in technology and diligent exploration of the earth, the long-term downward discovery trend is evident and unlikely to change.

If the Army is unprepared for the challenges that Peak Oil presents, it risks becoming ‘functionally dislocated’ ...

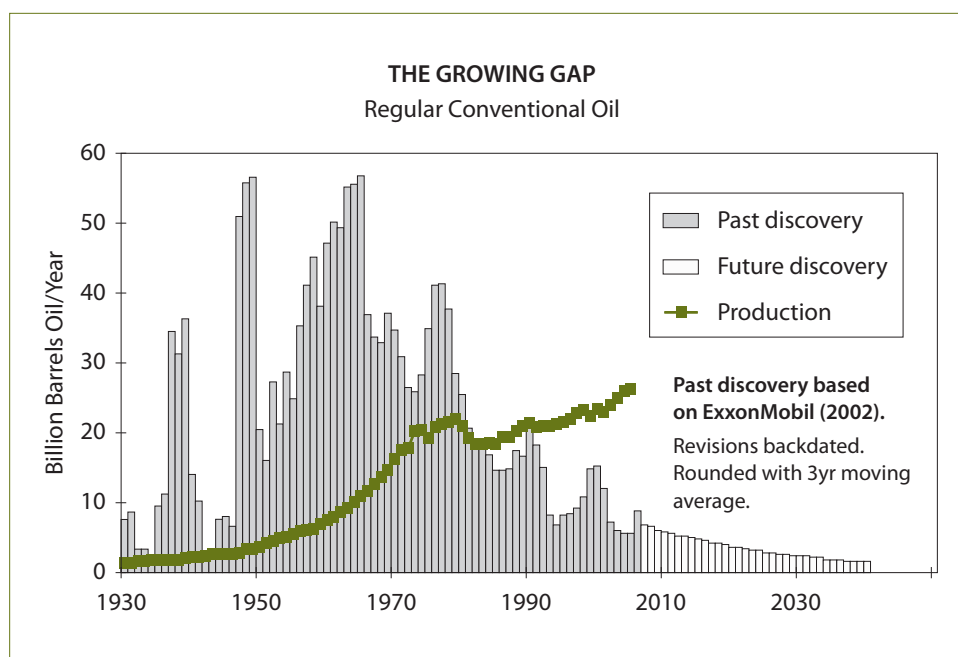


Table One: World Oil Discovery and Production<sup>7</sup>

Obviously one can not extract oil until it has been discovered. This implies that at some point after the peaking of discovery, there will be a corresponding peak in production. As can be seen in Table One, oil discovery peaked in the mid-1960s. Since the mid-1980s, the world has been consuming each year more oil than is being discovered. The trend of increasing demand is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. The EIA predicts that global demand for oil will grow by 47 per cent from 2003 to 2030.<sup>8</sup> The Australian Senate's interim report into Australia's future oil supply predicts that Australia's demand for oil will increase by 2 per cent per annum between 2006 and 2030.<sup>9</sup> Increased demand and contracting supply will have a significant impact on fuel prices and availability.

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Due to the complexity in predicting future oil production, it will not become clear when global oil production peaks until some years after the fact. Despite this, many organisations and individuals have developed predictions on the timing of Peak Oil. The recent Senate Committee Inquiry into Australia's future oil supply listed twenty-five predictions by industry players, experts and academics of the timing of Peak Oil. Twenty responses predicted a peak within fifteen years and of those, twelve predicted a peak within five years.<sup>10</sup> Some of the predictions suggest that the peak has already passed. It is quite possible that this is the case. For example, the International Energy Agency (IEA) reports total liquid fuel production at 84.28 million barrels a day in June 2007, which is 1.85 million barrels a day lower than the all-time high reached in July 2006.<sup>11</sup> Have we passed the peak? Possibly, but it is too early to be sure. The IEA in its latest *Medium Term Oil Market Report* has stated that by 2012 there will be increasing tightness in the oil market and that 'it is possible that the supply crunch could be deferred—but not by much.'<sup>12</sup> When the peak occurs is of relatively minor importance. Peaking is inevitable and the long-term implications are of far more significance than the actual timing.

After Peak Oil, it is unlikely that oil will be evenly distributed across countries. The current high oil prices are already demonstrating this in developing countries as widespread as Myanmar, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Nepal, where oil is already unaffordable for large parts of the population.<sup>13</sup> There is no guarantee that Australia will be able to obtain its requirement of liquid fuels post-Peak. According to Geoscience Australia, Australia's self-sufficiency in oil and petroleum products will decline from 84 per cent to 20 per cent (using a middle-range estimate of future production) over the next twenty years.<sup>14</sup> This will result in Australia relying on significantly greater imports, and hence competing with the rest of the world. Countries such as China have stated that they will pay anything for fuel<sup>15</sup>, and the United States, as the world's



biggest oil consumer, is likely to follow a similar path. This has the potential for Australia to be unable to purchase its fuel requirements or having to pay exorbitant amounts for its oil imports.

In addition to the significantly higher cost of oil, there is the potential for disruptions to oil supplies. Historically, there has been excess capacity within the oil industry that has ensured the flow of oil (known as 'swing producers') despite disruptions to oil production in an individual region. Over recent decades this has been primarily provided by OPEC nations and in particular Saudi Arabia. There is doubt however, that Saudi Arabia can still boost production, with one study arguing that Saudi production declined by 8 per cent in 2006.<sup>16</sup> Once global oil production peaks and commences its decline it will no longer be possible for 'swing producers' to make up for demand shortfalls. Any disruptions to supply, such as a hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico, internal conflict in Nigeria or geopolitical events such as a conflict in the Middle East has the potential to result in physical shortages. The impact of extended shortages of fuel supply in an industrialised nation would be catastrophic and are likely to result in significant social and economic instability.

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There is no guarantee that Australia will be able to obtain its requirement of liquid fuels post-Peak.

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## ALTERNATIVES

With future oil supplies declining and being unable to keep up with demand, the question of alternative fuels must be considered. There are many alternatives to oil. These include biofuels (ethanol and biodiesel), hydrogen and reforming gas or coal to liquid fuels. Unfortunately, none of them are capable of replacing oil as our primary source of liquid fuels at our current fuel usage rates for a number of reasons.

The first reason is the low starting base for alternate fuel production when compared to oil consumption. As a result, it would take a significant period of time for the production of alternative fuels to increase to a level where they can replace conventional oil. As an example, the Australian Government has set a biofuel production target of 350ML by 2010. Even if this could be increased by 25 per cent per year indefinitely, which is unlikely, it would take over twenty-two years for biofuels to match current Australian oil consumption. There also comes a point when a choice must be made on whether land is used to grow food or to grow feed stocks for biofuels—for example, the grain required to fill a typical four-wheel drive vehicle with ethanol could feed one person for a year.<sup>17</sup> The Chinese Government

has recognised the link between increased biofuel production and food security. As a result, its National Development and Reform Commission has significantly reduced its ethanol production target.<sup>18</sup>

The second major reason that alternate fuels will not make up for potential future oil demand is due to a ratio known as the Energy Return on Energy Investment (EROEI). This ratio is critical in understanding energy and why it is unlikely that alternate fuels will never be able to replace oil. This ratio expresses the energy gained as an output versus the energy required to produce a given energy source. Many alternate fuels have a ratio that is just over one (e.g. you only get a little bit more energy as an output than is used to produce the energy). This compares to the ratio for oil which is generally an order of magnitude, or more, greater than that for alternate fuels. As an example, hydrogen, which is an energy carrier, not an energy source, will always require more energy to create it than is released when it is used as a fuel—its Energy Returned on Energy Invested ratio is less than one.

While it is possible that there may be a technological breakthrough in the future, alternative fuels are unlikely to be able to make up for the decline in global oil production. Even if there is a technological breakthrough, it will still take a considerable period of time for the new technology to make an impact. For example, to replace just half of the US vehicle fleet would take ten- to fifteen-years<sup>19</sup> and would cost trillions of dollars. This implies that for the next one to two decades at least, we will be relying on the oil fuelled internal combustion engine as the primary locomotion source for transportation.

There are those who attempt to 'debunk' the Peak Oil theory or predict that Peak Oil will not occur for decades. These views are championed by ExxonMobil and Cambridge Energy Research Associates (CERA). A US Army Major, Daniel Davis, in his paper 'On the Precipice' has dissected the claims made by CERA in particular, that technology and unconventional sources of oil, such as oil shale and tar

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sands, will make up for both increased demand and declining conventional oil production. In July 2005, Mr Daniel Yergin, the President of CERA, detailed how technology would provide solutions to declining global oil supplies. As an example, he stated that the share of ‘unconventional oil’ would rise from 10 per cent of total capacity in 1990 to 30 per cent by 2010. The actual results, however, have not supported this. In 2005 the EIA reported that the percentage of unconventional oil was approximately 13.0 per cent of total daily oil production, while in 2006 the daily average was 13.2 per cent—virtually unchanged.<sup>20</sup> While it is possible that global oil supply will continue to expand and keep up with demand growth, through technological advancements, it is far from guaranteed that this will occur.

Unfortunately there are no quick fixes or ‘silver bullet’ solutions to our oil dependency. With world oil demand increasing and supply commencing a terminal decline there will be significant economic, social and political implications on a global scale that this paper will now consider so as to understand why Peak Oil is such a problem.

### THE IMPLICATIONS OF PEAK OIL

Left unmitigated, Peak Oil has the potential for major global economic and social disruption. The Hirsch Report stated that the economic loss to the United States from Peak Oil could be measured on a trillion-dollar scale.<sup>21</sup> It also found that without timely mitigation, the peaking of world oil production will almost certainly cause major economic upheaval.<sup>22</sup> This section describes the likely impacts of Peak Oil at a macro level so as to set the context for the impacts of Peak Oil on the Australian Army. One of the most immediate impacts of the onset of Peak Oil will be significant increases in both the cost of oil and its price volatility. As demand outstrips supply, there will be significant price increases. This in turn will result in demand destruction. As demand falls, the price of fuel will temporarily reach equilibrium between supply and demand until decreasing oil production repeats the cycle. We can expect each repetition of the cycle to become increasingly severe (eg. greater price increases and increased volatility). The impact of increasingly volatile and higher fuel prices on the economy is expected to be asymmetrical—the ‘negative economic effects of oil price increases are usually not offset by the economic stimulus resulting from a fall in oil prices.’<sup>23</sup> This could have a significant impact on defence industry and its ability to support the Army and ADF.

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The importance of oil to modern economies cannot be overstated. Oil and products derived from oil are used in nearly every sector of a modern industrial economy, from transportation fuels, to feed stocks for fertiliser used in modern agriculture to everyday plastic products. As a result, the price of oil directly impacts on inflation and interest rates, as stated in the Hirsch Report:

Higher oil prices result in increased costs for the production of goods and services, as well as inflation, unemployment, reduced demand for products other than oil, and lower capital investment. Tax revenues decline and budget deficits increase, driving up interest rates.<sup>24</sup>

These second-order economic impacts are likely to have significant ramifications for both the global and Australian economies. This view is supported by the US Government Accountability Office (GAO), which recently completed a report into the peaking of world oil production. It found that previous disruptions to oil supply caused unprecedented increases in oil prices and were associated with worldwide recessions.<sup>25</sup> This is supported by the Oil Shockwave simulation activity carried out in the United States, which found that even a 4 per cent disruption to global oil supplies would be sufficient to increase the price of oil by 177 per cent.<sup>26</sup> There have been five oil price peaks since 1965, all of which have caused economic downturns of varying severity.<sup>27</sup> The two most significant—the OPEC oil embargo of 1973 and the Iranian Revolution and Iran/Iraq War of 1980—resulted in widespread panic and miserable economic recessions.<sup>28</sup> These findings are based on experience from *temporary* disruptions to oil supplies. The impact of *permanent* demand shortfalls, after the onset of Peak Oil, is therefore likely to be much more severe and far longer in duration. The Hirsch Report provides a sobering warning when it states that waiting until world oil production peaks before taking action with crash programs action would leave the world with a significant liquid fuel deficit for more than two decades.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, we may only have years until the peak, and there appears to be very little recognition of the need for crash mitigation programs of the type envisioned by the Hirsch Report.

The Australian economy, which is heavily dependent upon the export of resources and tourism, will be particularly vulnerable to the onset of Peak Oil. Oil-inspired recessions result in lower government revenue from taxes while costs increase. This will provide significant pressure to reduce the Defence budget. Thus it is likely that the Army will be faced with a situation of decreased funding, increased costs for goods and services in general and liquid fuels

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There have been five oil price peaks since 1965, all of which have caused economic downturns of varying severity.

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in particular. This in turn will force decisions to be made on issues such as readiness levels, training, equipment acquisition and equipment operation. These factors make planning for the onset of Peak Oil of vital importance to the Australian Army.

### THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY AND PEAK OIL

The Army's mission is to win the land battle. Peak Oil has the potential to make this mission increasingly difficult and creates a number of vulnerabilities for the Australian Army. These vulnerabilities will be identified and explored against the building blocks of the Army's capabilities, in particular personnel, equipment, training and doctrine.

#### PERSONNEL

Soldiers are the backbone of the Army. This has been the case throughout history and will continue to be so, no matter what new technological advances take place. Peak Oil is likely to result in significantly higher unemployment. This is one of the few bright aspects of Peak Oil from the Army's perspective. As a secure form of employment, the Army will become increasingly attractive. With high unemployment, this should result in an increased number of recruits. Peak Oil should also assist with retention as civilian employment becomes increasingly competitive and less secure.

#### EQUIPMENT

While soldiers are the backbone of the Army, our equipment provides the tools through which the Army's mission is achieved. Modern mechanised military forces use an enormous amount of fuel. As an example, a single US division during Operation *Desert Storm* consumed 9.6 million litres of fuel a day.<sup>30</sup> This equates to over 6 per cent of Australia's current daily fuel consumption. The dependence of mechanised forces on oil exposes the Australian Army to a number of vulnerabilities. The first is the price of fuel. While the Army's consumption of fuel compared to both ADF and the wider community's consumption of fuel is relatively small, increases in cost due to Peak Oil will result either in an increasing percentage of the Army's budget spent on fuel purchases or reducing the amount of fuel consumed. There are very few options for reducing fuel consumption other than reducing operating hours for vehicles and limiting training.

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Given Australia's growing demand for imported oil, it is probable that in the years after Peak Oil, there will be disruptions to supply. The *Liquid Fuels Emergency Act 1984*<sup>31</sup> is the legislation by which the Australian Government will manage disruptions by prioritising the allocation of liquid fuels. In the event of disruptions to fuel supply, it is possible that severe restrictions will be placed upon the Army's use of liquid fuels for situations other than direct attacks against Australia. This will be a significant limiting factor on all aspects of the Army.

Just as fuel is required to move tanks, trucks and helicopters, there is a huge support network of industry that provides the maintenance and spare parts required to keep the Army's fleet of equipment operational. Modern logistics systems are largely based upon the 'just-in-time' principle for reasons of efficiency. This works in a system where there is cheap and plentiful oil ensuring a reliable transportation system. Peak Oil has the potential to disrupt transportation systems. In turn, this has the potential to delay both the repair of equipment that needs to return to deeper-level maintenance and in obtaining spare parts in a timely manner. For example, many items of communications equipment must be returned to the United States for maintenance and repair. Of even more concern is the availability of parts. Even a relatively simple item of equipment, such as a generator, consists of over 700 separate items.<sup>32</sup> The repair parts for all of the Army's equipment numbers millions of items. The industry that supports the Army's fleet of equipment will be susceptible to the same financial pressures as the Army. It is possible that many of these businesses will not survive the impacts of Peak Oil. The combination of a disruption to transportation systems and the unavailability of parts has the potential to render much of the Army's equipment unsupportable in the medium- to long-term.

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#### TRAINING

The third input into capability that underpins the Army's ability to generate forces capable of winning the land battle is training. Hard, realistic training is imperative to the Army's mission. As has already been identified, the cost and availability of fuel and the maintenance of the Army's equipment will provide significant challenges to the Army, in particular its ability to train. This will be exacerbated by the increased costs associated with training at a time when there will be significant pressure on the

Army to reduce its expenditure as the Australian Government struggles to manage the broader response to Peak Oil. The inflationary pressure caused by Peak Oil will result in most products and services rising in cost, including such vital requirements as rations and ammunition. This in turn will force reductions in the amount and level of training that the Army will be capable of undertaking.

Peak Oil will also impact upon Army's individual training system. Currently this relies heavily on domestic airlines for the movement of trainees to and from training institutions. As fuel prices rise, so too will the cost of air travel. At some point, possibly not long after Peak Oil, this may no longer be a viable means of transport. Dr Samsam Bakhtiari, formerly of the Iranian National Oil Company, has stated that '[a]eroplanes will be the first casualty' of Peak Oil.<sup>33</sup> If airlines do become the first victim of Peak Oil, the ability to move soldiers around the country to conduct training will be severely disrupted.

The Australian Army's low casualty rates in recent operations are a result of the high standards of training, both individual and collective, that the Army is currently capable of providing. The combined impacts of higher fuel costs and limited availability, equipment serviceability and the increased costs of training, at a time when there will be increased pressure on the Army's budget, lead to the conclusion that it will be difficult, if not impossible to maintain current standards after the onset of Peak Oil. In turn this implies that the Army can expect more casualties on operations, lower readiness levels and potentially the inability to provide a full range of capability options to Government.

#### DOCTRINE

The final aspect of capability that will be considered is doctrine. While discussed last, doctrine is arguably the most critical aspect of the Army's—and indeed the ADF's—response to Peak Oil. The Army's keystone doctrinal document, LWD1 *The Fundamentals of Land Warfare*, describes factors that are shaping land warfare, including globalisation and technological change.<sup>34</sup> Although the impact of unsustainable resource usage is mentioned briefly, nowhere does this document mention the implications of the global peaking of oil production. Our formation and battle group tactics are all based upon an underlying un-stated assumption that there will be the fuel available to operate as a modern Army. As has already been identified this may not be the case.

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Our formation and battle group tactics are all based upon an underlying un-stated assumption that there will be the fuel available to operate as a modern Army.

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By envisioning how we expect to fight, doctrine drives the capability acquisition cycle. The Hardened and Networked Army model is aimed at providing a modern, highly capable Army based around key capabilities such as the Bushranger Infantry Mobility Vehicle, M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank and Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter. These capabilities will be with the Army for significant periods of time; the equipment purchased under projects Land 907 (Main Battle Tank replacement) and Land 121 (Field vehicles and trailers) are expected to be in service until 2030 and 2040 respectively.<sup>35</sup> Military equipment traditionally has low fuel efficiency. This raises the question of how appropriate is the Army's current equipment acquisitions, given that many of these items of equipment will potentially be in service for decades after the onset of Peak Oil, when the cost and availability of fuel becomes a major issue? The first step in preparing for Peak Oil should be a review of Army and ADF doctrine in a Peak Oil context.

### RISK MANAGEMENT

The Hirsch Report, commissioned by the US Department of Energy, described Peak Oil as an unprecedented risk management problem.<sup>36</sup> It also found that the risks are asymmetrical. Mitigation actions initiated prematurely could result in a poor use of resources; however, late initiation of mitigation may result in severe consequences.<sup>37</sup>

The Hirsch Report goes on to state that:

The world has never confronted a problem like this, and the failure to act on a timely basis could have debilitating impacts on the world economy. Risk minimization requires the implementation of mitigation measures well prior to peaking. Since it is uncertain when peaking will occur, the challenge is indeed significant.<sup>38</sup>

The Army faces similar asymmetrical risks. For example, if mitigation measures are instituted early (e.g. changes to doctrine, equipment acquisition, etc.) and peaking does not occur for several decades, the changes will be premature. On the other hand, in the event of an early peak, the Army risks being 'functionally dislocated' with mechanised forces that cannot train or deploy due to the cost and availability of liquid fuels. Prudent risk management would suggest that planning for the onset of Peak Oil be initiated as early as possible.

### WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The impact of Peak Oil on the Australian Army, especially a peak within the next few years, has the potential to be tumultuous. Preparations for the onset of Peak Oil will require momentous change and pose considerable leadership challenges on the



Army. However, leadership is something on which the Army prides itself. The Army can provide the broader Australian community with leadership through its actions in preparing for Peak Oil.

There are numerous preparatory activities that can and should be undertaken. The first of these is education and awareness raising of energy issues. This provides the basis from which an understanding of the magnitude of the Peak Oil problem is developed and provides the motivation for change. Hopefully, this paper is the first step in this process. The establishment within Army of a Peak Oil study group would also be of great benefit. This would allow the coordination of Army's response both internally and with external organisations such as the Defence Material Organisation, industry and other government departments. The Army's doctrine must be reviewed and major thought put into how our Army will operate in a liquid fuels constrained future.

While the Army will be reliant on oil for the foreseeable future, there are many methods by which this dependency can be lessened. Examples include introducing solar and wind electrical generation equipment to reduce the dependency on diesel fuelled generators and reducing the stores and equipment required to provide headquarters and support functions in the field environment, which in turn will reduce the requirement for vehicles and hence fuel. The increased use of simulation in training will be vital in ensuring that standards can be maintained in a liquid fuel constrained environment. For individual training, distance learning and computer-based training programs could be implemented to reduce the requirement for air travel. Widespread installation of video teleconferencing facilities can also reduce the requirement for travel.

A prudent risk management activity would be a review of repair parts schedules for all of the Army's major equipment systems. Identification of the critical components that have the potential to result in complete systems being rendered unserviceable would provide a basis from which appropriate repair parts stock holdings could be developed. Future equipment procurement programs must take into account the onset of Peak Oil and focus on fuel efficiency and alternate sources of locomotion, such as hybrids or electric vehicles. Engagement with the Defence Material Organisation, Defence Science and Technology Organisation and industry will be a vital part of ensuring the future serviceability and useability of the Army's equipment.

Army barracks around the country have emergency plans for incidents such as fire, bomb threats and protests. Disruptions to fuel supplies would be a sensible addition to barracks emergency plans. These emergency management plans could include increased fuel holdings within barracks fuel points as a preventative

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The impact of Peak Oil  
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measure, prioritisation for the use of fuel in the event of a disruption to fuel supplies and planning for the movement of soldiers to and from their residences, possibly using military transport.

## CONCLUSION

Peak Oil represents the start of a new era—a time that will require fundamentally different thought processes to that which the first half of the age of oil allowed. Peak Oil will have significant social, economic and political impacts at all levels, from global to local. The Australian Army will not be immune. The challenge is for the Army to commence planning and implementing mitigation measures that will allow it to continue to ‘win the land battle’ now and into the future, perhaps at a time where oil is the nation’s most precious resource.

Preparing for the onset of Peak Oil will be time consuming and costly. However, as has been described throughout this paper, maintaining the status quo is not an option either. Waiting until there is a liquid fuels crisis to commence preparations will be too little too late. Preparation needs to start now.

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Peak Oil represents ...  
a time that will require  
fundamentally different  
thought processes ...

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## ENDNOTES

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## THE AUTHOR

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Major Cameron Leckie enlisted into the Australian Army in 1995 as an officer cadet at the Australian Defence Force Academy where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science. Allocated to the Royal Australian Corps of Signals on graduation from the Royal Military College, he was posted to the 1st Joint Support Unit. His current appointment is as the Officer Commanding of the 136th Signals Squadron. Major Leckie is a member of the Association for the Study of Peak Oil and Gas (ASPO) Brisbane branch.

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# FUTURE CONCEPTS AND FORCE DEVELOPMENT

## MUDDY BOOTS IO

### THE RISE OF SOLDIER BLOGS\*

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MAJOR ELIZABETH L. ROBBINS, U.S. ARMY

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A phone rings at the Pentagon. A journalist identifies himself and states, “I just read a blog that says Soldiers use dogs for target practice in Iraq. There’s a video clip showing it, too. What’s the Army’s position?”

How should the spokesperson respond?

Military web logs, known as blogs or milblogs, are small websites that Soldiers maintain as informal journals for personal comments, images, and links to other websites. Blogs emerged concurrently with the War on Terrorism and have become an increasingly influential and controversial phenomenon. This form of communication gives a Soldier the potential to reach a global audience.

In fall 2005, in recognition of the potential effects of blogs on information operations (IO), the Army began educating deploying units about this aspect of the evolving information domain. This article explores the milblog phenomenon,

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its benefits to the Army, current challenges, and the way ahead. It concludes that qualified support of Soldier blogs is good policy when coupled with clearly defined boundaries and aggressive Soldier education.

### WHY DO SOLDIERS BLOG?

Soldiers create blogs because they are an effective, efficient way to communicate. Soldiers and their families now expect near-instantaneous Internet and voice communications as an essential quality-of-life element.<sup>1</sup> During deployments or other geographic separations, milbloggers communicate with friends and family in a way that is easier (many people type more quickly and clearly than they write) and faster than postal services (traditional mail does not meet modern expectations of timeliness) and less presumptuous than email distribution lists.

Once a blogsite is running, a Soldier can post blogs periodically, and those with Internet connections—friend or foe, American or foreign—can choose when and how often to stop by. According to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) veteran Corporal Michael Bautista, “I started [my] blog because I felt bad that I didn’t write enough letters and emails to my family, and they can see what I’m doing, they can hear some of my experiences.”<sup>2</sup>

An equally important motivation is to communicate Soldiers’ experiences to outsiders. Soldiers understand that the public has become increasingly distrustful of mainstream news, and milblogs are a way to circumvent the media’s power to select news content.<sup>3</sup> This “gatekeeper” function is the media’s principal power, followed by its name recognition and access to consumers. Milblogs seize back some of this power, and many Soldiers relish the opportunity to share compelling descriptions of their reconstruction and warfighting experiences as well as man-on-the-scene coverage of daily life. In an interview, Bautista stated: “It kind of transformed itself from a desire to convey my personal experience into letting people know the real story. I think the main coverage that you’ll see at home is this car bomb blew up; this amount of people died. I think my main effort now is more toward showing that this is a good thing that we’ve done, regardless ... of what political decisions were made to get us here. We’re here. We have done a good thing.”<sup>4</sup>

Some milbloggers seek to counter inaccuracies in the media from a Soldier-level perspective. A high-profile example occurred in October 2005 when a teleconference was arranged between President George W. Bush, a group of 10 U.S. Soldiers, and one

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member of the Iraqi Army.<sup>5</sup> Once the communications link was established between Iraq and the White House, a senior Department of Defense (DOD) official and the Soldiers discussed what to expect. This preparatory talk, inadvertently broadcast live to the waiting news media, was widely pilloried by journalists as belying the White House assertion that the meeting was an unscripted conversation.<sup>6</sup> The White House and DOD responded to this criticism, but the most compelling response—widely disseminated within the blogosphere—came from one of the participants, Sergeant Robert Long, at 278medic.blogspot.com:<sup>7</sup>

Yesterday, I...was chosen to be among a small group of soldiers assigned to the 42 ID's Task Force Liberty that would speak to President Bush, our Commander-in-Chief. The interview went well, but I would like to respond to what most of the mass-media has dubbed as "A Staged Event."

First of all, we were told that we would be speaking with the President of the United States, our Commander-in-Chief, President Bush, so I believe that it would have been totally irresponsible for us NOT to prepare some ideas, facts or comments that we wanted to share with the President.

We were given an idea as to what topics he may discuss with us, but it's the President of the United States; he will choose which way his conversation with us may go. We practiced passing the microphone around to one another, so we wouldn't choke someone on live TV.

... It makes my stomach ache to think that we are helping to preserve free speech in the US, while the media uses that freedom to try to RIP DOWN the President and our morale, as US soldiers. They seem to be enjoying the fact that they are tearing the country apart. Worthless!<sup>8</sup>

This perspective penetrated the mainstream media after syndicated columnist Michelle Malkin cited Sergeant Long's blog in a column that strongly criticized the media's predominantly negative interpretation of the interview.<sup>9</sup>

Milblogs may also satisfy a Soldier's need for a creative, intellectual, or emotional outlet.<sup>10</sup> Previous generations of Soldiers wrote diaries or traded stories over a drink as a means of catharsis and retrospection, but many modern Soldiers prefer the electronic forum that can be simultaneously anonymous and public. Those who desire interaction create milblogs that allow visitors to respond with feedback and support.

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Some milbloggers want to share lessons learned from their experiences. While online professional forums exist for junior Army officers, most notably company-command.army.mil and platoonleader.army.mil, such forums do not exist for enlisted Soldiers. Troops heading into theater routinely read the milblogs of those who have already deployed to better prepare themselves.

Finally, more serious milbloggers seek to enter the blogging community. The so-called “blogosphere” is filled with online friendships and rivalries, and bloggers comment on each other’s postings as well as engage in spirited commentary.<sup>11</sup> Bloggers build communities by creating reciprocal links to other blogs, thus indicating which blog is worth reading. Greater numbers of links equate to higher search engine ratings, increased traffic, and more prestige for the blogger. Conversely, fake or inaccurate milblogs generate scorn and disregard in a community that is largely self-policing, a critical point in understanding blogging culture.

### QUALIFIED SUPPORT OF MILBLOGS IS GOOD POLICY

In simpler times (about 10 years ago), the Army’s corporate contribution to the public information domain was limited to what was produced by the traditional news media at local, national, and international levels, coupled with post newspapers and unit flyers. At the individual level, Soldiers wishing to publish a book or article or to grant a media interview were screened, and their unit public affairs officer (PAO) approved their activities.

Given that Soldiers’ abilities to publish were limited and that existing mass communications had a limited market reach, military control of Soldiers’ public communications was feasible. Commanders have traditionally sought to maximize control of influencing variables, and they effectively controlled this element of the battlespace. However, this also put power into the hands of the press, because Army efforts at public outreach were limited by editors and other gatekeepers who filtered the Army’s messages and controlled widespread access to the American people.

An era of greater risks and rewards has replaced this era of institutional control. The Army can reinforce its communications with the mainstream media by declaring its independence from it using the tools of the modern information domain. Without question, the domestic and international media are not a neutral force on the battlefield, and winning modern wars requires both battlefield success and mobilization of domestic and international public opinion.<sup>12</sup> By communicating

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directly with the American public, using the Internet to provide accurate, timely information that previously was available only from the media—if and when they chose to report it—the Army now positively influences public discussion.

In fact, the 2001 Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*, should be read with the understanding that the term “news media” includes use of the Internet. It reads: “Public affairs operations influence populations by transmitting information through the news media. They fulfill the Army’s obligation to keep the American people and the Army informed. Public affairs help to establish conditions that lead to confidence in the Army and its readiness to conduct operations in peace, conflict, and war. Disseminating this information is desirable and consistent with security. Information disseminated through public affairs counters the effects of propaganda and misinformation.”<sup>13</sup>

Since the Internet offers the most rapid, efficient, cost-effective, and direct means of reaching a variety of target audiences, the Army currently maintains dynamic websites to facilitate public information, community outreach, recruiting, internal (command) information, and media relations. This has dramatically increased the Army’s ability to communicate its story, to build the Nation’s trust in its Soldiers and capabilities, and to educate citizens about its efforts on their behalf.

However, this domain is not static. Forced to adapt to technological innovations and the evolving media culture, the Internet news market changes continually. One of the most important factors behind this has been the rising influence of blogs. In September 2006, Technorati search engine tracked 54.1 million blogs, a figure that has more than doubled in less than a year thanks to an estimated growth rate of 75,000 new blogs per day. Blogs are updated regularly with approximately 1.2 million posts daily.<sup>14</sup> A Pew survey conducted in early 2006 estimated that 39 percent of adult Internet users (57 million Americans) read blogs.<sup>15</sup> This is a communications phenomenon that cannot be ignored. To remain relevant and effective in the information domain, the Army must engage the power of this new medium by accepting and managing risk.

The primary reason to support Soldier milblogs is that they reveal the Army’s human face. According to consultant and author Robert Moskowitz:

Research shows that consumers get tired of the smoothly polished corporate message, and may even tune it out. Conversely, they tend to perk up their ears when they detect an individual’s honest expression. It’s the same phenomenon that causes hand-addressed direct mail pieces to earn a better response than identical but machine-addressed pieces.

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Moskowitz advises:

Somewhere in your company are one or more people who are passionate advocates of your products and services, who are good communicators, and who know exactly how to get the most from your products and services. These are born bloggers, and if you don't let them put their gifts to use, you're under-utilizing a major marketing asset.<sup>16</sup>

In a Nation with decreasing numbers of citizens who have any personal connection to the military, blogs augment Army journalists' efforts to educate people who are interested about the values, beliefs, and humanity of those in uniform. Blogs offer readers Soldiers' perspectives that seem more credible than the Army's official pronouncements. They come straight from the trenches, complete with interesting anecdotes and colorful descriptions, a perspective that is clearly unsanitized by Army leadership.<sup>17</sup> According to one retired officer, "The best blogs offer a taste of reality of Iraq or Afghanistan that the news media rarely capture. And they're often a grand, irreverent hoot."<sup>18</sup>

This fresh perspective is of particular value to prospective recruits who are anxious to learn what the Army is *really* like. Blogs offer a way to connect with these recruits, their family members, and other influencers. Most milblogs contain extensive explanations about why a Soldier decided to join the service, and they describe the personal growth and benefits gained from military service; moreover, they do so in language that is surprisingly pro-Army, pro-chain of command, and pro-mission.

In fact, the more the public perceives that military personnel who blog are honorable, interesting, intelligent people, the more it will respond with support and trust in our warfighting abilities and with volunteers in our ranks. During this period of intense warfighting, the Army receives constant media coverage and public interest. However, should the Army's news profile decline, milblogs will help maintain an essential, unique contact with citizens seeking insight into the Army.

A secondary, but equally vital reason to support blogs is to allow military bloggers to counter falsehoods propagated on other blogs. Bloggers exert significant control over fellow bloggers, and the blogging community is, to a large degree, self-policing. This policing function is one the Army cannot perform for itself because "official" blogs are not well received in the blogosphere.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, to silence the

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In a Nation with decreasing numbers of citizens who have any personal connection to the military, blogs ... educate people who are interested about the values, beliefs, and humanity of those in uniform.

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most credible voices—those at the spear’s edge—and to deny them this function is to handicap the Army on a vital, very real battlefield. The Army’s reputation is maintained on many fronts, and no one fights harder on its behalf than our young Soldiers. We must allow them access to this fight.

### TRoubles WITH MILBLOGS

Of course, some milblog perspectives may be undesirable. Soldiers may use blogs as a forum for airing legitimate grievances or whining self-indulgently. Soldiers may also misrepresent, lie, exaggerate, backstab, embarrass fellow Soldiers, or play out personal feuds. But just as most readers consult multiple blogs to gain context, leaders should also view an undesirable posting in context with the entirety of the blog and the overall blogosphere.

The Army position should be that *we seek to protect operational security and individual privacy, but we have nothing to hide and much to communicate, and we comprise over a million uniformed individuals with over a million perspectives.*

Public affairs officers should tell the news media that leaders want to know when something is wrong, and dissonant milblogs help satisfy that desire (although we traditionally rely on long-established chains of command to communicate, investigate, and fix problems). At the same time, of course, we should assure the media that the Army has long-standing mechanisms in place, such as inspectors general and equal opportunity offices, to support whistleblowers and ensure that Soldiers can get complaints and problems heard.

The worst-case milblog scenario would be the release of sensitive information that jeopardizes the success and safety of a future operation. Clearly, Soldiers should do no harm with their communications. If milblogs include inappropriate information about units and missions, this represents an unacceptable breakdown of discipline, unit cohesion, and Army culture. It also implies that leaders, operations security (OPSEC) officers, and PAOs failed to educate their Soldiers about information security. More senior milbloggers seem to understand these risks intuitively, although all milbloggers need clear-cut guidance.<sup>20</sup>

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An August 2005 ALARACT (All Army Activities) message from then-Army Chief of Staff General Peter J. Schoomaker stated that commanders should be keenly aware of potential security violations.<sup>21</sup> Clearly, any instance of breached OPSEC may have catastrophic consequences. However, fear of OPSEC violations has far outstripped the reality experienced by commanders in the field: since 2001, hundreds of blogs have originated from deployed and stateside locations, and there appear to be few instances where commanders have ordered that blogs be discontinued or violators punished for divulging sensitive information. At the most basic level, the evident discretion of milbloggers may be linked to their personal interests as combatants operating within the region.

“Security violations are rare,” stated Brigadier General Carter Ham, then the commander of well-known blogger and now published author Specialist Colby Buzzell ([www.cbftw.blogspot.com](http://www.cbftw.blogspot.com)). “While [operational security] is a very real everyday concern for us, I do not see potential violations as widespread.”<sup>22</sup> Buzzell states that he was called to account for two blogged observations: that his unit ran low on water during an extended operation and that he took certain tactical steps to obtain additional ammunition during a firefight. He subsequently removed both items following counseling and command intervention, but he was specifically not ordered to discontinue his blog.<sup>23</sup>

A lesser but still significant concern is the milblogged publication of information that does not jeopardize security but violates the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), Army policy, or the Army’s sense of propriety. Soldiers may share opinions about how to distribute and employ resources in the defense of our Nation, but their professional ethic demands that they refrain from partisan banter and public criticism of the chain of command. Even the most senior officers who are called upon to provide policy advice to civilian leadership cannot make public political statements. In fact, very few identifiable milbloggers violate this prohibition because they understand the penalties for breaching political boundaries set by UCMJ and DOD directives.<sup>24</sup>

Clearly, milblogs must also not infringe on the privacy of Soldiers or their families. Concerns range from descriptions of the follies and foibles of identifiable colleagues to real-time images of dead, wounded, or compromised individuals—friendly, enemy, or noncombatant. One milblog written by an Army doctor inappropriately revealed the numbers and types of casualties as well as the overwhelmed state of the local medical system following the December 2005 Mosul mess-hall bombing. Published prior to notification of next of kin, the blog increased the

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stress on frantic families awaiting word of their loved ones. While the products of embedded journalists are constrained by a contractual embedding agreement with DOD that forbids publishing a range of images and topics, milbloggers' products are under no such clearly defined official restraint or review. (Nevertheless, the thoughtless doctor was ordered to discontinue blogging.)<sup>25</sup>

For unit commanders, the most basic gut-level problem with milblogs is that Soldiers may publish anonymous real-time information about the Army without the Army's knowledge. This raises three concerns: Who speaks for the Army? If everyone may speak, what is the impact? What controls, if any, should the Army impose on Soldiers?

Current guidelines are adequate for printed books and articles, and most Soldiers comply with the requirement to consult a PAO if they wish to publish military content or use their military rank or title. Such PAOs serve the Army by ensuring that our personnel do not violate the traditional concerns of security, accuracy, policy, or propriety. They usually require the addition of a codicil, such as "This work does not reflect the views of the Department of the Army. The views here are his own." Presently, no such checks or statements are required on electronic communications, but many milbloggers voluntarily post a codicil.

Many leaders are aware that milblogs can spread information that might be damaging to unit morale, can create forums for gripes and hearsay, or can help enemies assess unit morale and other intangibles. Such forums could reveal embarrassing unmet needs for Army materiel, command information, or up-to-date lessons learned. When a leader learns the identity of a discontented milblogger, it may require extraordinary restraint to allow the blog to continue. But what a leader perceives as bad news might ultimately help his unit or the Army: if a unit is having difficulty, blogs can provide alternative means of communication with Army and outside leaders who may help to fix the problem. The release of negative information may be uncomfortable and embarrassing, but depending on how the blog is written, it need not represent indiscipline. Unremittingly positive blogs are both rare and unrealistic. We may be able to learn something from the more critical sites.

When a milblogger writes about the negative emotions and discomfort associated with military service, deployment, and war, these observations may accurately reflect that Soldier's experience. As the Army carries out the will of lawfully elected leaders on behalf of the American people, we want our fellow citizens to understand the true costs of service, including the burdens, the loss of comrades, and the toll on loved ones.<sup>26</sup>

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A final, potentially significant problem is the prospect of phony milblogs. Like imposters who claim to be former members of the Special Forces or SEALs, such bloggers may misrepresent themselves and publish incorrect or harmful information. Such a blog might read, “I can’t tell anyone what I saw for fear of retribution, but tonight we committed atrocities in my sector of Iraq.” If the media picks up this phony story, what then?

### MILBLOG CONTROLS

A basic truth is that the Army cannot effectively mandate that its personnel refrain from all public communications. To do so, the Army would need to prohibit Soldier access to all means of communications, because Soldiers’ family members and friends are not restricted from publicly releasing information they receive from their Soldiers by regular mail, email, or telephone.<sup>27</sup> In fact, anecdotal insights from fellow Soldiers indicate that private Soldier communications to family members who subsequently make inadvertent or intentional public statements are the primary source of leaked sensitive information. Some Army units temporarily restrict Soldier movement and access to communications equipment before significant operations or following a unit casualty, but cutting Soldiers off completely from family and friends is not a feasible long-term control measure.

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... the risk associated  
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Instead, the risk associated with Soldier communications is best managed by educating and trusting Soldiers. Given our values-based organization, the Army should make the same assumptions as do many U.S. corporations. Successful companies believe and communicate that their employees are reasonable and trustworthy and act in the company’s best interest.<sup>28</sup> A review of current corporate blogging policies reveals that their leaders believe employees must be educated as to what is allowable and forbidden. Companies typically do this in a clearly written, comprehensive, well-publicized document.

Just as milblog producers can be expected to exercise self-control, milblog consumers can be expected to exercise their own controls by heeding *caveat emptor*, “Let the buyer beware.” Akin to news aficionados who consult several news sources, milblog consumers are likely to monitor a variety of milblogs to expand their understanding of the Soldier experience. Obviously, quality control measures do not exist for milblogs; in fact, few Internet websites have such measures. Therefore, some milblog consumers will seek to expand their understanding of the Army’s story by visiting official websites such as [www.army.mil](http://www.army.mil)—to the ultimate benefit of the service.



An additional control is that the mainstream news media are particularly cautious about using information reported solely in the blogosphere, particularly since news content is now so thoroughly scrubbed by bloggers themselves. The media may have been prompted by gaffes such as the one that occurred in February 2005, when the Associated Press (AP) reported that an Iraqi militant website had posted the image of a captured U.S. Soldier and the threat of his beheading unless Iraqi prisoners were released.<sup>29</sup> While the AP article noted that the claim and the photo's authenticity could not be confirmed, the AP was subsequently embarrassed when bloggers quickly researched and revealed that the "captive" was a plastic toy action figure.

Some argue that milblogs can be cited by news media as convenient anonymous sources to "substantiate" all kinds of outrageous claims against the military. But for this threat, too, there is a control. Journalistic ethics decree that anonymous sources—say, milbloggers—can be cited only if the reporter has built up a trusting relationship with each one. To cite just any blog would be like trusting the contents of a leaflet found blowing in the street: it would equate to a violation of journalistic ethics.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, a reporter is duty bound to authenticate a blogged source. But, how to do so? As an Army spokesperson, I have received several inquiries from the media regarding blogged content. The real-life example that opened this article—a journalist requesting information about a blogged account of Soldiers shooting dogs—occurred because a journalist sought not only comment, but the confirmation needed to publish the account. Such contact gives the Army the opportunity to mitigate the impact of negative information.

As aforementioned, regardless of what we or the traditional media do, bloggers themselves exert significant control over fellow bloggers. Most Soldiers understand that when donning a uniform, they voluntarily agree to limit their free speech and political activity—a point that milbloggers reinforce among themselves.<sup>31</sup> Milblogs frequently link to other milblogs and comment on each other's content. Thus, the most credible milblogs are those that have been recognized by a small cadre of hard-core bloggers. They have survived the self-policing provided by those currently in the field, by those who have returned from the field, and by veterans who know enough to be able to assume this role.

In fact, the online community takes pride in "outing" all forms of deception and often is the first to reveal a falsehood. Two of the better known examples of this are "Rathergate" and "Easongate." On 8 September 2004, a *60 Minutes Wednesday* story

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... milblog consumers are likely to monitor a variety of milblogs to expand their understanding of the Soldier experience.

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based on an inauthentic document questioned President Bush's service in the Texas Air National Guard. When bloggers exposed that the report was false, CBS resisted, then apologized, and ultimately Dan Rather resigned with two years left on his contract.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, on 27 January 2005, CNN news chief Eason Jordan publicly accused the U.S. military of deliberately targeting journalists with lethal force. Jordan subsequently recanted, but a blogger who publicized the original comments ignited a controversy that forced Jordan to resign 15 days later.<sup>33</sup> Such online outing takes place within the blogosphere as well, to authenticate or invalidate those who pass themselves off as veterans or awardees, particularly those who claim to be affiliated with elite military organizations.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, because maintaining a milblog is hard work that requires time, Internet access, and some professional peril, the simplest controls on blogs are resources. For a blog to gain readership, it must achieve the blogging community's high standards of timeliness, consistency, and quality. Most Soldiers do not have the time or stamina to maintain such a blog, and most attempts wither from "diary syndrome"—a surge of up-front effort followed by fewer and fewer entries as interest and effort wane.<sup>35</sup> Internet access and bandwidth may not be available during a deployment, and commanders may limit use of scarce government resources for real-world communication missions. Ultimately, too, most individuals have no interest in subjecting themselves to additional command or peer scrutiny—a scrutiny that is itself evolving.

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## CURRENT ACTIONS AND THE WAY AHEAD

The latest Army guidance regarding blogs focuses on maintaining OPSEC in electronic communications. A rapid revision of Army Regulation 530-1, *Operations Security*, dated September 2005, calls on all Army personnel to properly implement OPSEC procedures in their communications and explicitly includes blogs in a listing of public forums.<sup>36</sup>

But the issues before the Army are larger than OPSEC. In recognition of this fact, the most specific guidance to date to Soldiers was released in April 2005 by Multi-National Corps—Iraq (MNC-I), in the policy memorandum "Unit and Soldier Owned and Maintained Websites." The policy prohibits the release of any official information not generally available to the public or releasable under the Freedom of Information Act. It lists five types of prohibited information: classified information,

casualty information before formal next-of-kin notification, information protected by the Privacy Act, information regarding incidents under ongoing investigation, and For Official Use Only information. The brevity of the MNC-I policy makes it difficult for a typical Soldier to understand it fully and comply, but it clearly communicates that specific types of information may not be released.

The primary effect of the MNC-I policy and the September 2005 ALARACT message has been to scare Soldiers. In response, many established milbloggers have voluntarily discontinued their milblogs, and most likely, many more never began one. Most signed off like this author of an extraordinarily insightful, positive, and moving blog, who wrote: “Operational security continues to be an issue for our Armed Forces. Therefore, it is with a heavy heart that I must back away from the blogging community .... I love my soldiers and want to do what is best for them .... I pray that I have been able to shed some light on the everyday events that our men and women overseas deal with ... into their struggles and triumphs .... What I do, I do willingly out of respect for our leaders and love for our soldiers.”<sup>37</sup> Managing Soldiers by scaring them into silence is regrettable because this blog and nearly all of the discontinued milblogs had served their readers and the Army well.

Therefore, the way ahead must engender an appreciation in commanders for the warfighting advantages that their Soldier-authors bring to the information battlespace.<sup>38</sup> This can be accomplished by addressing the three basic concerns about blogging listed earlier:

**1. “Who speaks for the Army?”** First, Soldiers have always served as ambassadors of the Army within their hometowns, their military communities, and throughout the world. Second, there are limited numbers of dedicated Army spokespersons (i.e., PAOs) to augment commanders. Third, it is a widely repeated truism that the best representatives of our Army—the best spokespersons—are our Soldiers themselves. Therefore, while commanders and PAOs serve as the “official” voice of the Army, all Army personnel represent and “speak” for the Army.

Similar to U.S. corporations, the Army needs to implement widespread training on information security and electronic communications to both support and caution Soldiers, Department of the Army (DA) civilians, and DA contractors. In addition, these personnel should receive traditional media training to “stay in their lane” and to preface comments with statements such as “What I know as a platoon sergeant is that...” and “I don’t speak for the Army, but I think...” Following instruction, individuals should be trusted to exercise self-control, as well as self-interest and selfless service, in publishing sensitive information.

In October 2005, the Army began sending out OPSEC mobile training teams to educate deploying units. This is a good start, but such education should be standardized into an annual classroom requirement, or a web-based tutorial and a predeployment refresher.

Most Soldiers want to do the right thing, but problems occur when they fail to recognize that their private and public electronic communications have merged. Education should ensure that milbloggers understand the potentially international nature of their audience.

A particularly pervasive problem is that most Soldiers do not understand the private-public merging of email. For example, an irreverent email from a Soldier to his father is a private communication, and one may certainly complain or question a superior in such a format. However, if the father forwards the email to his business associates, many of whom do not know the son personally, this private communication becomes public. As the email is forwarded or posted in the blogosphere, the result is widespread publication of a credible document with serious implications for the Soldier and the Army—no matter the sender’s original intent.

**2. “If everyone may speak, what is the impact?”** When everyone may speak—Soldiers and non-Soldiers alike—consumers become more savvy about what they consume. The fact that a milblog exists does not mean that it is read. Since the barriers to Internet publishing are low, consumers choose their sources based on credibility, accuracy, and timeliness. When credibility is hard to determine, consumers choose those blogs that regularly post information that is both useful and consistent with other sources. Corroborating sources include personal experience, news media accounts, and other blogs.

Like private citizens, the Army has a limited ability to distinguish between authentic and unauthentic milblogs. One approach, contained within the MNC-I memo, is to require all milbloggers to register with their commanders. Unfortunately, such a policy discourages “good” Soldiers while allowing “bad” Soldiers to blog unfettered unless caught. From a policy perspective, the Army should not feel obligated to respond to blogged allegations that lack such vital data as date, specific location, or unit name, for it is impossible to provide detailed responses to anonymous, unspecified rubbish. We need not set a precedent for troublemakers to waste Army resources by blogging falsehoods. The media cannot credibly publish any such blogged accusations without first substantiating them.

The Army can also benefit when individuals quickly speak for themselves to rectify inaccuracies in the national and international media. In a small number of cases, milbloggers can defend the Army more credibly and more quickly than official spokespersons.

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Education should ensure  
that milbloggers understand  
the potentially international  
nature of their audience.

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3. **“What controls, if any, should the Army impose on soldiers?”** If the Army opts for total control and restricts Soldiers from blogging, then Soldiers who like the Army and who are proud of their service will comply by shutting down their blogs and removing their positive influence from the blogosphere. In fact, these pro-Army blogs were never an issue because the Army benefits from the positive coverage. Most Army detractors ignore positive depictions of the military—experienced PAOs will attest that good news is rarely deemed newsworthy. If the Army restricts milblogs, the only voices that remain in the blogosphere will be the disgruntled and disaffected few, egged on by fellow miscreants and fakers. These troublemakers are perfectly capable of shifting the “preponderance of the evidence” in the blogosphere or even concocting phony issues that create noise in the system.

The MNC-I memo presents a carefully crafted set of restrictions ending with a paragraph stating, “This is a punitive policy.” Since meaningful restrictions require enforcement, the MNC-I policy states that commanders are responsible for reviewing blogs within their commands quarterly. This requirement is an additional burden on commanders with a lengthy time lag between publication and possible command feedback, a lag which renders such effort nearly useless. At present, limited help is available from outside sources. The Army Web Risk Assessment Cell specifically monitors official Army websites, although it also samples milblogs.<sup>39</sup> Unless the Army unwisely devotes vast resources to monitoring personal transmissions, commanders must primarily rely on the honor system and their Soldiers’ common sense.

Not only is enforcement a problem, but most possible violations exist in the eye of the beholder. Valid opinions differ between honorable people. But as one milblogger stated, “All good soldiers crave appropriate guidance to avoid problems.”<sup>40</sup> The MNC-I policy is an excellent start, but Soldiers deserve a more expanded and operational definition than it currently offers.<sup>41</sup>

Therefore, the Army needs to create a document on Soldier communications similar to the clearly written DOD media-embedding ground rules that constrain the publication of a range of images and topics.<sup>42</sup> Such a document would more clearly outline what is acceptable and unacceptable, although gray zones will always exist. Education on the document should be the centerpiece of annual OPSEC training and education requirements.

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## MUDDY BOOTS IO

Previous eras of widespread information control have been replaced by a present period offering greater risks and rewards. The newly found ability of Army personnel to communicate directly with the public, inadvertently or deliberately, anonymously or openly, requires updated and expanded guidance and education. Military blogs written by those in muddy boots—of their own volition and in their own words—give readers precious insight into the quality, efforts, and sacrifices of our forces. Blogs written within the boundaries of security, accuracy, policy, and propriety are a combat multiplier in the information domain. Commanders must educate Soldiers and provide them with specific guidelines in order to minimize possible OPSEC and other violations. However, commanders at every level must boldly accept risk in order to support the rewards and warfighting advantages that Soldier-authors bring to the information battlespace.

## ENDNOTES

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- 1 Family members now expect superb connectivity and may send computers and phones to deployed service members. See Moni Basu, 'Georgia Guard: The 48th: Georgia GI's in Iraq often without Net,' *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 4 July 2005, p. 6A. Also, 'Thanks to facilities stocked with computers and telephones, soldiers were able to keep in regular touch with loved ones .... Kadeisha Cornell and her husband, Sgt. Thomas Cornell, talked almost every day while he was gone.' Claire Parker, 'Tears, hugs greet GIs returning from Iraq,' *The Fayetteville (NC) Observer*, 4 September 2006, <[www.fayettevillenc.com/article?id=241214](http://www.fayettevillenc.com/article?id=241214)>.
- 2 'I Wanna be a Soldier Blogger,' National Public Radio 'On the Media,' aired on WYNC, New York, 29 April 2005, <[www.onthemedial.org/transcripts/transcripts\\_042905\\_blogger.html](http://www.onthemedial.org/transcripts/transcripts_042905_blogger.html)>.
- 3 Paul Gronke and Timothy Cook, 'Disdaining the Media in the Post 9/11 World,' paper prepared for delivery at the August 2002 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, 2002.
- 4 'I Wanna be a Soldier Blogger.'
- 5 Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, 'President Addresses U.S. Troops in Iraq in Video Teleconference,' 13 October available at <[www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/10/20051013.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/10/20051013.html)>.
- 6 Deb Reichmann, 'Bush Teleconference with Soldiers Staged,' The Associated Press, 13 October 2005.
- 7 U.S. Department of Defense, 'Statement from Pentagon Spokesman Lawrence Di Rita,' DOD News Release No. 1045-05 (Washington, DC: 13 October 2005), <[www.defenselink.mil/Releases/Release.aspx?ReleaseID=8956](http://www.defenselink.mil/Releases/Release.aspx?ReleaseID=8956)>.



- 8 Sergeant Ronald E. Long, Jr., 'Speaking with President Bush,' 14 October 2005, <<http://278medic.blogspot.com/2005/10/speaking-with-president-bush.html>>.
- 9 Michelle Malkin, 'All the News is a Stage,' *Washington Times*, 21 October 2005.
- 10 Amanda Lenhart and Susannah Fox, 'Bloggers: A portrait of the internet's new storytellers,' *Pew Internet & American Life Project*, 19 July 2006, pp. 7–11.
- 11 Ibid, 18–21.
- 12 Kenneth Payne, 'The Media as an Instrument of War,' *Parameters*, Spring 2005, p. 81.
- 13 U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*, Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office [GPO], June 2001, p. 11–20.
- 14 'About Us,' Technorati website, <[www.technorati.com/about/](http://www.technorati.com/about/)>. By comparison, on 12 November 2005, Technorati was tracking 21.1 million blogs with an estimated growth rate of 12 000 new blogs per day, updated by 275 000 posts daily.
- 15 Lenhart and Fox, 17. As compared to a study about 18 months earlier that estimated that 27 percent of adult Internet users (32 million Americans) read blogs. See Lee Rainie, 'The State of Blogging,' *Pew Internet & American Life Project*, January 2005, 2.
- 16 Robert Moskowitz, 'Five Reasons to Blog,' iMedia Connection, 14 March 2005, <[www.imediaconnection.com/content/5229.asp](http://www.imediaconnection.com/content/5229.asp)>.
- 17 This article specifically focuses on blogs, but much of the content applies to videos Soldiers create and post online to sites such as <[www.youtube.com/](http://www.youtube.com/)> or <[www.ifilm.com/](http://www.ifilm.com/)>. For example, 'Lazy Ramadi,' produced by Indiana National Guardsmen Staff Sergeants Matt Wright and Josh Dobbs, became an overnight sensation among both military and civilian viewers and was profiled by ABC News. See 'Soldiers Turn SNL Rap Skit Into 'Lazy Ramadi': Rapping About Pizza and Muncie, Ind., Iraq Video Becomes an Internet Hit,' *ABC News*, 18 May 2006, <<http://abcnews.go.com/US/story?id=1979301>>.
- 18 Ralph Peters, 'Reporting for Duty,' *Army Times*, 17 October 2005, p. 54.
- 19 Corporate blogs tend to fail because either the company's message is exposed as false by other bloggers or because the company fails to identify the blog as corporately owned. According to one study, 'Bloggers have an almost visceral reaction to these and see them as intruding on sacred ground. Blogs pride themselves on their transparency and independence from corporate ties. When a blog pops up that is obviously biased and lacks these two important traits, it is immediately suspect. Corporate blogs have been most successful when they have been run by—and subsequently identified with—one individual. Often this is the CEO or another high ranking officer in a company .... (1) They have a personal touch and do not seem to have the 'Approved by the PRDepartment' stamp on them and (2) They touch on a variety of subjects.' From 'Introduction to Blogs: A quick guide to understanding and maximizing communication efforts in the blogosphere,' *Bacon's Executive White Paper Series*, Volume I, 2005.

- 20 Younger soldiers such as Colby Buzzell, <<http://cbftw.blogspot.com/>>, a milblogger whose posts earned command attention, are less cautious than their experienced elders. In contrast, the popular blog allegedly written by a first sergeant, 'Dadmanly,' <<http://dadmanly.blogspot.com/2005/08/profiles-ncoic.html>>, wrote following an operation, 'I can't share details about this attack, because to do so would:
  - \* Aid an enemy making a Battle Damage Assessment (BDA) of the success of their attack;
  - \* Spread knowledge of the tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP) to other cells that otherwise might not learn of new methods;
  - \* Jeopardize operations security (OPSEC) for the Scouts, Quick Reaction Force (QRF) and other first responders to Jihadist attacks; and
  - \* Open up specific unit and leader decision-making to inappropriate public scrutiny. This can create situations where information, necessarily incomplete due to immediacy, preservation of individual Soldier rights, and classification, would otherwise distort how the overall information might be received and interpreted. These are not trivial concerns.'
- 21 Peter J. Schoomaker, 'Chief of Staff of the Army OPSEC Guidance,' ALARACT, 23 August 2005. This message built on a previous message from Vice Chief of Staff of the Army General Richard A. Cody, 'Sensitive Photographs,' 14 February 2005.
- 22 Christopher Cooper, 'Army Blogger's Tale Attract Censors' Eyes,' *Wall Street Journal*, 9 September 2004, p. B1.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 See UCMJ Article 88, 'Contempt Toward Officials,' and DOD Directive 1344.10, 'Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces on Active Duty,' 2 August 2004. Also, see DOD Directive 1325.6, 'Guidelines for Handling Dissident and Protest Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces,' 1 October 1996, certified current as of 1 December 2003.
- 25 Major Michael Cohen's blog at <[www.67cshdocs.com/Daily\\_Journals/December/dec21.htm](http://www.67cshdocs.com/Daily_Journals/December/dec21.htm)>. Also see Press, 'Military doctor closes online war diary,' 5 January 2005.
- 26 Those who are concerned that enemy forces will use anonymous milblogs to gauge morale or feed enemy propaganda should consider the current effects of U.S. editorial pages and the public statements of political leaders, both of which have been cited in enemy communiqués.
- 27 Witness the large number of blogs maintained by spouses and parents such as one of the longest running at <http://an-army-wife-life.com>.
- 28 'Corporate Blogging Policies: Introduction,' <[http://en.blogworkers.com/archives/2005/03/corporate\\_blogg.html](http://en.blogworkers.com/archives/2005/03/corporate_blogg.html)>.
- 29 Robert H. Reid, 'Questions raised over Web claim of soldier kidnapped in Iraq' *Associated Press*, 1 February 2005.



- 30 In one study, 53 per cent of journalists self-reported that they use blogs for story ideas, but only 1 percent was willing to state that they find blogs to be credible. 'Rebuilding Trust: Rebuilding Credibility in the Newsroom and Boardroom,' Eleventh Annual Survey of the Media with Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, 18 August 2005, p. 27.
- 31 Greyhawk, the founder of milblogs located at <[www.mudvillegazette.com/](http://www.mudvillegazette.com/)>, advises milbloggers to 'Write under the assumption that the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and your mother will read your stuff and know you wrote it,' quoted in '10 Tips for Posting Your Blog,' *Army Times*, 16 March 2005, p. 16.
- 32 Dick Thornburgh and Louis D. Boccardi, 'Report of the Independent Review Panel on the 8 September 2004 60 Minutes Wednesday Segment 'For the Record' Concerning President Bush's Texas Air National Guard Service,' 5 January 2005, available at <[www.cbsnews.com](http://www.cbsnews.com)>.
- 33 A 'blogstorm' of protest erupted when Rony Abovitz broke the story the morning of 28 January 2005 at <[www.forumblog.org/blog/2005/01/do\\_us\\_troops\\_ta.html](http://www.forumblog.org/blog/2005/01/do_us_troops_ta.html)>. An excellent chronological history is Michelle Malkin, 'Easongate: Retrospective,' 11 February 2005, <<http://michellemalkin.com/archives/001489.htm>>. A mainstream media account is Howard Kurtz, 'Eason Jordan, Quote, Unquote: CNN News Chief Clarifies His Comments on Iraq,' *Washington Post*, 8 February 2005, C01.
- 34 An example is the public discrediting of Robin Moore's 2003 book, *The Hunt for Bin Laden*, which relied on interviews of Jonathan Keith 'Jack' Idema, a self-promoting felon who repeatedly capitalized on his previous (although unsuccessful) stint as an Army Green Beret from the late 70s and early 80s. Idema used his military credentials to further a variety of business ventures and to gain credibility with the media such as CBS's *60 Minutes*. In September 2004, Idema was convicted by an Afghan court of charges that included operating a private torture camp. See Mariah Blake, 'Tin Soldier; An American Vigilante In Afghanistan, Using the Press for Profit and Glory,' *Columbia Journalism Review*, January/February 2005.
- 35 Lenhart and Fox, p. 12. According to the Pew survey, most bloggers blog infrequently when inspiration strikes (only 13 per cent post daily), and the typical blogger spends about two hours per week on a blog.
- 36 Army Regulation (AR) 530-1, *Operations Security*, Washington DC: GPO, 27 September 2005, p. 6.
- 37 Chaplain (Captain) Brad Lewis, 'Fade to Black,' <<http://chaplain.blogspot.com>>, 8 November 2005.
- 38 A term used in 'Army Vision 2010—Information Superiority,' <[www.army.mil/2010/information\\_superiority.htm](http://www.army.mil/2010/information_superiority.htm)>. The term is also used in FM 46-1, *Public Affairs Operations*, DC: GPO, May 1997, p. 32.
- 39 AR25-1, *Army Knowledge Management and Information Technology Management*, Washington DC, GPO, 30 June 2004, p. 27.

- 40 Joseph R. Chenelly, 'Bloggers in must register sites,' *Army Times*, 4 July 2005, p. 25.
- 41 Lieutenant General John R. Vines, Multi-National Corps—Iraq Policy #9, *Unit and Soldier Owned and Maintained Websites*, 6 April 2005.
- 42 DOD message dated 10 February 2003, Subject: Public Affairs Guidance (PAG) on Embedding Media During Possible Future Operations/Deployments in the U.S. Central Command's (CENTCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR). See Section 4, 'Ground Rules.'

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# FUTURE CONCEPTS AND FORCE DEVELOPMENT

## THE COMBAT EXCLUSION OF WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

### PATERNALISTIC PROTECTION OR MILITARY NEED?

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MAJOR SCOTT DAVISON

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#### ABSTRACT

While the Australian Defence Force has seen an increasing range of roles become available to women in the recent past, women are still excluded from serving in combat roles. This article discusses the arguments both for and against women serving in combat roles, drawing on both Australian and overseas observations.

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*Our combat effectiveness and performance in the field relates very much to the competence of our people—that is, their physical competence and their mental competence as well. Those competencies apply not just to men, but to women.<sup>1</sup>*

Admiral Chris Barrie, RAN  
Chief of the Defence Force, 1998–2002

Australia's military history is relatively short and uneventful given that this is a country that has never been invaded or rent by the agony of civil war. Yet in that brief century since Australia's soldiers first fought under the flag of their own nation, the inroads that women have made towards full integration in Australia's military forces have been nothing short of remarkable. Since 1901, women have performed in increasing and ever-widening roles, moving from a purely beneficent capacity towards full integration into mainstream military occupations. Historically, such integration has, at times, resulted from the urgent need to release the nation's men for combat duties overseas. More modern times, however, have seen servicemen and women competing with a parity reflective of Australia's latter-day social structure and those contemporary cultural values that espouse gender equality. Yet this integration has stopped short of allowing women to serve in all combat roles. Although the Australian Defence Force (ADF) has made significant progress towards eliminating gender discrimination and acknowledging the rights of women, service in the combat arms remains an exclusively male domain—'the last bastion'. This begs the question of whether such a prohibition is the result of paternalistic protection or military need.

Many advocates for continued exclusion frame their arguments in terms of the need to protect women—to keep them 'out of harm's way'. Others argue the case for preserving the military's combat effectiveness '[c]ombat capability is a first concern, and combat effectiveness cannot be compromised if the ADF is to fulfil its role'.<sup>2</sup> To this end physiological differences between men and women remain the most often cited justification for continued exclusion. Proponents of full integration, on the other hand, couch their arguments in terms of women's rights, equality, and the use of integration as a tool to fight discrimination and harassment. Indeed, today's Australians, as members of a contemporary liberal democratic society, are living in an unprecedented era in terms of winning battles against discrimination and harassment. Thus, the onus of justification for the exclusion of women from combat roles lies fairly and squarely with the Services, whose responsibility it is to advise their political masters, the ultimate arbiters of which employment categories should be open to women.

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The first women to serve in the Australian military forces were nurses. Australian forces serving in the Boer War included in 1901 a number of nurses in their ranks who, significantly, were listed on the establishment of the Australian Army. During the First World War, women again saw active service overseas, this time in Australian military hospitals as members of the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS).<sup>3</sup> In this period 'at least 2139 Australian Army Nursing Service personnel served overseas; 423 worked in Australian military hospitals and 29 died on active service.'<sup>4</sup> Given the social context of the period, women were employed only in what was essentially a non-combatant capacity. Women's employment in this role coincided with an era in which the ratio of combatant casualties exceeded that of non-combatant casualties, a marked contrast with the circumstances of contemporary warfare.

During the Second World War, the AANS was again prepared for active duty and nurses served overseas as part of the 2nd Australian Imperial Force (AIF).<sup>5</sup> The conflict also saw the formation of the Australian Army Medical Women's Service (AAMWS).<sup>6</sup> A shortage of men led to the further recruitment of women to fill crucial military roles with the establishment of the Women's Services in the 1940s. Over 60 000 women served across the three Services, releasing thousands of men for combat duties overseas.<sup>7</sup> Although the Women's Services were disbanded shortly after the end of the war, they were re-established in the 1950s, again, largely due to manpower shortages.<sup>8</sup> However, the recruitment of women was strictly limited and was never permitted to exceed 4 per cent of the total personnel of the mainstream Services. Women were also limited in other ways:

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... nurses served overseas as part of the 2nd Australian Imperial Force ...

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They received different training and could only occupy positions specifically designated for women. They were on a lower pay scale than their male counterparts, were not permitted to serve overseas, and were not permitted to remain in the service when they married.<sup>9</sup>

With the outbreak of the Vietnam War, Army nurses once again saw active service. It was during this conflict that demands of guerrilla war began to erode the sanctity of non-combatant immunity on a large scale. Against the background of the war and the concurrent era of social turmoil, the military began to confront its most significant period of adjustment. In the following decade, the Sexual Revolution and growth of the women's rights movement would prove to be powerful agents for change, particularly by destroying gender stereotypes and traditional attitudes to the role of women in society.<sup>10</sup> The rationales that women required 'protection' and should be kept 'out of harm's way' were branded as elements of patently outdated concepts of femininity, motherhood and women as nurturers. These concepts, grounded in conservative patriarchal notions of stereotypical gender roles, were

becoming increasingly less relevant as society modernised and social attitudes continued to advance into the new millennium.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, it became increasingly obvious that the ideal that women required protection in time of war had never been applied universally—civilian women were regularly killed and severely injured, targeted or left to fend for themselves in war and had been since time immemorial.

In 1975 the Chiefs of Staff Committee commissioned a working party to examine and report on the role of women in the ADF. The working party returned the recommendation that women should be permitted on active service, but should not serve in combat roles.<sup>12</sup>

In a military context this tacitly heralded the end of the era of protectionism, as women could no longer be regarded solely as non-combatants in the purest sense of the word. The ban on women bearing arms remained; however, this clearly denied the reality that women on active service would potentially need to defend themselves at some point.

Australia ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1983—albeit with combat exemptions.<sup>13</sup> The ADF then requested, and was granted, an exemption to the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* regarding the employment of women in combat or combat-related duties. These duties were defined as those ‘requiring a person to commit, or participate directly in the commission of an act of violence against an armed adversary in time of war, as well as those duties exposing a person to a high probability of direct physical contact with an armed adversary.’ With the application of these definitions of combat and combat-related duties, 17 000 (23 per cent) ADF positions were subsequently identified as being open to both men and women competing on the basis of merit.<sup>14</sup> Yet Defence leaders continued to approach the issue of women in the military as a pragmatic initiative, rather than as social policy.

With women now integrated into the mainstream, servicewomen were identified as members of the armed forces according to their functional role; their membership was now based on work rather than on gender. From this time forward, an increasing number and variety of jobs would become available to women competing on equal terms with their male colleagues.<sup>15</sup>

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... the ideal that women required protection in time of war had never been applied universally ...

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... Defence leaders continued to approach the issue of women in the military as a pragmatic initiative, rather than as social policy.

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Over the next few years the ADF conducted further reviews which led to the opening of additional categories to women. By 1989, some 28 562 positions (43 per cent) of all ADF positions were identified as being available to women competing equally with men. However, it was not until the 1990s that the military witnessed its most dramatic changes. In 1990 a review recommended that women be permitted to serve in combat-related positions and that this change be introduced over the next three years. The change was to be overseen by the Combat-Related Employment of Women Evaluation Team, which had a particular mission to monitor the impact of this amendment on the operational effectiveness of the Army. Navy adopted the recommendations with gusto, opening service on all surface ships to women—amounting to 94 per cent of all positions. The Air Force opened all positions except combat aircrew, Ground Defence Officers and Airfield Defence Guards—again, 94 per cent of all positions. The Army, in turn, opened up all positions *except* those directly involved in combat—only 53 per cent. In the twelve months from June 1989 to June 1990, the number of positions available to women more than doubled, increasing from around 22 000 to almost 53 000.<sup>16</sup> In 1992 the government went one step further, announcing that women would be able to serve in all Army, Navy and Air Force positions except direct combat units. This, in effect, allowed women to serve as combat aircrew in the Air Force and submariners in the Navy. In 1995 the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* was amended to reflect this monumental change.

The current Defence position on the employment of women in combat-related roles reflects some degree of progress in the years since the introduction of these far-reaching changes. In 2000, the Howard Government announced that Australia would partially withdraw its reservation to CEDAW concerning combat-related duties, representing a further advance from the 1983 position. The latest development occurred in 2005, when the Minister for Defence advised that:

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The current Defence position on the employment of women in combat-related roles reflects some degree of progress ...

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... suitably qualified women may apply to serve within the headquarters and administrative companies of artillery, armour and infantry units. Such women would undertake support roles only, such as clerical, medical, logistics, signals or transport duties. This opens a previously denied role for women in combat units.<sup>17</sup>

As it currently stands, women can be employed in approximately 90 per cent of employment categories across the ADF. Within the individual Services this represents 99 per cent of Navy and Air Force positions and 70 per cent of Army positions.<sup>18</sup> The *Defence Report* of 30 June 2005 stated that women comprised



13.2 per cent of the permanent ADF, occupying 6768 positions.<sup>19</sup> Among its international brethren, Australia is currently considered to be near the forefront of women's participation in the military.<sup>20</sup>

Although women are now able to serve in combat units in the ADF in a combat support role, current Defence policy nonetheless states that women are excluded from combat roles; that is, employment defined as involving *direct combat duties*. Specifically, the employment categories that remain denied to women are: Navy clearance diving teams; Airfield Defence Guards and Ground Defence Officers in the Air Force; and armour, artillery, combat engineers and infantry, including special forces, in the Army.<sup>21</sup> The crux of the current employment distinction between combat and combat-related roles lies in the *purpose* of the soldier and the *likelihood* of direct combat in what may potentially be a hostile environment:

... in the combat zone the prime purpose of combat troops is to engage the enemy in combat i.e. to seek out and destroy. In the communications zone/support area, where the environment is more benign, the prime purpose of troops is to support combatants in the combat zone. That long-range weapons may target a storage site in the 'non-combat zone', disrupt the lines of communication and incidentally maim troops at the storage site does not change the purpose of those troops.<sup>22</sup>

Yet, the distinction between combat and combat-related roles is artificial and denies the reality of contemporary war. The intent of this distinction is twofold: to keep women out of 'harm's way' and to preserve combat effectiveness, neither of which presents a cogent argument for the exclusion of women from combat roles. The argument that women need protection, in particular, has long ceased to retain its validity in Australian society.

At the conclusion of Operation *Desert Storm* in 1991, the United States reported a total of thirteen women killed in action, of whom five were termed 'combat casualties'.<sup>23</sup> A number of these casualties resulted from an Iraqi Scud missile that hit a combat service support area far behind the forward edge of the battle area. In the same conflict 'fourteen female Marines received the Combat Action Ribbon for returning fire

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against Iraqi troops.<sup>24</sup> The reality is that warfighting today is less discriminate than a hundred years ago and the various combat zones indistinguishable. Likewise, the distinction between combat and combat-related roles is also blurred:

Probably the major argument put forward in favour of removing all barriers to women's participation is that exempting women from combat duty while accepting them in combat-related positions is somewhat artificial. In war, women flying transport aircraft can be just as much exposed to the decisions of battle as are fighter pilots. Similarly, ships are either in action or they are not.<sup>25</sup>

No Iraqi insurgent firing a rocket-propelled grenade at a Blackhawk helicopter will consider the gender of its pilot, a point amply demonstrated when US Captain Tammy Duckworth, a Blackhawk co-pilot, lost both legs in 2004.<sup>26</sup>

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The artificial delineation between combat and combat-related roles was a conundrum faced by the United States in the First Gulf War, which it sought to solve through the application of the 'risk rule'. This rule was developed 'to standardize the Services' assignment of women deploying to a hostile area'.<sup>27</sup> The purpose of the 'risk rule' was to allow the majority of women to volunteer for military service without being forced to serve with units operating in or near the front lines.<sup>28</sup> However, applying the methodology of the rule proved no simple task given the threat of long-range chemical weapons and the reality that combat support units, comprising large numbers of female soldiers, were occasionally deployed closer to the front line than actual combat units. The rule proved particularly troublesome in the field:

The principle [*sic*] source of the confusion within the Army was the Direct Combat Probability Coding (DCPC) system, which unnecessarily complicated the management of military personnel at a time when the Army could least afford it. The system was especially troublesome at the unit level, where commanders struggled to keep pace with the shifting, unpredictable demands of the war by getting the most out of the people they had. Although Army leaders in the Pentagon continued to deny it, numerous reports surfaced through unofficial channels that commanders in the field were regularly ignoring the rules and assigning their people where they were most needed—regardless of gender.<sup>29</sup>

In the reality of combat the application of the 'risk rule' proved cumbersome and almost beyond universal application. It was effectively scrapped in January 1994, underscoring a key principle in the conduct of warfare—*keep it simple*.<sup>30</sup> Unwelcome

distractions in the battlefield are quickly discarded or ignored as combat leaders focus solely on achieving their objectives. This is a principle that applies across the spectrum of conflict.

Stabilisation operations are becoming more commonplace as the international (and regional) security environment redefines the requirement for combat troops to one of forces geared more to military peacekeeping, peacemaking or security. This is clearly evident in the range of current operations undertaken by the ADF, from Timor-Leste, Solomon Islands, Afghanistan, Iraq and the broad range of smaller United Nations and other deployments. This changing military role has, at times, been used to justify opening the remaining combat roles to women as a means of increasing combat effectiveness. It has been argued that, in the case of peacekeeping operations or occupations, 'women may actually perform combat-related missions as well as, if not better than, their male counterparts', particularly given the requirement to interact peacefully with the civilian population, to provide aid and to minimise further physical damage and loss of life.<sup>31</sup> However, within the Australian context, this rationale, effectively justifying the inclusion of women in combat units as a means of increasing the units' combat effectiveness, is redundant. The military already holds an exemption under *Section 43* of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* that permits the employment of a person of a particular sex as required, for example, where the duties of a position involve the searching of women. Regardless of a task force's order of battle, unit establishments can be modified or supplemented with attachments to suit a particular task or role, a concept analogous to bolt-on armour.

The remaining often-touted argument against women's full integration into combat roles lies in the need to preserve combat effectiveness. Combat effectiveness is a catch-all term that describes a force's ability to apply—and sustain the application of—lethal force at a given time and place. It is influenced by a range of factors such as the level of individual and collective training, equipment, resources, and coordination with combat multipliers

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afforded by use of the combined-arms team. The argument runs that women affect combat effectiveness in that their very presence diminishes unit readiness, cohesion and morale. It is also claimed that the physiological differences between men and women in endurance and strength justify their continued exclusion.

Undeniably, ground combat duties make huge demands on any individual's strength and stamina. Whether carrying mortars and ammunition, digging weapon pits, pack marching, changing tracks or throwing grenades, the daily demands on a soldier comprise constant physical exertion: 'Despite the technological advances, ground combat has not become less hazardous and physically demanding.'<sup>32</sup> This combat reality results in the claim that the physiological differences between men and women preclude women from combat roles because of the enormous physical demands of combat.

Is this claim justifiable? The argument that women are weaker than men is actually based on a calculated population average. There are significant gaps between the physical capabilities of men and women in general; however, studies have shown that 'the top 20 per cent of female military personnel can perform to an equivalent standard as the bottom 20 per cent of male military personnel.'<sup>33</sup> A further study found that 'more than 10 percent of the military women have greater lifting capacity than the lowest 10 per cent of men.'<sup>34</sup> Finally, 'there is little doubt that some women could meet the physical standards for ground combat.'<sup>35</sup> This overlap refutes the argument that physiological differences constitute a sound basis for the exclusion of *all* women.

At the individual level, combat capability involves a set of skills and physical conditioning that isolates ineligible individuals in relatively short order. Combat itself is optimally fought in teams against a numerically inferior force. An individual's performance contributes to the combat effectiveness of the team; however, the team's combat effectiveness is not solely contingent on any one individual.<sup>36</sup> Accepting that some women could perform at least as well as their average male counterparts, and conceding that in most combat situations people tend to perform in groups, the argument that combat effectiveness will be compromised based on the physiological differences between men and women is patently flawed, particularly given that the ADF is theoretically able to employ physically and mentally capable women in ground combat units. Defence leadership has recognised this and recently the ADF moved towards the introduction of competency-based standards for combat roles. Objectors continue to cite the physiological capabilities of the 'average woman' as being unable to meet the physical demands of combat. However, once competency standards are

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formalised, it can be reasonably expected that the ‘average woman’ will not make the grade in any case—only the uppermost percentile will. In fact, there will also be a number of men who prove incapable of meeting these standards, a situation exacerbated by the lowering of ADF entry standards in an effort to increase the size of the Army by 2600 personnel over the coming years.<sup>37</sup>

In 1998 the CDF directed that work on combat competencies should be completed in priority order of: engineers, artillery, armour and infantry.<sup>38</sup> This project was given a two-year time frame with anticipated completion by mid-2001.<sup>39</sup> The Navy, for its part, indicated a willingness to seek approval from the government to open employment in the clearance diving team category to women. However, due recognition was also accorded to the fact that the employment of women in combat roles is a polarised debate. Thus, the introduction of competency-based standards for combat roles was quickly linked to the requirement to maintain combat capability. Both of these aspects were addressed in the Ferguson Report, referred to by Admiral Barrie, who described a key finding of this report in a speech to the 12th Women, Management and Employment Relations Conference in Sydney in 2000:

Rather than being seen as a gender issue it was approached as an equity issue focusing on employment competency and the requirement to maintain combat capability—my new words [sic], enhance combat capability. The research found that the arguments against widening women’s employment in the ADF had no empirical evidence to support them—they were simply based on emotion.<sup>40</sup>

One significant issue for women in combat roles is that of pregnancy. While a female is biologically bound to motherhood, Australian society generally regards responsibility for parenting as ideally shared equally between men and women.<sup>41</sup> Further, proponents of the move to exclude women from combat ‘do not seem to acknowledge that women are only pregnant for a short part of their lives, that some women never become pregnant at all, and that readiness procedures and policies could well accommodate the 5-10 percent of military women who are pregnant at any given time.’<sup>42</sup> The US Presidential Commission found that, on average, maternity leave reduced the availability of women for duty by a mere one hour per month compared with the availability

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of their male counterparts.<sup>43</sup> Pregnancy certainly presents a genuine problem in terms of readiness for deployment and must, therefore, be carefully managed. The uncertainty of pregnancy presents a legitimate reason to exclude a woman from actually engaging in combat, but it is equally true that not all women are pregnant all of the time and thus pregnancy cannot be used as a justification to exclude *all* women from combat.<sup>44</sup>

Rosemary Skaine, commenting on the research of Mady Segal, claims that 'if there is a need to defend our society, women will not be defined in a societally constructed gender role, and even if they are, that constructed role will be overridden and they will be helping the war or peace effort.'<sup>45</sup> Regardless of this, the gender assumptions relating to women's 'role' in society as 'mothers engaged in raising the next generation' evoke emotive reactions from all corners. An indication of a typical attitude that women pioneers confront is characterised in the words of former Commandant of the US Marine Corps, General Robert Barrow, from his congressional testimony in 1991:

EXPOSURE to danger is not combat. Being shot at, even being killed, is not combat. Combat is finding ... closing with ... and killing or capturing the enemy. It's KILLING. And it's done in an environment that is often as difficult as you can possibly imagine. Extremes of climate. Brutality. Death. Dying. It's ... uncivilized! And women CAN'T DO IT! Nor should they even be thought of as doing it. The requirements for strength and endurance render them UNABLE to do it. And I may be old-fashioned, but I think the very nature of women disqualifies them from doing it. Women give life. Sustain life. Nurture life. They don't TAKE it.<sup>46</sup>

In reality, in a potentially deadly environment, little regard will be paid to the gender of a team member. The focus will be fixed firmly on the survival of the team itself. Task cohesion will override socially constructed gender roles.<sup>47</sup> It will also contribute to the bonding process and mitigate environmental factors.

While, indisputably, 'male bonding' is a critical aspect of teamwork and performance on the battlefield, the group dynamics concept should not be limited by gender. Devilbiss found evidence to support the hypothesis that 'cohesion is based on commonality of experience, shared risk and mutual experiences of hardship, not on gender distinction.'<sup>48</sup> The bonding processes of men and women are not mutually exclusive; they are not restricted along gender lines. Hence, from this perspective the contention that readiness and cohesion are contingent on gender appears flawed. Group dynamics can be managed in such a way as to avoid perceptions of unfairness

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or favouritism, just as the impact of pregnancy can be managed. The same rationale could be applied to environmental factors such as hygiene, menstruation, forced intimacy in communal living areas, or lack of privacy on the battlefield; none of these issues is insurmountable with a little prior preparation, ingenuity and resolve—traits for which Australian Diggers are renowned. After all, Australian military nurses have endured such difficulties without a reduction in their ability to perform their wartime duties since 1901.<sup>49</sup>

It is often claimed that task cohesion would suffer in an operational environment as men revert to their natural instinct to protect women in combat situations, that ‘male soldiers will be psychologically unable to cope with seeing female compatriots maimed, killed, or sexually assaulted has negative implications for military readiness and effectiveness.’<sup>50</sup> While this may be a widely held opinion, it is highly likely to be a generational attitude rooted in the social assumptions of a traditional feminine role—that women require protection.<sup>51</sup> One anecdotal example of this, both culturally and temporally bound to conservative attitudes and occurring at a time preceding the Sexual Revolution relates:

... in 1948 a handful of women did see combat [in Israel] with the *Hagana’s* fighting arm, the *Polmach*, but their presence resulted in both sides suffering higher casualties. Israeli men risked their lives and missions to protect their women, and Arab troops fought more fiercely to avoid the humiliation of being defeated by women.<sup>52</sup>

I would argue that a situation such as this is not relevant to Australian soldiers typical of the X and Y generations. In addition, apart from this lone example, *because* women do not serve in combat, there is little evidence to support the claim. Field and Nagl support this view, claiming, ‘the operational capabilities of a unit are not weakened by the presence of women.’<sup>53</sup> Perhaps of greater import is the impact of potential harassment concomitant with introducing women into a previously all-male military culture.

Harassment is a facet of military culture that women may face in combat units. Its elimination and the acceptance of women in combat units are tied to cultural change. The reality is that attitudinal change—leading to cultural change—is a slow process, perhaps slowest in

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the military.<sup>54</sup> These are among the issues causing greatest concern to the ADF in terms of undermining combat effectiveness. Yet, questions remain over the validity of these concerns.

There is a direct correlation between the existence of a strong military culture and a high level of combat effectiveness. Military culture provides the foundation for essential standards of behaviour—discipline, teamwork, loyalty, selfless duty—from which success in battle results.<sup>55</sup> Discipline engenders resolve and creates a semblance of order in battle. Western military culture embodies the professional ethos of service, a shared identity, guides the conduct of its members and establishes a respect for civilian control of military forces. However, creating this military culture during the training process requires definition of what precisely it means to be in the military. This definition is almost always characteristically male and this masculinity may be reinforced at the expense of women:

Denigrating femininity is one common way of bolstering masculinity that is used during training. ... A man's masculinity, his self-identity, is called into question when he is accused of having female traits.<sup>56</sup>

This aspect of military culture fosters an atmosphere of sexism, discrimination and harassment built on the perception of male superiority. It became clearly manifest in the ADF in the 1990s with reported incidents of alleged sexual harassment and assault.<sup>57</sup> Incidents such as these, in an era of ever-increasing female participation in the military, became a catalyst for expanding the number of employment categories open to women as well as imposing cultural change.<sup>58</sup> Further incidents of harassment led to the establishment of a review into policies and practices to deal with sexual harassment and sexual offences at the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA), with a report published in 1998.<sup>59</sup> A submission to the inquiry by Dr Graham Cheeseman, an academic at the University College at ADFA, suggested that one step in 'eradicating the root causes of sexual harassment at ADFA would be to begin to reconstruct the notion of the armed forces and military service in Australia in non-gendered (and even non-militarised) terms.'<sup>60</sup> The notion of reconstructing military service in non-military terms would perhaps be regarded by many as extreme; yet it bore witness to the fact that the increasing presence of women in the military was disruptive of, or at least worked to modify military culture to the extent that the validity of male superiority was open to question, particularly if women were competent at performing those tasks traditionally performed by men.<sup>61</sup>

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By far the biggest obstacle in the fight to open combat roles to women remains the entrenched attitudes of many of the ADF's combat soldiers. Surveys canvassing military attitudes towards the combat-related employment of women conclude that the most negative attitudes can be attributed to male soldiers and officers serving in all-male units.<sup>62</sup> Managing hostility towards female 'trailblazers' in the combat arms and breaking down pre-existing, negative, sexist attitudes of the 'old and bold' requires a measured approach. Canada has travelled this path and can offer some important lessons:

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A 1989 decision by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal opened all combat positions in the Canadian Forces (CF) except submarines to women. Based on this decision, the CF invited women from both inside and outside the military to join the infantry: 103 women responded to the offer.<sup>63</sup>

Yet, in 2002, 'Canada, a nation with an armed force of about 65,000, [had] six women infantry soldiers.'<sup>64</sup> The Canadian experience was replete with issues such as perceptions that women were recruited simply to fill quotas and reports of the harassment and the isolation of women warriors. 'This would help explain when [sic], in 12 years, women have made very little inroad into the combat arms in Canada.'<sup>65</sup>

One means for Australia to avoid issues such as these is for the military to achieve critical mass in combat units. Critical mass encompasses the requirement to both establish a proportion of women within a combat unit and also to sustain that number. It is generally accepted that this figure should be around 20 per cent.<sup>66</sup>

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The Army's Combat Related Employment of Women Team worked on a figure of 10 per cent.<sup>67</sup> The Office of the Status of Women believes that a figure of between 20 and 30 per cent is more realistic.<sup>68</sup> However, a numerical solution is somewhat simplistic at best. Critical mass limits were also identified as important in establishing how the presence of women in combat units will create a situation that actually contributes to combat effectiveness.<sup>69</sup> Achieving critical mass would also address the concerns of tokenism and contribute to minority acceptance. Blalock describes the phenomenon of minority-



proportion discrimination, the theory that discrimination occurs against minorities in the workplace because of their lack of numerical representation. The corollary to this occurs when the specialised skills of the minority are valued by the majority, leading to decreased discrimination. Conversely again, where the minority is without specialised skills, the majority perceives an erosion of team skills, leading to increased discrimination. Minority-proportion discrimination also implies that the larger the relative size of the minority, the greater the discrimination because of the increased competitive threat to the majority.<sup>70</sup> Thus, in real terms, the application of this theory dictates that for women to successfully integrate into the combat arms, those already serving in those corps need to be convinced that women possess, or have the potential to gain, skills that are desirable.<sup>71</sup>

The practicality of achieving critical mass is complicated by the obstacles posed by women's availability or willingness to serve in combat roles. A survey of 250 women, approximately 10 per cent of the female Army population, was conducted in 2001. They were asked, firstly, which combat arms employment categories they thought should be opened to women and, secondly, in which of these categories they would be prepared to serve. 'They appeared to have a clear idea of what was required and this became more evident to them the longer they served and as a result of seeing first hand the role of soldiers in the Combat Arms on deployment.'<sup>72</sup> Fewer than 50 per cent thought that combat arms employment categories should be available to women (particularly infantry), and even fewer of this group expressed a willingness to serve personally (about one in four). While these results indicate that few women wish to serve in the combat arms, this does not justify their exclusion *per se*.

In the face of current research and modern societal attitudes, the primary arguments that seek to preclude women from combat roles appear flawed. The protectionist arguments fail from the pragmatic perspective of selecting the best qualified person for the position, regardless of gender. Keeping women 'out of harm's way' denies the reality of modern warfare and is grounded in conservative and outdated notions of assumed and ascribed gender stereotypes. The claim that employing women in combat roles will

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reduce combat effectiveness is also unproven. The smokescreen that physiological differences justify exclusion employs critically pejorative language such as ‘fairness to our troops’ and ‘on average women just don’t cut it’. This claim fails to recognise that there will be a small proportion of women who *will* be able to meet the physical demands of combat. Certainly it would appear ‘unfair’ to expect the average woman to fight in hand-to-hand combat with a man; however, the *average* woman is not at issue. The injustice, in fact, lies in paternalistically denying women this opportunity. Achieving gender equality is not about destroying barriers simply because they exist. Of greater import is the right to be treated as an individual, not as a member of a group, and this is a notion wholly supported by the liberal democratic society that is Australia. Discordantly, women are not similarly situated in the ADF—yet.

A more pertinent problem is the attendant cultural change required to support the presence of women in combat units. The future employment of women in combat roles is simply inevitable. However, socialisation and acceptance of the concept of women serving in combat roles will be a slow process given the military’s resistance to change. Regardless of the difficulties ahead, the justification for the continued exclusion of women from combat roles lies with the Services—the fact that the process will be difficult does not mean that it should not proceed. The ADF has already come part of the way by allowing suitably qualified women to serve on the headquarters of combat units in combat support and combat service support roles. The ADF is bound to implement gender neutral competency standards for combat roles at some as-yet-undetermined time in the future.

Yet gender equality carries with it the burden of implication, including the fact that equal rights entail equal responsibilities—they are two sides of the same coin. Women are not currently compelled to serve in a combat capacity following basic training. When women metaphorically ‘storm the last bastion’, those who are suitably qualified may be assigned to direct combat roles—as men are today—to meet current operational requirements. The simplicity of implementation is of paramount importance. The US ‘risk rule’ obfuscated the employment of women in the First Gulf War, and the artificial distinctions between combat and combat-related roles continue to deny the reality of warfare. Distractions such as these present the greatest potential to negatively influence combat effectiveness—and have no place on the battlefield. There is no need to further encumber combat leaders already heavily burdened in discharging their operational missions. Keep it simple—and allow the team to do its job.

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The future employment  
of women in combat  
roles is simply inevitable.

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- 5 During the Second World War, a total of seventy-one nurses died on active service. The AANS was designated 'Royal' (RAANS) and became part of the Australian Regular Army in 1949. Ibid.
- 6 The AAMWS was disbanded in 1951 and its functions incorporated into the new Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps (RAANC). Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 The Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS) was disbanded at the end of the Second World War. The Women's Australian Auxiliary Air Force (WAAAF) was disbanded in 1947 and re-formed as the Women's Royal Australian Air Force (WRAAF). The Women's Australian Army Corps (WAAC) was granted the 'Royal' prefix in June 1951 and became the WRAAC. Ibid.
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### THE AUTHOR

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# EDUCATION, DOCTRINE AND TRAINING

## CHARACTER AND THE STRATEGIC SOLDIER

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORAL LEADERSHIP FOR THE ALL CORPS SOLDIER TRAINING CONTINUUM

CHAPLAIN DAVID GRULKE AND CHAPLAIN MARK HINTON

#### ABSTRACT

This paper makes explicit a process for developing moral leadership and ethical decision-making. It provides insight into the theoretical frameworks and practical outcomes that have been inserted into the All Corps Soldier Training Continuum promotional courses and provides a series of recommendations for further effort.

#### INTRODUCTION

In a world of far-flung deployments, uncertain and fluid environments and persistent media coverage, the strategic soldier makes snap decisions every day that may have profound consequences. Each individual soldier's character impacts significantly upon their ability to provide effective leadership across such

a range of situations. The All Corps Soldier Training Continuum (ACSTC) focuses on common training and the leadership development of the Australian soldier. In modern warfare, and its associated ambiguities, an important element of leadership development is the formation of character, which has always been seen as important for the Australian soldier. It is for this reason that character development is embedded within the ACSTC.

In 2005 and 2006, Land Warfare Centre (LWC) Chaplains began a re-development of the ACSTC moral leadership components, culminating in the construction of a moral leadership package, to be inserted across the ACSTC corporal to regimental sergeant major (RSM) subject one promotional courses. This development involved an informal training needs analysis, engaging ranks from corporal to RSM in Sydney and Brisbane, and input from Promotions Wing at LWC, Canungra. Additionally, a review was conducted on current doctrine, training packages and policy guidelines dealing with leadership and the ideal character for the modern Army environment.<sup>1</sup>

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#### CHARACTER DOCTRINE WITHIN THE ADF

In reviewing the current state of character training across the ACSTC, beginning from entry-level training through to the Officer Grade 2 course, it was found that much of the material failed to engage doctrine, and that doctrine itself failed to provide enough substantive frameworks from which the development of character training could emerge. There are inconsistencies and lack of correlation between the various training points along the ACSTC spectrum to support an overarching development of character. While some good material existed, it was found that much of character training existed adjunct to doctrine, and failed to provide an adequate continuum upon which leadership and character could be developed. In addition, much of it failed to engage a whole-of-training approach, seeing character as an additional training point, rather than part of both doctrine and current Army policy.

Land Warfare Doctrine 0-2-2 *Character*<sup>2</sup> was released in 2005. Both LWD 0-2-2 *Character* and LWD 0-2 *Leadership*<sup>3</sup> overlap on numerous points, indicating they should be read within the context of the other. *Character* tends to

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brush over various points regarding character without providing much substance. It relies on anecdotal material, promotes a somewhat mythological ideal of the Australian soldier, and fails to give adequate theoretical frameworks for some of its key concepts. In addition, its release should have prompted a total review of current character training to ensure that it supported doctrine. This has not occurred outside the development of the moral leadership package within LWC.

#### OBSERVATIONS ON CHARACTER DOCTRINE

As a result of the review and the information gathered, several observations emerged. The first focused on Army ethos and values, which were generally viewed negatively by those engaged, even though they upheld a perspective that affirmed their importance. Significantly, many commented that rarely were the ethos and values displayed by those who imposed them, and that the social make-up of those entering the Army did not lean towards adopting such values as their own. The second observation engaged the position of RSM, who was seen as the most significant figure in which all elements of being a soldier should be found. Many, including RSMs, indicated that while they believed this to be so, reality indicated differently as the subjugation of Army bureaucracy overwhelmed the position with superfluous tasks. The third observation focused on ethical decision-making, which was perceived as a declining skill amongst many in the Army. Most felt that this affected all of Army, and all within the chain of command have a responsibility for both modelling and mentoring this skill. Fourthly, beliefs and world views emerged as a focal point in which it was found that most respondents could not adequately articulate a belief system, much less identify the world view that governed much of Army's understanding of character.

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... rarely were the  
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displayed by those who  
imposed them ...

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The significant outcome was that a framework for developing a world view was needed. This framework needed to be articulated within the various transitional levels of promotion, and out of it both an understanding of what shapes character and how an individual's character affects ethical decision making needed to be developed.

#### A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR MORAL LEADERSHIP

Character formation within the ACSTC promotional courses needs to address two distinct areas. First, the individual needs to have the skills to articulate a world view appropriate to her or his rank level, and understand the implications of that on life as a soldier and potential leader within the Army. Second, the individual needs to be

able to function ethically as a leader, particularly in the ability to make morally sound decisions across the range of environments that may be encountered. An individual's world view and the ability to think ethically need to be an integral part of the soldier's self-identity. This self-identification enables the individual to act morally and ethically in an instinctive manner to any given scenario in any military context.

#### A MODEL FOR A WORLD VIEW

While numerous models of world views exist, many are either tainted by a particular cultural, religious, theological, or sociological perspective, or are too complex to sustain in a multicultural and multi-religious environment such as Army. The model developed by Frederick Streng<sup>4</sup> provided the capability of translation into a military context, in which the diversity of views within this environment could find a common framework. All models have their flaws, and Streng's is no exception, nevertheless his model is most useful in defining a structural approach to a world view.

Streng's model contains five elements. The first is the *ultimate reality* that is understood as the ideal to which an individual is intimately linked and by which all aspirations in life are shaped. The second is the *problematic state*, which contains the barriers that prevent the *ultimate reality* from being fully realised. The process of change is the third element, and is understood as the *means of transformation*. This transformation overcomes the *problematic state* and permits the individual to achieve intimacy with the *ultimate reality*. The outcomes of the transformation are realised by the last two elements. The first of these is *individual expression*, which comprises the internalised changes evident in the individual in terms of self-awareness. The second is *social expression*, the externalised actions that provide evidence of the individual's shift toward the *ultimate reality* in terms of social interaction. This is seen by Diagram 1.

This model can be translated into an Army framework using the concept of the 'Soldier of the 21st Century'.<sup>5</sup> This concept contains nine traits integral to being an Australian soldier:

- Every soldier is an expert in close combat.
- Every soldier is a leader.
- Every soldier is physically tough.
- Every soldier is mentally prepared.
- Every soldier is committed to continuous learning.
- Every soldier is courageous.

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An individual's world view and the ability to think ethically need to be an integral part of the soldier's self-identity.

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- Every soldier takes the initiative.
- Every soldier works for the team.
- Every soldier demonstrates compassion.<sup>6</sup>

This concept identifies a standard to which all are expected to self-develop. The reality is that no-one can embody them perfectly and, therefore, the model identifies both the ideal and the problematic. The soldier strives to self-realise the ideal, but also needs to overcome barriers that prevent such self-realisation. The process of undertaking this effort requires transformation in the individual. Such transformation aids in shaping self-identification as a soldier, and presents an external image that others identify with the concept of being an Australian soldier. This is seen in Diagram 2.

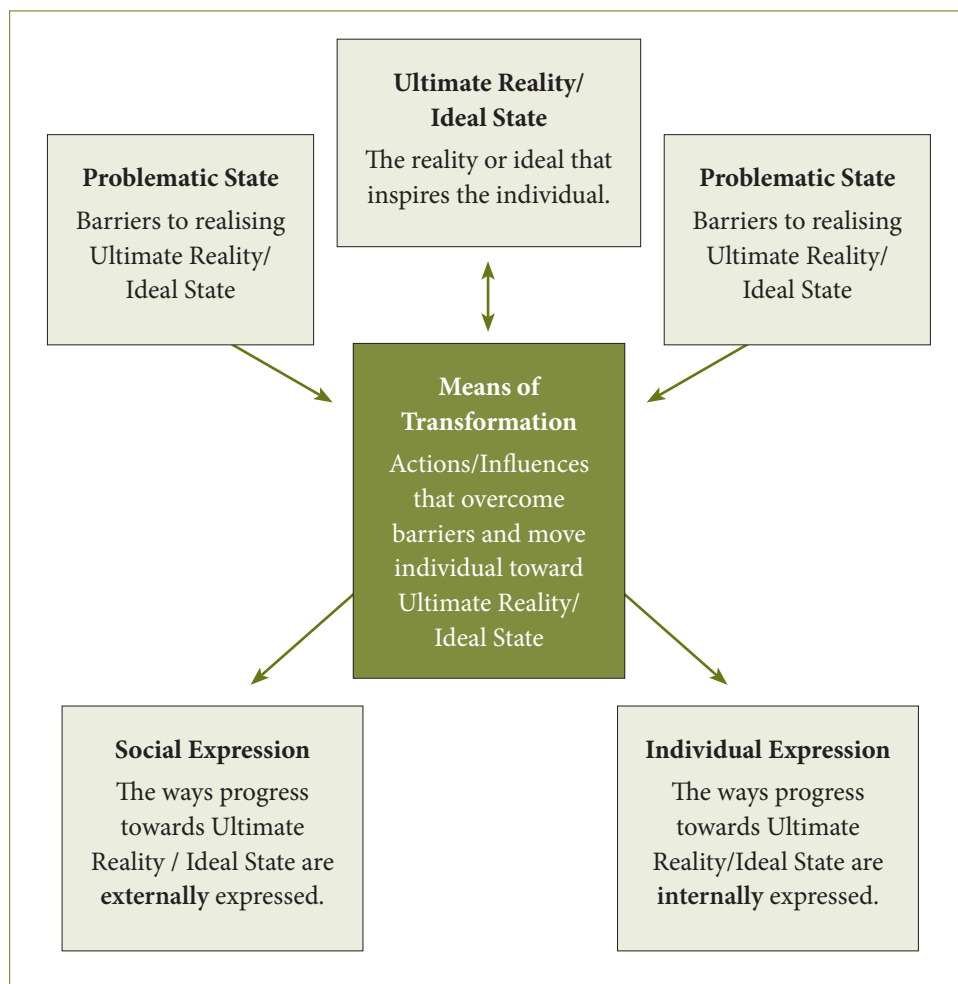


Diagram 1. Streng's Model of a World View.<sup>7</sup>

Streng's model enables individuals to grasp a comprehensible world view in a structured format into which Army doctrine and intent can be inserted. It is robust enough for individual adaptation without compromise of fundamental belief systems, yet permits the merging of Army's ideal soldier into the overarching world view of the individual. A training model can be developed in which individuals can be empowered to facilitate their own personal transformation processes.

One of the pragmatic issues that arises is 'how does this transformation manifest itself?' Another issue is: against what visible standard should the ideal be measured? Based on the research undertaken, it was concluded that the position of RSM embodies the totality of the ideal soldier, and as such the nine elements of the

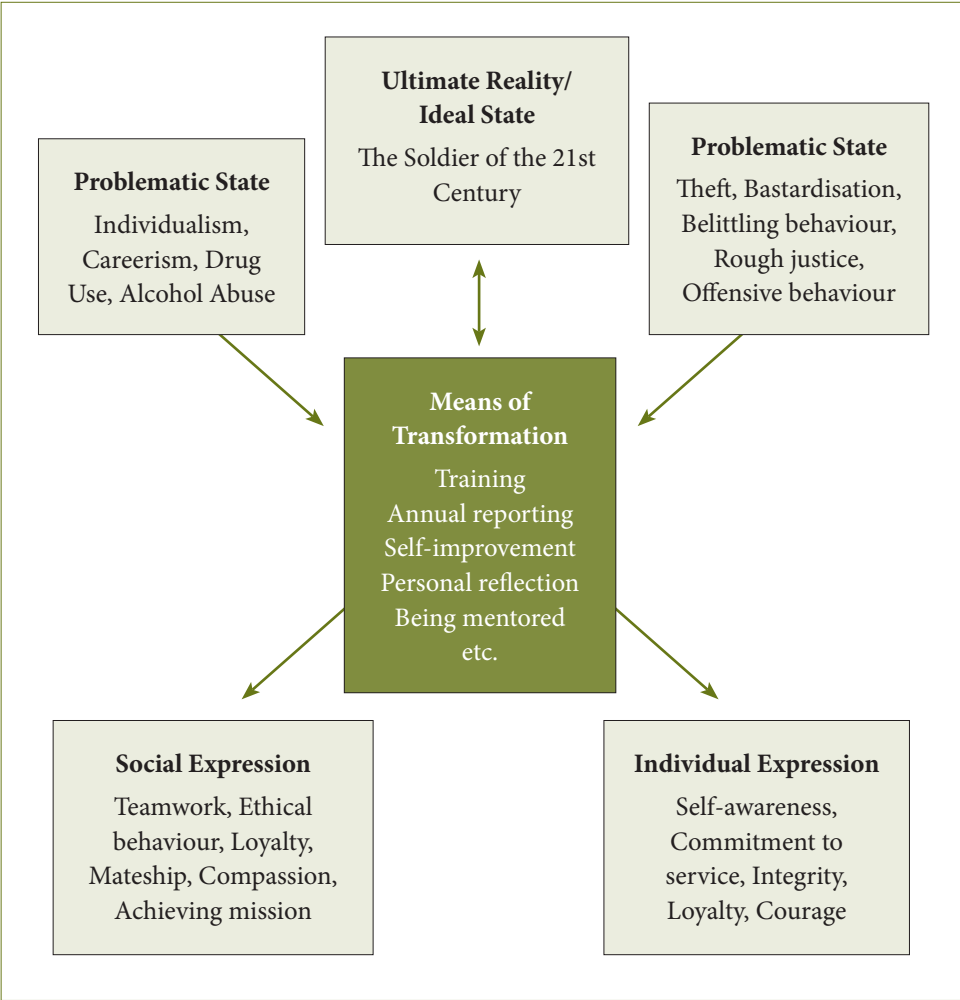


Diagram 2. Streng's model applied to Australian Army.



‘Soldier of the 21st Century’ should be embodied by the RSM. The diversity of personalities, style, trade, corps, beliefs, etc., all enable Army to have a variety of expressions of the ideal. It is for this reason that the individual best qualified, by status, experience, knowledge, development and learning, to impart the concept of the ‘Soldier of the 21st Century’ to soldiers is the RSM. It is not the role of the Chaplain to impart these concepts to soldiers; the Army Chaplain has an integral role of conceptualising these values for individuals based on the lived example of the RSM. As such, the RSM and Chaplain must work as a team in placing before soldiers the *ideal*, the *problematic* required to be overcome, the *means of transformation* and the forms of *expression* such a relationship with the ideal delivers to both the individual and all within the Army organisation. The RSM needs to both state and embody the ideal to subordinates, while the Chaplain needs to assist individuals to comprehend why the ideal is so important to character formation. This has a training implication in the delivery of character formation.

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#### A MODEL FOR ETHICAL AND MORAL THINKING

The process for ethical decision-making grows out of a world view. The ‘individual’ and ‘social expression’ is the nexus where ethical and moral thinking manifest into action. However, the model for making ethical and moral decisions also needs to fit into the model of decision-making within the Army. LWD 0-2 *Leadership* identifies a rational process of decision-making:

- Step 1 - Define the problem.
- Step 2 - Identify the object of the decision.
- Step 3 - Analyse the situation.
- Step 4 - Identify and assess the alternatives.
- Step 5 - Decide the best course of action.
- Step 6 - Implement the plan and evaluate the results.<sup>8</sup>

An ethical decision-making model was adapted from the work of the Markkula Centre for Applied Ethics<sup>9</sup> that met the generic criteria needed for use within the Army context. This framework is:

- Recognise an ethical issue
- Get the facts
- Evaluate alternative actions from various ethical perspectives as follows:
  - Utilitarian Approach—the greatest benefits over harms
  - Rights Approach—most dutifully respects the rights of all

- Fairness or Justice Approach—people are treated equally, proportionally, and fairly
- Common Good Approach—contributes most to the achievement of a quality common life together, and
- Virtue Approach—embodies the habits and values of humans at their best.
- Make a decision and test it:
  - Which option is the right or best thing to do?
  - If you told someone you respect what would that person say?
  - Act then, reflect on the decision later. (How did it turn out? Would you do anything differently if the same situation occurred again?)

In adapting the above for use within Army, some modifications are required. For example, the Virtue Approach, and talking over the decision with a trusted individual, is translated into the concept of Transparency and is an easier concept for soldiers to grasp while still reflecting the essence of those approaches. Testing a decision is dropped from the model, and replaced with ‘determine the best action, take the action, and reflect upon outcomes’, which accurately reflects the rational military decision-making model found in LWD 0-2.

Additionally, two further dimensions need to be added. These are *the lawfulness of action*<sup>10</sup> and *consistency with the commander’s intent*.<sup>11</sup>

These are included because they embrace the environment in which Army functions. Warfighting, in the Australian context, includes clearly defined parameters set within a legal boundary. All ethical decisions must take into account *lawfulness of action* and *commander’s intent* if they are deemed valid, and as such the tests used should affirm or confirm the validity of the proposed action. The endpoint for moral leadership and the ethical thinking model is that the soldier is able to do the right thing at all times. The model for use within Army then looks like the following.

Warfighting, in the Australian context, includes clearly defined parameters set within a legal boundary.

- Identify the facts
- Identify possible actions
- Test against:
  - Greatest balance of benefit versus harm
  - Respect full rights and dignity of all
  - Fair and just outcomes
  - Contribution to the common good
  - Action consistent with individual world view
  - Transparency

- Lawfulness of action (i.e. compliance with legal regulations, laws of armed conflict, rules of engagement, etc.)
- Consistency with commander's intent or mission imperatives
- Determine the best action
- Take action best suited for situation, and
- Reflect upon the outcomes of the action.

The variety of ethical models employed in the model provides choice. Not all apply to all situations. The use of such diversity provides individuals with a variety of tools within the one framework from which to function effectively in an ever-changing complex environment. Furthermore, it relies heavily upon the concept of the 'Soldier of the 21st Century' being the basic world view that is embedded within the soldier. This model provides a holistic approach, using the developing 'virtues' within the soldier as the point from which all decision-making is based.

## CONCLUSION

The research undertaken was a challenging and adaptive re-evaluation of how Army currently delivers character training and what shape that should take within the ACSTC. From this several recommendations were made. They included:

- The adoption of Streng's model of a world view, using the concept of the 'Soldier of the 21st Century', to enhance and clarify the intent of doctrine and the delivery of those elements seen as crucial within doctrine for the leadership development of the Australian soldier.
- The adoption of the Markkula Centre for Applied Ethics model for ethical thinking, as adapted by this paper, within the leadership decision-making process of the promotional courses of the ACSTC as a tool that enhances Army's current decision-making processes and enables soldiers at all levels to not just act morally but to make decisions that are morally and ethically sound.
- That a review of all courses within the ACSTC take place in light of the new LWD 0-2-2 *Character* and changes be made that embrace Streng's model of a world view and the adaptation of the Markkula Centre for Applied Ethics model for ethical thinking to ensure a more robust and sustainable outcome is achieved.
- That a review of character training across Army be undertaken to ensure that units are resourced with the skills and methods needed to ensure that character development remains an ongoing concern for all elements within Army. In particular, this review should explore ways by which the 'Soldier of the 21st century', as expressed using Streng's world view model, can be applied at local unit level, and soldiers can be practiced in ethical decision-making using the adaptation of the Markkula Centre for Applied Ethics process.

The research and development of moral leadership within the Army sought to clarify what was required for the moral leadership elements of the ACSTC. This simple project identified a deficiency, across all ranks, which demonstrated soldiers were unable to articulate a clear understanding of who they were as members of the Australian Army and their place as soldiers in the world in which they live. Similarly, the research highlighted an inability to fully embrace and retain such an understanding even if it had been or was presented to them. It was further identified that this group generally lacked the tools required for articulating a process for ethical and moral thinking. To ensure consistency across Army in the delivery of character training, specifically moral leadership within the ACSTC, this paper has argued that the same framework for understanding Army values and ethos within a world view and a means to think ethically needs to be taught in the ACSTC promotional courses. Finally, it has raised the issue of the development of character across Army and has offered a possible framework in which it may be developed in the future.

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## ENDNOTES

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- 2 Commonwealth of Australia (Australian Army), Land Warfare Doctrine LWD 0-2-2 *Character*, Land Warfare Development Centre, Puckapunyal, 2005.
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- 5 This has since been re-released as *I am an Australian Soldier* cf. Australian Army CA Directive 16/06, 19 Oct 2006. Commonwealth of Australia, 'I'm an Australian Soldier (developing the soldier for the HNA)', Department of Defence, 2006.
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- 7 Streng, *Understanding Religious Life*, pp. 4, 23-24
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- 10 *Lawfulness of action* incorporates the rules of engagement, the laws of armed conflict, etc. These are assumed within the model to be ethically sound and are therefore unquestionable criteria against which all ethical action must be measured.
- 11 *Commander's intent* also assumes that the commander's intent is consistent with the laws of armed conflict, the rules of engagement, and as such is ethically sound.

## THE AUTHORS

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Chaplain David Grulke enlisted into the Australian Army Reserves in 1980, where he served an infantryman before discharging as a corporal in 1989. Ordained into the Lutheran Church of Australia in 1990, he returned to the Army as a Chaplain in 1999. He has served as a Chaplain at ARTC, 3 RAR, LWC (NSW) and ALTC. He is working towards the completion of a Doctoral degree in practical theology and social theory with the Australian Catholic University.

Chaplain Mark Hinton first enlisted into the Australian Regular Army in 1979 and graduated from OCS, Portsea, into the RACT where he served as a Transport Officer in a variety of postings before transfer to the Army Reserve in 1983. Chaplain Hinton was ordained into the Uniting Church of Australia in 1987, and subsequently served as an Army Reserve Chaplain while ministering in a variety of parishes before transferring to the Australian Regular Army in 2000. He has served as a Chaplain in a number of units, including 16AD Regt, ALTC, LWC (SA) and SOI.

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## EDUCATION, DOCTRINE AND TRAINING

# READING: THE MILITARY PROFESSION AND THE COURSE OF HISTORY\*

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SCOTT HOPKINS

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### ABSTRACT

Reading is the core of not only military professionalism but also human development over the last 5000 years. Reading provides a foundation for broadening Army's capability, especially in the complex and uncertain environments of the twenty-first century. With the launch of the *Chief of Army's Reading List*, the Australian Army provides an important tool to aid soldiers and officers develop their thinking skills.

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\* This article has been peer-reviewed.



*Every man who knows how to read has it in his power to magnify himself, to multiply the ways in which he exists, to make his life full, significant and interesting.*

Aldous Huxley

*Every reader, if he has a strong mind, reads himself into the book, and amalgamates his thoughts with those of the author.*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

*Read in order to live.*

Henry James

## INTRODUCTION

On 1 November 2007, Lieutenant General Peter Leahy launched the *Chief of Army's Reading List*.<sup>1</sup> It has been eleven years since the last reading list was promulgated. The nature of the Army, the Defence Forces, the Australian strategic situation and the international security environment have undergone significant change since then. The realisation that personnel need the ability to make strategically aware decisions in the heat of battle, often in complex and unfamiliar cultural environments characterised by uncertainty and fluidity, has come to the fore with the future operational concepts *Complex Warfighting* and *Adaptive Campaigning*. Reading enables soldiers to make better snap decisions under pressure; reading widely and deeply broadens the soldiers' context—it is educational. This is the principal motive for the Chief of Army's drive to enhance the educational abilities of the Australian Army.

High technology was once seen as a panacea for winning war, but the soldier was always the key factor, even if military and academic fads decided otherwise. In light of operational experience across the globe and across the spectrum of warfighting, the Australian Army views the soldier on the ground as the key for prevailing in the range of conflict scenarios. All ranks—hence the phrase 'the strategic private'—need the ability of how, not what, to think. The primacy of education (how to think) over training (what to think) is a reality with which the Australian Army is coming to terms. A reading list, in a busy and widely deployed Army, contributes to this grand project.

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Reading enables soldiers to  
make better snap decisions  
under pressure ...

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## READING—AN IMPOSITION?

The reality in most units is that personnel have more tasks than hours in the day. The churn of deployments, postings, training requirements and family commitments leaves today's officers and soldiers 'time poor'. Is sitting down to read thoroughly and reflect deeply an additional task that can be justified? The answer must be a resounding 'yes'. It is a professional soldier's duty to do so—reading widely and deeply, and then synthesising what is read with their own experience, is the cornerstone of what it is to be a military professional. Surgeons, lawyers, accountants, academics and other professions all accept that reading, both into the past and what is current, is a requirement for doing their jobs responsibly. Military professionals are no different; this *Reading List* helps guide that responsibility.

However, it is not enough to consume the books; truly educative learning comes after thoughtful reflection that sees the reader incorporate a book's content, themes and lessons into their existing world-view. If the book challenges the reader's outlook, this process is more time-consuming, albeit with greater reward. A good book, one that is educative, should prompt contemplation and questioning—a design principle behind the books on the new *Reading List*. Yet today's world is full of television, movies and the Internet, so why should Army personnel commit their precious resources to the consumption of books? The answer is best viewed through the context of history and what it tells us about the importance of reading.

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... reading widely  
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## A BRIEF HISTORY OF READING AND WRITING

The foundation stone of human development for the last 10 000 years has been the development of writing. Previously, the myths, stories and histories of cultures were passed on orally. Spoken language was the currency of human evolution. The storyteller of the village, tribe or court was the holder of knowledge, providing a buffer against uncertainty and a storehouse of ideas and concepts to help decision-makers frame their choices. Writing is the symbolic representation of language, and early developments in writing go back approximately 8000 years. These were systems called 'proto-writing', where pictures

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represented real-world objects. The next leap forward was to create abstractions, to build words and meanings beyond simple representations, and this occurred almost concurrently in several civilisations about 5000 years ago.

The cradles of civilisation, the ancient societies in Sumer and Babylon—modern-day Iraq—and Egypt invented systems of writing called cuneiform. Concurrently, ancient Chinese languages and the civilisation in the Indus Valley developed written script. Writing was a ‘revolution in human affairs’ across the world. In an oral tradition, the story changed with time and subsequent re-tellings. Writing, while also open to adaptation and evolution, provided a firmer base by which history could be secured. For Ancient Greek and Roman societies, the ability to read was a social distinction. The polity could read and the polity could vote (from Greek *politeia*, meaning citizenship). Women, slaves and the large expatriate communities would also be able to read.

Written histories and analyses became a force-multiplier and a vehicle whereby ideas could be spread further, both geographically and temporally. People, events, dates and circumstances could be accessed and interpreted by a wider range of people, although, like the oral historian, this generally remained an elite within a society: the literate. Written works were rare and precious, available only to a fraction of any society. Such gatekeepers of knowledge tended to be the nobility and the clergy. These power structures created the intellectuals and military leaders, (usually) men from positions of wealth and influence that gave them the time for detailed study of the classics—the literary and historical canon. Informed by the close study of literature, history and art, leavened with wide travel in and experience of the world, including politics, war and diplomacy, this community is embodied in figures such as Alexander, Caesar and Saladin. They gained an education; the skills to analyse and synthesise information into knowledge. The written word formed the backbone of the educative process, but books themselves remained restricted to the few.

As the Western world experienced the Renaissance and then the Enlightenment, a democratisation of knowledge began. The widespread use of moveable type, first with the Gutenberg Bible in 1455, witnessed a flourishing in publishing, along with a commensurate increase in literacy among the growing middle classes. More books and more people reading contributed to a flourishing of ideas. The traditional social, political and economic structures were increasingly questioned and ideas from the ancient world were re-invigorated—leading over time to the American and French Revolutions and the current forms of Western culture. The writings of Plato and Aristotle informed political philosophers such as John Locke,

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Written histories and  
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Thomas Paine, Voltaire, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Reading and education are obviously powerful activities, and they have direct importance for increasing military effectiveness.

The classics informed the education of Gustav II Adolphus (1594–1632), King of Sweden, who is known as ‘the father of modern warfare’. Similarly, Niccolò Machiavelli studied classical works under close tutelage. Studying at the *École Militaire* in Paris, Napoleon Bonaparte would become familiar with the works and underlying principles of Thucydides, Caesar and de Saxe. Over time, more works of strategy and military history appeared in print. The wartime experiences and lessons of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries provided rich fields of study for the military professional. Through the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries, the range of such works has multiplied. Reading Carl von Clausewitz’s *On War* is today *de rigueur* for those in positions of higher command. Yet not all important works are intended for career officers aspiring to star ranks. Ardant du Picq, a French colonel on the losing side of the Franco-Prussian War, wrote the short and accessible *Battle Studies*. This book, more than 100 years old, provides important and enduring lessons on combat morale for the private soldier and section leader. So the *Chief of Army’s Reading List* distils the best of these books and groups them along rank lines. This will help soldiers and officers develop their professional reading in line with their operational and barracks experiences, guiding them forward.

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The wartime experiences  
and lessons of the eighteenth  
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## READING BROADLY

Beyond the military history or works of grand strategy, other writers and books, including general history, biography and fiction, are important sources to understand humans, their reactions and societies. The skilled writer brings alive a new world, and the skilled reader finds many new tools for their kitbag. It is axiomatic to declare war a human activity, conducted by people for a wide variety of reasons. Airport thrillers and works of great fiction offer insights into the human condition. Shakespeare’s *Henry V* and *Romeo and Juliet*, one about the burdens of leadership and the other about the passions of the human heart, both

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... the skilled reader  
finds many new tools  
for their kitbag.

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provide clues to why people behave as they do. The latter would not be an immediate entry onto a professional military's list of recommended texts, and yet the intelligent reader should not dismiss its value.

When coupled with practical training and real-life experience, a well-read and thus fully rounded soldier can impose context on the uncertain present. Most importantly, they can put themselves into the enemy's mind and see weaknesses and strengths on both sides. Reading the works of Soviet strategists enabled US military thinkers to develop their Air-Land Battle concept in the 1980s. Reading the ideological works underlying al-Qaeda, such as the writings of Egyptian Sayyid Qutb, gives insights into the enemy's world-view; from there, ways to combat their objectives come into sight. The educated army is best able to employ the flexibility required to dominate across the range of adversaries and environments in which they operate.

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The educated army is  
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dominate ...

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### THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

Rote learning of facts and figures, of procedures and processes, is training; most people can recall the dreary horror of the schoolroom where this formed the basis of their exams. An army uses training to build a common understanding and set of skills in its members; this is called doctrine. For many, however, doctrine is 'what to think'. The most effective way to maintain the F88 Steyr or conduct the business of platoon tactics is rightly published as doctrine. Commanders need to know and to trust that their subordinates are competent at assigned tasks. The mastery of doctrine is the beginning of soldierly professionalism. To call someone 'doctrinaire', however, is to assert that their thinking is constrained, linear and programmed. Free, critical and creative thinking requires more scope for choice, greater risk of error, but with the significant opportunity of innovation, improvement and adaptation. Reading beyond doctrine is the hallmark of a military professional and a sign of the educational process.

Once a soldier's reading becomes broad and deep, a critical mass occurs. Creative thinking is enhanced, and students draw conclusions beyond the raw facts they've learnt. They question and challenge the material under examination, drawing in examples and conclusions from other material they have read and the experiences they've lived. Education—based around the study of books through small-group tutorials guided by masters—was the model behind the emergence of universities, a model still employed in higher education today. This educative paradigm underwrote the Prussian General Staff system, the inheritance of contemporary military

officer education throughout the world. Reading books and reflecting on them in light of your experiences, often by discussing them with contemporaries, is the surest method to building a solid military education.

### A LIVING READING LIST

Commanders at all levels can use the *Reading List* to enhance the effectiveness of their subordinates. By leading discussions of the books on the *List*, they encourage free thinking. Each reader takes different meanings from each work, and, unlike doctrine, such discussions have no ‘right’ answer. The debate of emphasis and evidence is the goal and the payoff.

Superiors need to step back from their rank and accept the challenge of having subordinates disagree, sometimes passionately. This requires trust and challenges the chain of command. A poor leader would impose their interpretation as ‘the right answer’, whereas the good leader could agree to disagree.

As an example of leadership in reading at the unit level, this article presents a book review from Lieutenant JP Wallace at the School of Armour. Lieutenant Colonel Jason Thomas, the CO, encouraged his subordinates in their professional reading by asking them to read books and then write reviews. While this review is longer than its *Reading List* entry, it does provide an example of how commanders can enhance the education of their subordinates. Assign books on the *Reading List*, and have readers report to the unit on the themes, importance and utility of the work in question. Make it a weekly activity. Encourage debate. Listen carefully to arguments against your opinion—changing your mind is not weakness but common sense. This is more than an exercise in going to the Defence Library Service and borrowing a dusty old history book. The past teaches us, when we bother to learn, about today and tomorrow; by coming to grips with ‘how things came to be’, we can begin to scope ‘where might they go next?’ Analysis of the past creates options for tomorrow; with a wider perspective, leaders make better choices under pressure.

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Reading books ... is the  
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**BERNARD FALL—STREET WITHOUT JOY:  
INSURGENCY IN INDOCHINA, 1946–63**

Reviewed by Lieutenant JP Wallace

*Revolutionary Warfare cannot be left to happy improvisation any more than can nuclear warfare.*

Bernard Fall

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Long before Long Tan, the Vietnamese were fighting Western armies. *Street Without Joy: Insurgency in Indochina, 1946–63*, provides a detailed and unique account of the French Expeditionary Corps' operations, strategies and tactics that were used throughout the course of the conflict, as well as an account for why they failed to defeat the Viet Minh. The title is derived from the French soldier's nickname for Highway One on the Vietnamese coast. The Highway was the scene of almost constant ambushes against French civilian and military targets. It was on this road that Bernard Fall himself was killed in a Viet Cong ambush while accompanying a patrol of US Marines in 1967. The book discusses a number of issues in regards to Revolutionary Warfare, and the conventional and not-so-conventional attempts that were made by the French military to counter it.
2. The aim of this book review is to discuss the content of the book and how the central argument is still applicable today. The book review will discuss the author's frame of reference, and provide a brief synopsis of the content of the book, followed by the readers' recommendations.

**THE AUTHOR**

3. Bernard B. Fall (1926–1967) was born in Austria and moved to France after it united with Nazi Germany. He became a member of the French resistance and gained a commission in a Moroccan division during the liberation of France. He conducted formal studies in Europe and then the United States, and spent many years in South-East Asia researching for his doctoral thesis. The book is thoroughly researched with Bernard Fall having spent a number of years in Indochina throughout the conflict, embedded within military units. Fall's military connections also allowed him access to the vast amount of official papers of the French Ministry of Defence. Fall draws his frame of reference from his personal experience as a member of the French resistance, as well as a regular military officer, and his own extensive research in counterinsurgency theory.



## CONTENT

4. The book uses traditional historical text as well as diary-style entries in order to convey some of the more personal and sociological aspects of the history of the conflict. These diary entries broach topics such as the pilots, both military and civil, that were used throughout the conflict to fly combat missions all over Indochina. The diary entries also detail some of the roles played by men and women, civilian and military, on both sides of the conflict; and the subsequent effect these roles had on them. This style of writing allows the reader to gain an enhanced understanding of the social history of the conflict from a very personal perspective. The other chapters, written in historical prose, describe broad divisional movements as well as detailed descriptions of individual battalions, companies, and platoons. Fall gives a very detailed account of some of the major operations and units, as well as some of the lesser-known, but still important actions that occurred in Indochina. Throughout the book Fall discusses the idea of using naval craft in the river systems of Indochina, in particular the *Dinassaut*, Naval Assault Divisions. Fall also examines other non-conventional methods the French used in order to solve the problem of Revolutionary Warfare.
5. A theme running throughout the book points to the conclusion of the inevitable failure at Dien Bien Phu. However, it later becomes clear that Fall is not condemning the defence of Dien Bien Phu as a purely military failure, but a result of the failure to understand and study Revolutionary Warfare and counter-insurgency tactics. The failure to make political concessions had an impact on the consciousness of the populace and did not provide an alternative to Communism that was a solution specifically for Indochina.
6. Fall has used a strong narrative style throughout the book in order to present the historical facts and develop his argument on how to confront Revolutionary Warfare. This narrative style makes the book very easy and interesting to read, as Fall links together the historical facts throughout the narrative in order to convey his argument. The argument, however, does not become an overwhelming dirge of rhetoric or opinion, as it is only towards the end of the book that Fall fully enunciates his argument and outlines its implications—his second last page is entitled *The Lesson*. The main focus throughout the book is to accurately tell the story of the soldiers who fought in the conflict and the civilians that suffered because of it. It is only after the historical, military, social, and political condition of Indochina has been presented that Fall's argument and implications can be fully understood and appreciated.

## READERS' RECOMMENDATIONS

7. *Street Without Joy* is a seminal work and an essential book as a starting point for understanding counterinsurgency theory. Fall's argument that Revolutionary Warfare is not something to be entered into on a whim, but requires study and a thorough understanding of the concepts and principles of the theory behind it, and the combatants involved in Revolutionary Warfare, is certainly valid given today's military operations.
8. This book will prove enjoyable for most military history readers. It is a good book for those wanting to learn about the French in Indochina. It is also a solid starting point in the study of Revolutionary Warfare. Fall's main criticism of US involvement in Indochina is that they did not devote themselves to learning the principles of counterinsurgency; instead they tried to solve Vietnam in a similar fashion to the French. A disappointing aspect of the book, however, is that most of the maps and illustrations are of little use, due to their clutter and lack of clarity. This book is recommended for military history enthusiasts and military officers, although a wider audience would still be able to appreciate the book due to its strong narrative element.

## CONCLUSION

9. After all the in-depth narrative and accurate historical account, Bernard Fall is trying to encourage military officers and thinkers to study and apply themselves to understanding Revolutionary Warfare, instead of relying on 'happy improvisation.' This is another of his books that continues the discussion on counterinsurgency theory. Given Australia's current deployment commitments, the study and understanding of counterinsurgency theory—as well as a thorough knowledge of indigenous environmental factors—is of vital importance for all military officers. Fall's argument that it is not technology or special forces alone that are going to win a Revolutionary War, but knowledge and its applications, has been consistently validated.

*Lieutenant Jim Wallace graduated ADFA in 2005 with a BA majoring in Politics and History. He graduated RMC in 2006 and is currently posted to Tank Troop, School of Armour.*

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Lieutenant Wallace's assessment of a forty-year-old book and the way he relates its continuing importance demonstrates his awareness of a broadening context:

Given Australia's current deployment commitments, the study and understanding of counterinsurgency theory—as well as *a thorough knowledge of indigenous environmental factors*—is of vital importance for all military officers. Fall's argument that it is not technology or special forces alone that are going to win a Revolutionary War, but knowledge and its applications, has been consistently validated. [emphasis added]

Wallace's insight into the importance of a thorough and accurate intelligence preparation of the battlespace demonstrates that he has converted the training-regime thinking tool into an educational process that seeks new questions and challenges. Understand the theory of counterinsurgency as well as the area in which you will operate. Local customs, local conditions and local sentiment are the sea in which the insurgent swims.

The *Chief of Army's Reading List* is a guide to what is best and most pertinent to military, strategic and human affairs in the Western canon. But the *Reading List* is not exclusive; it is a start-point. Always make time for exercises to keep the Army intellectually limber. Feel free to disagree and discuss what should be included and why with the AAJ, with your CO, or with the Chief of Army on his web forum. The *Reading List* is a waypoint on a lifelong journey of reading and learning, of educating ourselves for the fractious future. It is about making the Australian Army intellectually fit and mentally ready. The goal is education, the broadening of experience for its own sake to create more adaptable, aware and informed military professionals. Henry James, noted novelist, critic and observer of the human condition, was certainly correct with his entreaty of 'read in order to live'.

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[The Reading List] is about making the Australian Army intellectually fit and mentally ready.

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## ENDNOTE

- 1 Download the *Chief of Army's Reading List* from the Chief of Army's website or the LWSC Internet site: <[http://www.defence.gov.au/army/lwsc/Publications/SP/SP\\_313.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/army/lwsc/Publications/SP/SP_313.pdf)>.

## THE AUTHOR

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Scott Hopkins is Editor of the *Australian Army Journal* and Publications Manager at the Land Warfare Studies Centre. He is undertaking a PhD on contemporary Australian speculative fiction and is attending the Australian Command and Staff College in 2008.

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## OPERATIONS

# ‘HARDENED, NETWORKED ... AND COMMERCIALY CAPABLE’

## ARMY AND CONTRACTOR SUPPORT ON OPERATIONS

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BRIGADIER DAVID SAUL

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### ABSTRACT

Contractor support is an overlooked aspect of Army operations. This article outlines the conditions where Army can best use the considerable capability provided by deployed contractor support, highlights the pitfalls if implementation of this support is not conducted in a comprehensive and integrated manner, and details the management considerations necessary if this support is to be successful.

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- This article was originally published in the RACT Corps Journal in 2006. It has been reviewed and updated.

*... the US, and to a lesser extent the UK, now rely extensively on private firms to provide logistics support in operational areas ... Where there have been problems, they can usually be traced back to inadequate oversight rather than any intrinsic problem with contract support.<sup>1</sup>*

Dr. Mark Thomson

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) has made some progress over the last five years in formalising the process for using contractors on operations. Departmental Instructions OPS 05-3 – *Civilians in support of Australian Defence Force operations* and ADFP 4.2.1 – *Civilians in Support of Australian Defence Force Operations* both provide sound guidance on the topic. However, the inescapable fact remains that Army currently lacks a training process to ensure we can optimise this capability—in short, Army needs to become more commercially capable on operations.

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**Army needs to become  
more commercially  
capable on operations.**

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## CONTRACTOR SUPPORT

To some extent Army now has a basic commercial understanding in most units. However, there is a range of options for the use of commercial resources on operations and a better understanding of the roles and implications of these options is important. Considering contract support in a tiered manner may assist in understanding roles and responsibilities at different levels.

At the tactical level, the local purchase of items using Commonwealth regulations is a daily occurrence and it is a sound method of engaging a local community. Such practices form the first tier of contract management practices and in the right circumstances can alleviate short-term sustainment issues on operations. The purchase of basic foodstuffs, office supplies or fuel at the tactical level is a good example of Tier One support.

More significant contracting practices—where a comprehensive contract or standing offer<sup>2</sup> is established—involves formal tendering, a selection and negotiation process and the subsequent implementation of support by a commercial entity. This second tier of commercial support forms an enduring sustainment capability and can add flexibility to an operation. It may involve more complex capabilities, such as medical support, and will normally require contract management staff to be

deployed. The provision of vehicle maintenance and the cleaning and redeployment of vehicles in Timor-Leste and the contractor support provided to the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) by a prime contractor are examples of this Tier Two support. In recent history this type of support has been organised at short notice and is known as ‘on occurrence support’ (OOS). With some advanced notice such support could also be implemented as ‘prearranged support’ (PAS).

Tier Three support includes operational- or strategic-level contracting. It is most often prearranged support. The engagement of commercial shipping or aircraft for deployments, the establishment of contractor maintenance obligations in major equipment acquisitions or a support contract established as a contingency measure are examples of this level of contracting.

None of the tiers of contracting support should be considered in isolation. The establishment of Tier One arrangements must be done in the knowledge that a more comprehensive Tier Two contract is likely to be implemented within ninety days of an operation commencing and local expectations should be conditioned to such a change. Similarly, staffs need to forecast the implications of Tier Three arrangements, particularly the deployment of civilian maintenance staff.

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This second tier of  
commercial support  
forms an enduring  
sustainment capability ...

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### WHEN IS CONTRACTOR SUPPORT VIABLE?

*... in Iraq and Afghanistan it appears that, for the most part, contractors have stayed the course in the face of kidnappings and deaths.<sup>3</sup>*

Dr. Mark Thomson

Army has undertaken a series of demanding operational deployments over the last decade and commercial contractors have been used to supplement (or as an alternative to) military capabilities in some form on all deployments.

In-theatre contracted services worked well in Timor-Leste (specifically during 2002–04) and in Solomon Islands for a number of reasons. On both operations Army faced a relatively benign tactical environment—this allowed each party to establish its own processes in the contract relationship and allowed the contract to evolve as new requirements were determined. As well, a viable military option was readily available to minimise the risk of contractor non-performance, and this ensured a value-for-money outcome in the selection/negotiation phase of establishing a contract. Competition was present in the commercial marketplace

that allowed the Commonwealth to have a choice in the way that services were to be provided, and this allowed a comparison of costs to occur and very good value-for-money solutions to be provided.

Thomson's ASPI paper noted that contractors in Iraq had shown commendable resilience in the face of considerable threats. From the author's perspective, contractor support within major bases in Iraq was excellent. In a protected environment, when set services are required, contracted support can provide tremendous benefits. Difficulties in securing contracted support in Iraq occurred in various situations, including when services needed to be expanded or replicated in different locations quickly, specifically in less than ninety days. When local providers were involved and these contractors were subjected to intimidation, including death threats and kidnappings, the provision of services such as tentage or a labour force was unreliable or non-existent. Only one or two companies bid for contracted work outside well-established bases and this resulted in grossly inflated costs and often left no mechanism to compare proposed costs. Further to this, unscrupulous contractors took advantage of poor contract management and failed to perform the contracted services.

None of these situations would jeopardise an operation unless a military force is left without the capacity to provide alternative support. The lessons for Army are that contracted services work most effectively in a benign environment or in situations where significant protection is available. In the complex environment, contracted services do not provide tactical flexibility. There is benefit in having a number of contractors engaged in the process and the availability of a military alternative is a clear risk mitigator. Contractors are not the panacea for a lack of military service support nor should mission-critical support be reliant upon them.

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tactical flexibility.

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## THE CONTRACTING PROCESS

Understanding of the contracting process is the most basic step for Army on the path to being commercially capable. This understanding encompasses three elements: the formal process in accordance with complex procurement requirements, knowledge of commercial capabilities, and a clear idea of where the integration of contracted support fits into the planning cycle for operations. An understanding of these elements should span the three phases of a contract: the establishment of a contract, the implementation of a contract and the ongoing management of a contract.

### ESTABLISHING A CONTRACT

Ideally, the possibility of contracting support is acknowledged at the operational level during initial planning. ADFP 4.2.1 provides a comprehensive overview of the process and factors to be considered,<sup>4</sup> and Joint Logistics Command (JLC) staff can provide specific guidance. The following points are important:

- The strategic intent for contracting support needs to be established and a timeframe for engagement needs to be confirmed. This guidance will trigger planning on the type of services to be sought.
- Funds need to be sought through normal appropriations mechanisms, which allow the contracting process to be initiated. Careful wording of tendering documentation may permit indicative costs to be provided early in the contracting process, assisting staff to more accurately assess the funds required.
- In consultation with deploying elements, the specific contractor support requirements and indicative timeframes need to be determined. This will confirm the type of services and usage rates—both are critical to formulating a pricing schedule that can be used to compare contractors. However, deploying elements need to be guided through this process to ensure that realistic and commercially viable expectations are created. In Iraq, some supported elements expected transit camps to be established with beds and pebbled paths in a seven-day period, five kilometres from Fallujah—the actual contractor capacity was markedly different.
- The formal contract process needs to be undertaken (noting that currently the ADF does not have the standing logistic arrangements enjoyed by the United States and United Kingdom). This requires the availability of trained staff coupled with good legal advice on commercial matters.

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... deploying elements need to ... ensure that realistic and commercially viable expectations are created.

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The ADF has taken a significant step in addressing timeliness in engaging contractor support by establishing a strategic planning partner within the JLC staffed by commercial contractors engaged to provide advice on what options are commercially possible and the subsequent implications for the ADF. This support has the potential to hasten the contracting process.

Defence has not sought the option of establishing a service support PAS—as the United States and United Kingdom have done—which is one of the ASPI recommendations. The speed of contracting response has to be balanced against the stand-by costs and the fact that the tendering process engenders competitive proposals. This issue was addressed by the Chiefs of Staff Committee in 2004 and 2005, and the strategic planning partner concept was endorsed as the preferred course of action.

#### IMPLEMENTING CONTRACT ARRANGEMENTS

In most circumstances a phased roll-out of contractor support—that is, the establishment of services over a period of time—allows deployed forces to make provision for the arrival of contracting staff, enables any initial problems to be rectified before they are compounded by new requirements and ensures that contract management staff are in place.

Contracts for the provision of support are a living document. Recent experience suggests that initial requirements can change, particularly as a better understanding of the tactical situation develops. In Solomon Islands, the operating requirements of the police element were determined well after the support contract was signed. Established contractors understand that personnel numbers, locations and the rate of effort on an operation can vary markedly between planning and execution.

A note of caution—deployed military staff need to have an understanding of what the initial contract requirements were before raising concerns about contractor performance in meeting subsequent short notice, unforecast requirements. Usually you are getting the service that was requested and contracted for. Capable contract management staff will assist this process and amend the contract.

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... initial [contract] requirements can change, particularly as a better understanding of the tactical situation develops.

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## CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

It would be wrong for personnel to go into contract relationships deeply suspicious of contractor motives. Instead, contract management should focus on collectively improving the level of service delivery. Difficulties are encountered when there is a shortage of personnel at the tactical level who can:

- verify contractor performance,
- with a knowledge of the capabilities of the on-site contractor, tailor the inevitable changes in a form that meets the requirement of the deployed force,
- evaluate contractor initiated efficiency proposals, and
- direct concerns to a cell that can formally hold contractors to account.

A number of implications flow from this in-theatre requirement. Trained staff are required to undertake this contract management role, formalised as the Commonwealth's Representative, and a lack of trained staff is an Army weakness. Secondly, when staffing is being considered at HQ Joint Operations Command (HQJOC), an allowance must be made for the inclusion of contract management staff in the figures. A shortage of staff supporting the Commonwealth's Representative may limit the effectiveness of contractor support and may lead to some of the oversight problems faced in Iraq.

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... a lack of trained staff  
is an Army weakness.

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The current ADF experience suggests that in-theatre contract management should be supported by contract support outside an area of operations. JLC operates a small contract management cell based in Melbourne that provides general advice on contracting options and establishes contracted support for deployed forces. Such a cell allows legal issues to be resolved, noting that commercial legal advice may need to be sourced from outside the ADF. It also allows for accounts to be independently verified, especially important when dealing with foreign exchange differences. Such a management cell acts as a conduit for concerns about contractor performance to be formally raised with company executives. Further, contract change proposals can be staffed for legal and financial determinations.

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... in-theatre contract  
management should be  
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support outside an area  
of operations.

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In the Australian context this management process has worked well and has freed deployed forces from the burden of establishing contracts and managing complex issues. The challenge for HQJOC is to coordinate the various types of contractor support and ensure that measures are

in place to verify that support is consistent with the operational intent and ADF directives. HQJOC should ensure that contract proposals are tabled and discussed as part of the initial operational level planning process.

### ARMY'S TASKS

ADFP 4.2.1 notes that a range of staff are necessary to make the contracting process viable and 'Training of personnel to be assigned to these positions is also the responsibility of HQAST and JLC [*sic*].'<sup>5</sup> This is an unrealistic requirement. If Army is going to provide timely and sensible input into the establishment of contracts for deployed services, and be in a position to oversee an orderly implementation of contracted services as well as manage the ongoing support, then a range of training needs to be provided. Interestingly, neither of the other uniformed Services has a contract training regime in place, although some on-the-job training does afford more exposure for junior personnel.

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... neither of the other  
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regime in place ...

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### A DEPLOYABLE CONTRACT MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY

Within Land Command there is a requirement to establish a deployable contract management capability, specifically personnel to act as the Commonwealth's Representatives. Determining the optimal form for this capability is a challenge because there is a practical requirement to train a variety of staff to act as subject-matter experts for the differing contract services—catering, medical support, facility maintenance and aviation to name a few.

No unit has a wealth of such individuals, nor is it feasible to dedicate personnel to this speciality in a fulltime capacity. An expedient solution has seen 17 Combat Service Support Brigade establish a small cell to oversee the training and development of staff who can, subsequently, undertake the Commonwealth's Representative role or provide subject-matter expertise. Notably, a number of Reserve personnel possess excellent contract management experience gained in civilian employment and these skills will be used for Army's benefit.

### CONTRACT TRAINING

Some general contract management knowledge would benefit a cross-section of personnel who need to provide planning input at all levels. Consequently, three levels of contract training, focused on support services, should occur:

- *Introduction to Contracting.* A WO2/officer-level introduction is required, focused on principles and processes with an emphasis on deployed contractor support. This should be conducted at Army Logistic Training Centre (ALTC) as part of the Logistic Officer Intermediate Course/Warrant Officer Logistics Course. This would be a two- or three-day commitment.
- *Contract Management Processes.* A senior captain-level course focused on the implication of contracting on the planning of, and implementation into, operations is needed. This should be conducted at ALTC as part of the Logistic Officer Advanced Course. Again, this would be a two- or three-day commitment.
- *Contract Management (Commonwealth's Representative).* An interim solution will require personnel in 17 CSS Bde to be dual-roled and identified to undertake training in simple and complex procurement; an example is the Phillips Fox (legal firm) introduction to contract management, tuition in negotiating and influencing and then practical work experience. The practicum could be achieved with an attachment to JLC or by undertaking some contract establishment for small tasks in Australia. In total, six to eight weeks of distributed training would be involved. This training could evolve into a formalised course or in part as a module at ALTC.

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... general contract  
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section of personnel ...

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## CONCLUSION

Commercial support to deployed forces should now be a standard consideration in planning operational support. There are complexities involved in this contractor support that some commentators do not appreciate. Recent operational deployments have highlighted some areas of weakness that need to be addressed. Mark Thomson's ASPI paper explored these issues but sometimes neglected the complexity of some contracting environments, particularly those in the Middle East. Recent developments in the JLC have ameliorated many of the threats to operational flexibility and effectiveness, yet further work is required.

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Recent developments ...  
have ameliorated many of  
the threats to operational  
flexibility and effectiveness ...

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Despite a range of experience in using contractors over the last decade, Army has yet to formalise any process for educating or training personnel who not only have to plan the implementation of this support but who should be managing the support on operations. Of greatest need for Army is to raise, train and sustain a deployable contract management capability. Without being commercially capable, Army risks a sub-optimal performance on operations.

## ENDNOTES

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- 1 Mark Thomson, *War and Profit: Doing business on the battlefield*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra, March 2005, p. 3.
- 2 Standing Offer – refers to the establishment of a ‘menu’ of contracted services that a deployed force can choose to use. The Commonwealth incurs nominal costs until services are requested.
- 3 Mark Thomson, *War and Profit*, p. 24.
- 4 Department of Defence, ADFP 4.2.1 – *Civilians in Support of Australian Defence Force Operations*, Australian Defence Headquarters, February 2004.
- 5 ADFP 4.2.1 – *Civilians in Support of Australian Defence Force Operations*, Chapter 7.17, p. 7-7.

## THE AUTHOR

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Brigadier David Saul graduated to the Royal Australian Corps of Transport in 1984. He has commanded 26 Tpt Sqn, 3 CSSB and has served on operations in Namibia and Iraq. In 2003-05 he served as the Director of Operations at HQ JLC where he was responsible for the Joint Contracting Coordination Cell. He attended the Defence and Strategic Studies Course at the Australian Defence College in 2006 and took up his current appointment as Commander 17 CSS Bde in August 2006.

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## OPERATIONS

# TACTICAL OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS SUPPORT TO A COMMANDER ON OPERATIONS

COLONEL ANDREW CONDON

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to increase the level of understanding of operational analysis (OA) within the Australian Army, and in particular the utility of Tactical OA teams deployed in support of the tactical commander. Operational analysis is a decision support capability and is offered at most military universities in the Western world as a discipline of academic study at the postgraduate level. The article coins the phrase Tac OA and provides the author's views on what comprises Tac OA, how it would be employed, and its utility for deployed tactical commanders.

*Operations Research Systems Analysis is not business analysis, it's warfighting capability analysis – a critical part of the Joint, Combined Arms Team.<sup>1</sup>*

General Benjamin Griffin, US Army  
Former Commander 4th Infantry Division

## INTRODUCTION

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) deployed its first Tactical Operational Analysis (Tac OA) Team in recent decades on operations in 2005.<sup>2</sup> There has since been an effort to maintain a deployed Tac OA capability in the Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO) and some ‘on occasion’ presence in support of other operations. Most ADF tactical commanders have little exposure to a tactical operational analysis capability. The Australian Army’s understanding of operational analysis has been primarily confined to an emphasis on historical analysis and the identification and application of lessons derived from that analysis. Scientists at DSTO use operational analysis as a tool to support the capability development process. However, US, British and NATO forces have been employing tactical operational analysis for some time as a force multiplier for combat operations.

Modern operational analysis originated in the lead up to and conduct of the Second World War as a US and British innovation. Subsequently, operational analysis specialists supported British commanders during insurgency in Malaya, US commanders in Vietnam, as well as both US and British commanders during operations to liberate Kuwait in 1991. With the advent of computer-based wargaming simulations, operational analysis specialists employed these tools to support tactical planning for operations. In 1994, Major General William M. Steele’s 82nd Airborne Division invasion planning for Haiti used computer-based wargaming to refine tactical insertion plans. This approach enabled significant branches and sequels to be developed and analysed. Military operational analysis research is an academic discipline that has many applications; however, this article is solely focused on the Australian Army’s use of operational analysis to support deployed tactical commanders.

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## WHAT IS TAC OA?

Tactical operational analysis is a decision support capability for the tactical commander and their staff. Employment of a Tac OA Team enables a higher degree of analytical rigour in command decision-making. In an environment of uncertainty, Tac OA offers commanders greater confidence that their decisions have been informed by scientific analysis. Tac OA often provides counterintuitive results that in hindsight appear to be no more than simple logic or common sense. In many situations, there is a time lag between cause and effect that is not always immediately



obvious. One of the more notable examples of successful, high-impact operational analysis (many have yet to be declassified) is that of convoy escorts for the British Merchant Navy during the Second World War. Merchant shipping transported troops and supplies for the war effort. German U-boats were sinking merchant shipping despite adaptive tactics and formations being used by the Royal Navy to provide safe escort. The Royal Navy could not increase the number of combat ships for convoy escort to overcome the U-boat threat.

The British Admiralty directed an operational analysis team to enhance the ongoing development of convoy escort tactics. The team initially defined their problem as determining the number of escort ships required to maximise the tonnage of merchant shipping reaching its destination safely. They then collected data on escort success rates in an attempt to find correlations with the various convoy escort tactics. The OA team worked out the U-boats were essentially getting a 'kill' regardless of both escort tactics and number of escort vessels. Generally, however, the Germans only achieved one kill because they were chased off by escort vessels after un-masking themselves while 'making the kill'. Thus the operational analysis team proposed a solution that required the number of merchant vessels per convoy to be increased and the number of escort vessels to be decreased. Though this solution appeared to be counterintuitive, the operational analysis produced statistical evidence and the Royal Navy implemented the recommendations. The result was that a greater tonnage of merchant shipping arrived per convoy despite the provision of less escort ships. The analysis outcome was counterintuitive (less escorts, not more), but the logic proved to be undeniably simple.

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Tac OA often provides counterintuitive results that in hindsight appear to be no more than simple logic or common sense.

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### A FORMAL DEFINITION

In formal terminology, operational analysis uses scientific methods as well as a quantitative and qualitative rationale to improve situational awareness, to facilitate decision-making and to improve the quality and effectiveness of operational planning and execution. NATO uses the description '...OA provides quantitative analysis with a clear audit trail to inform the decision. OA does not just answer the question posed but seeks to identify 'hidden' concerns, branches and sequels.'<sup>3</sup> Importantly, qualitative operational analysis provides analysis and models to assist in highlighting the critical problems for detailed quantitative analysis as well as solutions developed in-theatre or through reach-back as time permits.<sup>4</sup>

Operational analysis will be applied in a method appropriate to the task and the time available. However, a generalised OA method is provided as:

1. Problem Definition
2. Collect/Assemble Known Data
3. Model Problem with appropriate Qualitative or Quantitative Technique
4. Conduct Analysis and Develop a Solution Set to Problem
5. Communicate Analysis to Decision Maker

In summary, operational analysis is a systems approach to decision-making using analytical methods ranging from mathematical and statistical techniques (including modelling), through to soft operational research methodologies such as Influence Diagrams and Field Anomaly Relaxation.

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... operational analysis  
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analytical methods

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Tac OA will often be seen as ‘rough’ by academic purists because it may lack the comprehensive scientific rigour of a technical study over a period of time based on complete data. However, a tactical commander requires timeliness of decision support rather than precision. An early trend is far more valuable than a delayed absolute answer. Tactical commanders will not have confidence in Tac OA unless decision support is delivered on time and in context.

The United States and United Kingdom continue to deploy operational analysis teams with their forces deployed in Iraq. An example—observed during the author’s deployment to Iraq in 2004—was the United States employing operational analysis to optimise timings for convoy movements to minimise the effectiveness of insurgent interdiction of Coalition road convoys.

In recent decades the Australian Army has generally employed operational analysis in the form of historical analysis to provide an archival record and to collect lessons in preparation of potential future deployments and operations. Australian tactical commanders will need to develop an understanding of how to employ Tac OA in order to leverage this combat force-multiplier capability on operations.

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### WHY DEPLOY A TAC OA CAPABILITY?

The current threat force in Iraq has demonstrated a capacity to learn and adapt quickly with deadly effect. Threat force tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) have been continually modified to deal with Coalition TTPs and countermeasures. During his tour of duty in Iraq in 2004, the author observed that US divisional commanders believed the Iraqi insurgent cycle for changing their TTPs was in some cases between twenty-one and twenty-four days. Also, informal UK estimates of the rate of insurgent improvised explosive device (IED) development in Iraq put the figure at twenty times faster than that experienced in Northern Ireland.

The Australian Defence Force needs to use all means available to increase the survivability of our troops, enhance their effectiveness, and reduce the risk of casualties. Tactical-level operational analysis capabilities can assist commanders and their force elements to adapt in a complex and changing threat environment faster than the threat.

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There are a range of advantages in addition to decision support. These include:

- Expertise and staff capacity available to the commander for developing in-theatre user requirements for rapid acquisition and support to spiral development for emergent capability requirements;
- A link for the commander and staff to leverage in-theatre coalition Operational Analysis capability and products; and
- A conduit for a commander to reach back for timely deeper level analytical, simulation, experimentation and other scientific support in the National Support Area.

### EMPLOYING TAC OA

In simple terms, commanders should employ Tac OA in whatever form that enables the Tac OA Team to support their decision-making. Commanders will have their own individual decision-making style. In most decision situations, a commander will not require Tac OA. However, Tac OA will have greatest utility in those situations where it is essential to learn and adapt quickly to new or changing circumstances. Typically, these circumstances will be unfamiliar to commanders and their force elements and be accompanied by higher levels of uncertainty.

Tac OA does not replace a commander's professional military judgement. Commanders will always be accountable for their actions and responsible for final decisions. Tactical commanders are often faced with making decisions with low levels of certainty in situational information. Tac OA, when employed and executed appropriately, should enhance the level of confidence of commanders in the decisions they have made.

Prior to D-Day for the First Gulf War, Major General Rupert Smith, Commander 1st UK Armoured Division, tasked his Tac OA Team to work out how much of the opposing Iraqi combat force could be engaged before having to stop the Division and reconstitute combat power. This problem was defined as what was the Iraqi force 'bite-size chunk' capability of the UK Division. This historical Tac OA task has since become known as the 'Bite-Size Chunk Problem'. Major General Smith did not accept the Tac OA results and he used a far more conservative estimate—a very defensible professional military judgement. Coalition forces moved quickly through the Iraqi defences on D-Day and Major General Smith increased his bite-size chunk up to that estimated by his Tac OA Team. Arguably, Major General Smith had an increased level of confidence to rapidly increase his bite-size chunk based on Tac OA.

Currently there exists no ADF doctrine to guide tactical commanders on how to employ Tactical OA. However, there are a number of guiding principles for a tactical commander to consider.

- **Situational Awareness Reduces Response Time:** Fast analysis to support short-notice decision-making requires current situational awareness.
- **Context is Critical:** Decision context is critical to quick and effective problem definition.
- **Agree Problem Definition:** If time permits, define the problem for analysis and the decision to be made.
- **The OA Tool Box:** An operational analyst will have had training in an extensive array of OA techniques (see Figure 1). Commanders should look for opportunities to exploit these techniques in support of their decision-making.
- **Tac OA Does Not Replace a Commander's Professional Judgement:** The Commander should treat Tac OA results the same as advice from any other technical/specialist adviser. Commanders may choose to accept or not accept technical/specialist advice in their decision-making based on professional judgement.

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- **Practice Tac OA Team working with Commander and Staff:** Mission rehearsal exercises (MREs), command post exercises (CPXs), tactical exercises without troops (TEWTs), joint military appreciation process exercises (JMAP EX) and other training opportunities should be used wherever possible for members of Tac OA Teams. This constant practice develops relationships with commanders and their staff to better understand their unique decision-making processes. Such activities enable Tac OA Teams to develop operational analysis decision support methods that best compliment the commander's decision-making process and supporting staff procedures.

Examples of Tac OA recently provided to US commanders in Afghanistan and Iraq include:

- Recommend changes in the emplacement of counterfire radars to maximise effectiveness in identifying mortars and rockets aimed at base camps.
- Examine the locations of IEDs to determine possible enemy cache locations.
- Assess counter-IED procedures to reduce attacks on convoy supply routes.
- Develop metrics and assess plans and operations to adjust future operations.
- Analyse critical nodes and desired effects in the Joint Effects Working Group to modify operational plans.

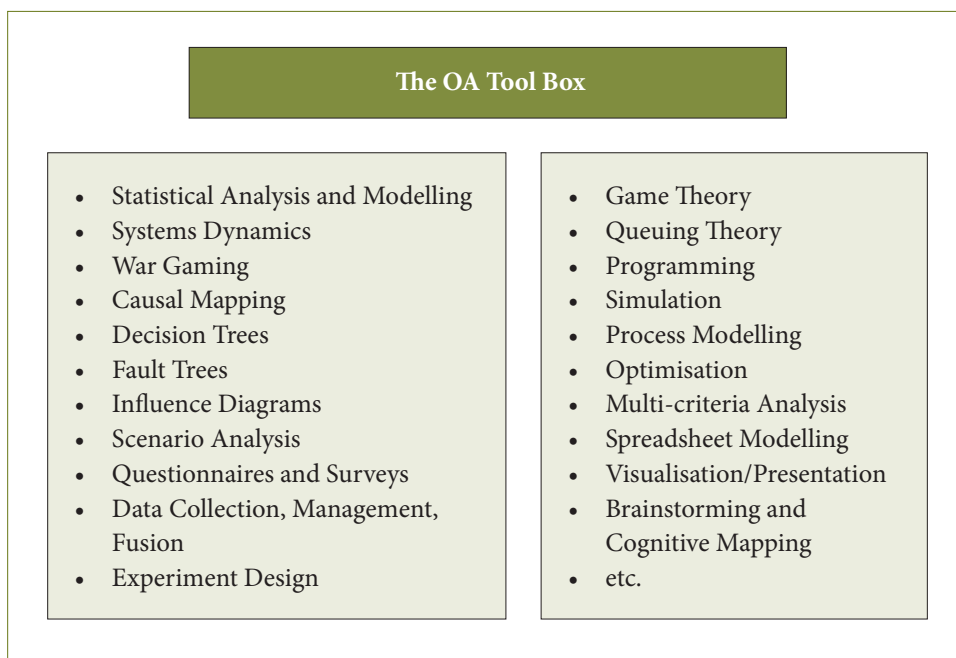


Figure 1.

- Analyse poll results about counterinsurgency operations to gauge the success of efforts to win the hearts and minds of the local population.
- Examine militia re-integration as a way to begin disarming private armies.
- Assess the effectiveness of combat and security operations on enemy activity.

### THE WAY AHEAD

Tac OA teams need to include scientists and uniformed operational analysis practitioners who clearly understand the warfighting aspects of the commander's planning and decision-making. The ADF needs to develop this capability with increased numbers of OA-trained uniformed personnel, preferably PSC (Passed Staff College)-level officers, and by writing the supporting doctrine.<sup>5</sup>

The US Army has specific staff streams known as Functional Areas and operational analysis is designated Functional Area 49 (FA49). US Army Operations Research Systems Analysts (ORSA) personnel can expect postings into their Functional Area when not employed in their primary Branch (corps). FA49 personnel receive operational analysis training that varies from a three-month short OA course through to a two-year postgraduate Masters degree. Prior to deployment in a FA49 position, they attend an eight-day pre-deployment OA course. FA49 personnel are employed within US warfighting headquarters in two- and three-person OA teams that are part of the deployed headquarters structure. NATO teams are larger and more self-sufficient.

The US Army model for managing their operational analysis capability outlined in the previous paragraph highlights the value that the US Army places on a deployed operational analysis capability. The Australian Army may not have the resources to mirror the US model, yet work is required to ensure the Australian Army has a method of developing and maintaining an appropriate operational analysis capability for use on exercises and operational deployments.

As the ADF's concept of network-centric warfare matures there will be a move from a desire to achieve information dominance to achieving knowledge dominance, before finally focusing on the key NCW outcome of decision dominance. While a networked force is a key capability enabler for decision dominance, Tac OA is the capability a tactical commander can employ to leverage the benefits of NCW to achieve decisive decision dominance.

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## CONCLUSION

Tac OA as described in this article is a capability previously untested on operations in recent time by the ADF prior to 2005. With the current deployment of a Tac OA Team in support of current operations, the capability is expected to develop in both applicability and effectiveness. Commanders and staff will mature their understanding of how to employ Tac OA in order to learn and adapt quickly in a complex environment, thus enhancing deployed tactical decision-making.

Enhancing learning and decision cycles on operations are critical if Australian Army force elements are to adapt their techniques, tactics and procedures faster than opposing threat forces. Tac OA in general—and employment of embedded Tac OA Teams in particular—is enhancing US and UK operations in complex terrain against a learning enemy. The Australian Army will need to apply resources in order to catch up with our allies.

## ENDNOTES

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- 1 Quoted in Lieutenant General David F. Melcher (US Army) and Lieutenant Colonel John G. Ferrari (US Army), 'A View from the FA49 Foxhole: Operational Research and Systems Analysis', *Military Review*, Vol. LXXXIV, No. 6, November–December 2004, p. 2.
- 2 Scientific Support Teams have been previously deployed on ADF operations; however, 2005 saw the first deployment of an OA Team with both a scientist and a Masters-qualified operational analysis military officer.
- 3 NATO, Research and Technology Organisation, NATO Code of Best Practice on Decision Support for CJTF and Component Commanders, AC/323 (SAS-044)TP/46.
- 4 Reach-back is a concept whereby capabilities based in the National Support Area are accessed by the deployed force using an appropriate means of communication.
- 5 Army has trained one OA officer every two years since 1990. Only one of these officers is currently still serving.

## THE AUTHOR

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Colonel Andrew Condon graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon in 1985. He has a Bachelors Degree in Mechanical Engineering and is a graduate of the US Army Command and General Staff College. His training and experience in Operational Analysis includes a posting to the Army War Games Centre, the Royal Military College of Science's Military Operational Analysis Research course, a Masters degree in Military Operational Research (Cranfield University, UK), posting to the Army Battle Simulation Group, and Director of Simulation War Gaming for the EX PHOENIX Restructure The Army Study. In 2004 he deployed to Iraq as a staff officer on HQ CJTF7 and he deployed as the Commander JTF for the evacuation of Australian nationals during the war in Lebanon in 2006.

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## OPERATIONS

# IMPLEMENTING AN ADAPTIVE APPROACH IN NON-KINETIC COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS

LIEUTENANT COLONEL MICK RYAN

### ABSTRACT

This article explores the ways in which the Australian Army's 1st Reconstruction Task Force, deployed to Afghanistan in August 2006, implemented complex adaptive systems theory to develop an adaptive approach to their role as part of counterinsurgency operations.

*For highly complex missions, it is not realistic to expect to "get it right" from the outset. The initial conditions are much less important than the ability to improve performance over time.<sup>1</sup>*

Contemporary counterinsurgency operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, southern Thailand, and the southern Philippines have proven a significant challenge for those nations whose military cultures and force structures are still evolving from Cold War, conventional mindsets. It is likely that state militaries will continue to face such challenges as insurgency continues to be the favoured approach of violent non-state actors. Therefore, success in these operations will be determined largely by the ability, and willingness, of Western forces to adapt and thrive in the changed situation.

The character of the operation in Afghanistan reflects that of many previous insurgencies, with the addition of contemporary influences such as pervasive media. Recently described by Hoffman as a *neo-classical insurgency*<sup>2</sup>, the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces possess a cause, effective leadership (based in Pakistan<sup>3</sup>), support from (at least part of) the population, favourable terrain and external support as well as a sophisticated ability to manipulate the Internet and mass media to influence perceptions.

Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of the insurgency is its proven capacity to adapt, not only to the terrain and the operations of counterinsurgents but also with its application of new technologies to their operations. Ten years ago, the Taliban did not permit the playing of music; now it is highly adept at exploiting multimedia for its propaganda in Afghanistan and around the world. These factors combined make Afghanistan a serious challenge for conventional Western military forces and a destabilising influence in the region. While this lethal conflict will require time and resources to confront, as history shows it *is* possible to defeat insurgencies and Afghanistan is no different.

This paper examines how the 1st Reconstruction Task Force (RTF) implemented a systemic adaptive approach, not as a new method of operating, but to improve the chances of the unit successfully influencing its environment. Military commanders have always sought to innovate both during and between conflicts to ensure success. Therefore the efforts of 1RTF to innovate

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the framework ...

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and develop new ways of doing business are not exceptional. What does set these operations apart is the deliberate use of complex adaptive systems theory as the framework for implementing an adaptive approach as part the unit's culture.<sup>4</sup>

In reviewing 1RTF's implementation of an adaptive approach, this article starts with a description of the context—how reconstruction operations fit within counterinsurgency campaigns, and the environment in which the task force operated. The next section describes how the task force sought to win the adaptation battle against the Taliban. Further, this article offers suggestions on the transition from theory to practice in the conduct of systemic adaptation<sup>5</sup> before and during military operations. The underlying principle, implemented from the top of the organisation, was that of *winning the adaptation battle*, to deny the enemy the support of the people and to consequently make the Taliban irrelevant.

### A COMPLEX ENVIRONMENT: NON-KINETIC COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS

Where does reconstruction fit within the broader spectrum of counterinsurgency operations? One of the underlying themes of counterinsurgency theory is that of separating the people from the insurgent. While this may have a physical (kinetic) dimension, its primary importance is in the cognitive realm. Also known as winning the hearts and minds, the counterinsurgent seeks to provide the population with sufficient motivation to deny support to the insurgents (either physically or morally).

The contemporary environments in which land forces are undertaking counterinsurgency operations have been described as 'complex terrain'.<sup>6</sup>

This is certainly the case in southern Afghanistan. While the physical terrain is quite challenging for the conduct of operations, it is the humans that occupy this region that comprise its complexity.

The intricacy of the human and informational dimension of Uruzgan was a constant challenge in the operations of the RTF.<sup>7</sup> It required continuous information collection to ensure that RTF operations were based on the most up-to-date understanding of the environment. The environment changed constantly, as a result of various stimuli from coalition forces, the Taliban, local people and other actors. Ensuring that the RTF maintained and enhanced its effectiveness in the environment required an adaptive approach. Building this approach required detailed pre-deployment activity.

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**WINNING THE ADAPTATION BATTLE—BUILDING A FOUNDATION**

The process of introducing an adaptive approach commenced prior to the deployment. There was a realisation among several key staff very early in the planning for the deployment that the task force would be conducting operations in a very complex environment. It was an environment that was largely not understood, despite the plethora of briefings and reading done by nearly all members of the task force. A detailed appreciation of the situation would require time spent in that environment. This reinforced the need to be a learning organisation, with the ability to quickly gain situational awareness and adapt operations as the understanding of the environment improved after deployment.

Given this dilemma, complex adaptive systems theory appeared to offer important insights into how the unit might be able to better understand and influence its environment upon deployment. Using a framework of complex adaptive systems for task force operations also seemed to offer the chance to improve the task force's chances of successfully conducting operations in the medium to longer term. Consequently, complex adaptive systems theory was adopted as a supporting structure for innovation and adaptation from the formation of the new unit.

As the first task force of its type, there was significant latitude from the chain of command in how the unit would operate. No-one really knew what a reconstruction task force was supposed to look like or how it would conduct its operations. Therefore, there was significant freedom of action in how the unit's standard operating procedures were developed. This autonomy permitted the use of complex adaptive systems theory to shape how the unit initially did business, and how it might learn from its initial experiences to constantly adapt and improve its performance.

Several principles were used in implementing an adaptive approach. First, it was based on extensive study of military history (in particular the history of military innovation). Military history is an excellent source of what has, and has not, worked over a couple of thousand years of human conflict. Given the enduring nature of warfare, a sound foundation in the history of human conflict is essential to an effective implementation of an adaptive approach. Second, whatever was adopted had to be simple. This dedication to simplicity included the use of existing terminology where possible. This was to ensure that it was understood and implemented widely, and was also transferable to subsequent task forces when they rotated into Afghanistan. This would ensure longevity of the approach.

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Third, it required advocacy from the top. This is a key lesson from any study of the history of military innovation and change—commander advocacy is critical. Leaders—and initially this was a very small group but gradually expanded—had to constantly push and mould the implementation of an adaptive approach. It would have been very easy to fall back into the standard methods of operating. It took constant reinforcement and allocation of resources to the implementation of an adaptive approach to ensure it took hold.

Solid research and preparation identified previous COIN operations and the lessons therein. These formed the basis of the way the RTF would do business. Over time in-theatre, these lessons were revised continuously and can be called ‘learnt’ because the RTF adapted as circumstances changed. The RTF embodied the utility of being an adaptive and learning organisation and the military benefits of doing so.

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... a sound foundation in the history of human conflict is essential to an effective implementation of an adaptive approach.

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As John Nagl states in his most recent book *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, ‘individual learning is not sufficient for an organisation to change its practices, a more complicated process involving the institutional memory is involved’.<sup>8</sup> Prior to deployment, the unit consulted with the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) on methods of implementing a systemic approach to adaptation in the unit. Building upon individual adaptation processes, this ensured the entire organisation benefited from lessons learnt during the conduct of operations, and that these were absorbed effectively. Where possible, the unit sought to institute systems with longevity—and the simpler the system, the longer its likely endurance.

After-action reviews (AARs) were introduced from the first days of assembling the new task force. These were an important element of pre-deployment preparation and were conducted to measure whether training objectives had been met, and to assess whether task force tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) were appropriate to the likely tasks that the RTF would undertake. These AARs were also used by observers from outside the unit during the Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRE). Facilitated by the Combat Training Centre, observers were employed to assess the performance of the new unit prior to deployment, and to make observations on the need for changes in organisation and procedures.

The principle of the task force having to ‘win the adaptation battle’ was reinforced constantly. It was also included as an explicit section of the unit concept of operations. This was necessary to ensure that the unit deployed with the organisation and procedures most appropriate to the environment in southern Afghanistan.

It was also vital in ensuring that the unit built and reinforced an ethos that allowed members of the task force to identify weaknesses—or undesirable patterns—and change them before the enemy in Afghanistan could exploit them.

The organisation of the RTF constantly evolved prior to deployment. Originally envisaged as a 200-person organisation, it deployed as a significantly larger task force. A robust security element was added just prior to deployment, although this organisation deployed later than the remainder of the unit. This resulted in a more flexible organisation, containing its own integral intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, engineering, security and logistics functions. It also provided very good freedom of action for the task force.

... the task force having to ‘win the adaptation battle’ was reinforced constantly.

The period prior to deployment in which the reconstruction task force was raised and trained was critical to introducing an adaptive approach. While *Adaptive Campaigning*<sup>9</sup> had yet to be written or released during this period, the pre-deployment activities of the RTF did fit within the Adaptive Cycle<sup>10</sup>, as shown in Figure 1.

When new ways of doing things are implemented they are, if possible, tried—rehearsed—before deployments to ensure that the organisation is familiar with new processes or equipment, and any weaknesses are identified and remedied. Implementing an adaptive approach for the conduct of reconstruction task force operations demanded a similar approach.

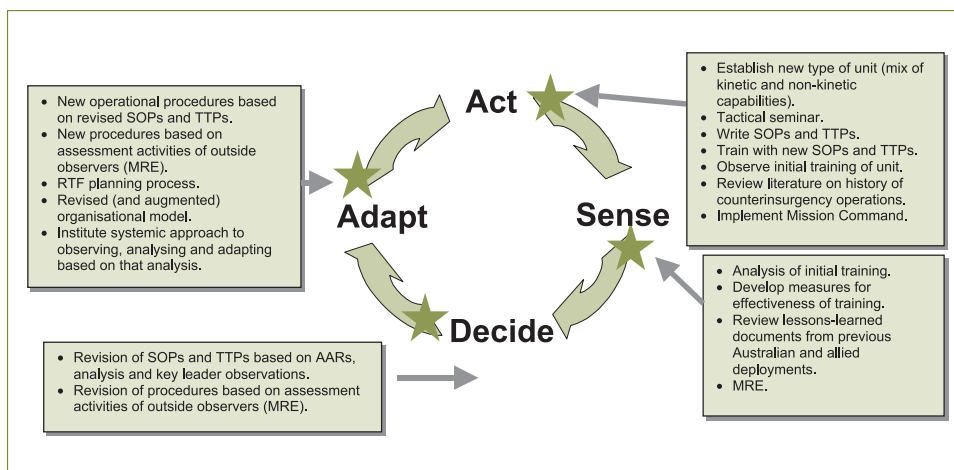


Figure 1. Adaptation in the Pre-Deployment Phase.

The period in which the RTF developed the tactics, techniques and procedures required for operating in southern Afghanistan was hugely challenging and often quite frustrating for many personnel. There was much trial and error while the unit undertook pre-deployment training in Australia. Much was learned about the potential for the unit to contribute to counterinsurgency operations in this time. However, it was the first months while the unit was deployed in Uruzgan that really provided the environment for exploring exactly what the task force was capable of.

### CONSTANT ADAPTATION – ADAPTIVE RECONSTRUCTION OPERATIONS

On deployment, the RTF continued to focus significant energy on winning the adaptation battle. The RTF sought to be adaptable throughout the execution of its operations in the Tarin Kowt basin. This was the result of a constantly evolving security situation in Uruzgan, but also a result of the personnel of the RTF learning more each day about the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation that they had designed and deployed. An effective RTF needed to be a learning organisation. This philosophy had to be fostered by leadership at all levels.

The adversary confronting the RTF demonstrated an ability to observe coalition forces and adapt accordingly. They constantly exchanged information about any observed coalition vulnerabilities amongst themselves, including with other insurgents in distant areas. RTF operations sought to deny recognition of patterns, and limit the adversary's ability to understand the RTF and subsequently adapt to combat it. In many respects, the unique organisation of the RTF—combining security and construction capacity in a single unit—may have posed more dilemmas for the adversary than otherwise would have been the case for a traditional unit.

Because of the unique organisation and mission of the RTF, there was no existing planning process that allowed for an integrated approach to RTF planning. The RTF adapted extant military planning processes, which were developed for conventional operations, to develop a hybrid planning process that combined the existing Military Appreciation Process (MAP), the Project Management System (PMS)<sup>11</sup>, information operations planning and healthy doses of professional military experience and common sense. It allowed

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... the unique organisation of the RTF—combining security and construction capacity in a single unit—may have posed more dilemmas for the adversary than otherwise would have been the case ...

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RTF assets to reconnoitre, design, project manage, and conduct engineer operations within a security umbrella provided by the RTF intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and security assets.

The task force also developed simple measures of effectiveness (MOE) to ascertain progress, or lack of, in adapting to the environment. These MOE utilised both quantitative and qualitative measures to give the task force an indication of its success in influencing the environment, and a sense of where it was on the road to specified goals. It also assisted in reviewing whether those goals were still relevant in the changing environment.

Finally, a key adaptation that took place was a shift from pure physical reconstruction as the main effort, to a far greater emphasis on capacity-building. Though this often had a physical dimension, such as the construction of a trade training school or a school for healthcare professionals, the training of the local people gradually assumed a significantly enhanced role in our operations as we gained a better appreciation for the environment and for the effect that this increased investment in capacity-building would have.

The idea of the RTF needing to win the adaptation battle was constantly reinforced at all levels. This was vital in ensuring that the unit possessed an ethos that allowed everyone to notice patterns and change them, especially ineffective or detrimental ones. This systemic and formal approach to adaptation—reinforcing the informal approach that is more prevalent in military units—was an important part of the RTF's operational philosophy.

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... the training of the local people gradually assumed a significantly enhanced role in our operations ...

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### THE NEXT STEP: COUNTER-ADAPTATION

It is logical to assume that if a friendly military unit seeks to adapt to be more suitable for the environment in which it operates, the enemy is doing the same thing. The adversary in Afghanistan had previously demonstrated the ability to adapt. As a consequence, the RTF conducted what could be described as a *counter-adaptation battle* against the enemy.

Counter-adaptation is the logical extension of the military counter-reconnaissance battle (or probing and sensing in the terminology of *Adaptive Campaigning*), which seeks to deny information to the enemy of friendly strengths, dispositions and intentions. Counter-adaptation operations aim to enhance friendly capacity to adapt and influence the environment while denying the adversary this same capacity.

Counter-adaptation operations seek to interrupt an adversary's adaptive mechanisms. Using the lexicon of *Adaptive Campaigning*, it would influence and interrupt the Adaptation Cycle<sup>12</sup> of those who seek to prevent friendly influence. This four-step loop is a good framework upon which to base counter-adaptation operations. This is because it is a natural approach to adaptation that any adaptive element would need to possess to be able to survive and influence others within a complex adaptive system.

The essence of counter-adaptation operations comprises four elements. First, influence the probing actions of the adversary based on the friendly understanding of the environment. Second, degrade the adversary's sensing capacity by denying the recognition of any friendly patterns and procedures. Third, recognise adversary patterns and exploit them to friendly ends. Finally, deceive the enemy to ensure that any adaptations the adversary makes are low-quality adaptations (disrupting the decision process and the overall adaptation cycle).

The identification of patterns is a key method that both human and non-human predators employ to attack their prey. Just as friendly forces will seek to identify patterns that can be exploited in the behaviour of an adversary, so too the capacity of the enemy must be limited in seeking to do the same against friendly forces. The task force went to great lengths—and consumed considerable energy to include this in its planning process—to ensure that everything possible was done to not set patterns that the adversary could exploit.

Despite this, it would be naïve to think that friendly forces will always be able to avoid setting patterns. Therefore, it is vital to ensure the adversary is denied recognition of any patterns. The key to this is friendly forces recognising first their own patterns and making changes before the adversary identifies and exploits them. Once again, through the use of detailed after-action reviews for every mission, and the analysis of those reviews by intelligence and operations staff (as well as senior staff), this approach was incorporated into RTF operations.

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Counter-adaptation operations aim to enhance friendly capacity to adapt and influence the environment while denying the adversary this same capacity.

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Exploiting adversary patterns and using them to generate non-kinetic effects ... has a more enduring legacy ...

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Friendly forces must recognise adversary patterns and exploit them. For military reconstruction operations, this means ensuring the enemy has limited capacity to have a negative impact on our reconstruction activities. While this may at times require kinetic operations, these will only have short-term, tactical effects. Exploiting adversary patterns and using them to generate non-kinetic effects within the population of the disrupted society has a more enduring legacy and helps make the adversary irrelevant to the population.

It is important to be active in influencing an adversary so that any adaptations they attempt are low quality. This can be done through deceiving the enemy about the true capabilities of various friendly systems so that enemy adaptation is based on wrong estimates of capabilities. Additionally, ensuring that friendly counter-adaptation measures are closely orchestrated and integrated into the planning of all operations from their conception will ensure that friendly forces have a better chance at negating the adversary's influence in a given environment.

Key to the conduct of counter-adaptation operations will be the continuous collection, fusion, analysis and dissemination of information on the environment. The aim should not be to seek a perfect overall picture, but to gain enough information to make decisions of good quality faster than the adversary. This reinforces the need for intelligence-led reconstruction.

## FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

There is still much to be done in implementing an adaptive approach in a systemic manner. The implementation in operations of the adaptive stance will require some trial and error to ensure that the most effective manner of employment is adopted. However, based on the experiences of 1RTE, several issues are apparent.

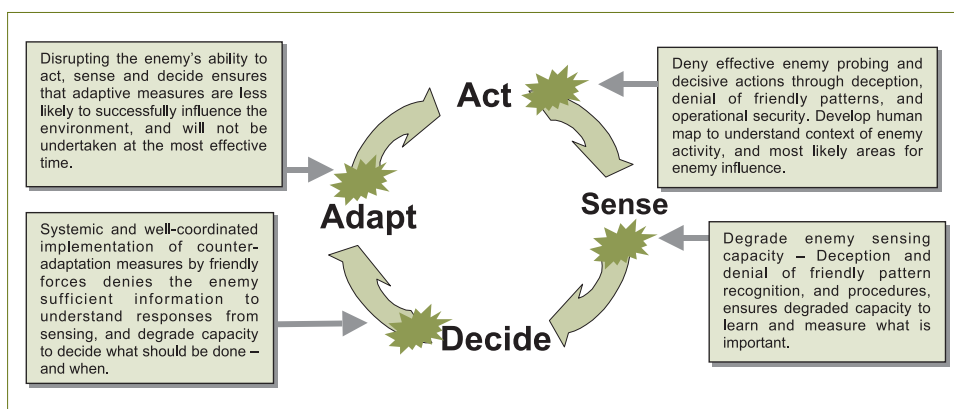


Figure 2. The Adaptation Cycle and Counter-Adaptation.

First and most importantly, keep it simple. The environment in which contemporary operations take place are enormously complex. The technical and human resources employed are also very complex organisations. Therefore, in aiming to give friendly forces a better chance of success through adaptive operations, operational planning and execution should not be complicated through introduction of this approach. Any adaptive approach must be easily understood by key leaders and staff, and they in turn must be able to translate the complex ideas and terminology associated with the study of complex adaptive systems into a lexicon that is understood and employable by those they command. The ACT – SENSE – DECIDE – ADAPT loop, described in *Adaptive Campaigning*, provides a simple yet effective approach to how units can better understand and influence their environment. It is a simple model that does not seek operational perfection, but instead seeks to ensure friendly forces are more successful in their environment relative to any adversary.

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Any adaptive approach  
must be easily  
understood by key  
leaders and staff ...

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A simple approach also demands simple yet effective mechanisms for measuring success, to provide valuable feedback for the conduct of subsequent operations. The 1st RTF developed a simple yet effective set of measures linked to its objectives, which provided feedback on short and longer term adaptations required within the unit, as well as for other adjoining units and follow-on RTFs. This type of approach needs to continue to be developed.

Any approach to simplifying the adaptive approach must consider terminology. The military will, and indeed should, resist the introduction of any fancy new lexicon associated with complex adaptive systems. Where existing words, phrases and terminology can be employed to describe the adaptive approach, they should be. This will aid in institutional acceptance.

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...we do need some  
time 'out of contact' for  
innovation to take place.

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Second, this is not something that can quickly be developed during operations—inculcating an adaptive approach in a military unit needs to start long before any deployment. As the history of military innovation shows, significant innovation—or adaptation—needs to have some time to develop before the conduct of operations. While in the contemporary environment we may not have the luxury of the Interwar Period of 1918–1939 to develop new forms of doing business, we do need some time 'out of contact' for innovation to take place. It must be part of the culture of a unit, and there

must be 'buy in' by commanders and their subordinates. This includes a robust adoption of mission command and the capacity to undertake effective self-critiques of unit performance.

Next, implementing an adaptive approach must be led from the top. Unit commanders and their subordinate leaders must understand, and support, the implementation of the various mechanisms to support better quality adaptation in military units. This advocacy from the top is critical. In 1983 US Army General Donn Starry, writing about change in military organisation, stated that:

someone at or near the top of the institution must be willing to hear out arguments for change, agree to the need, embrace the new operational concepts and become at least a supporter, if not a champion, of the cause for change.<sup>13</sup>

In a unit this will normally be the commanding officer. However, this advocacy will be required at various echelons above unit level, all the way to the top of the organisation. This will be a difficult undertaking for an organisation such as Army. It is certainly possible, but it will require senior leaders to understand, embrace and sell the adoption of this approach if it is to be successfully embraced by the wider organisation.

Not only must senior leaders convince their subordinates of the effectiveness of this approach, they must also ensure that other organisations with which Defence works, such as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and aid organisations, appreciate the adaptive nature of military organisations and how they intend to operate. Publishing a concept such as *Adaptive Campaigning* is a start, but much more will need to be done. In addition to Australian Government institutions, a common approach must be forged with Australia's principal allies and coalition partners. This will ensure that the cultural, as well as technical, framework that Australian Defence Force elements work within during coalition operations is familiar and is exploited by the coalition force as whole.

The senior leaders that advocate the adaptive approach must also foster continued examination of the benefits of exploring complex adaptive systems. In an organisation as busy as Army, we often need a separate organisation to undertake some of the theoretical development of alternative ways of conducting operations. The relationship between scientific organisations such as DSTO and soldiers is critical. Both play important roles in implementing an adaptive approach, as well as working

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The senior leaders that advocate the adaptive approach must also foster continued examination of the benefits of exploring complex adaptive systems.

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to identify additional areas that can be exploited to enhance the effectiveness of military organisations. Ensuring there is an effective link to facilitate an effective transfer of theory into practice is a key part of this. The intellectual underpinnings provided by organisations such as DSTO will be a key enabler.

Fourth, advocates for the adaptive approach must ensure that systems implemented for adaptivity have longevity. It is a waste of valuable time and resources to implement an adaptive system that only endures as long as its original promoter remains in the unit. The advocate must ensure other key leaders ‘buy into’ the changes and ensure its continuation after that advocate departs the unit. Obviously in military operations there are lots of ways an advocate for these kinds of changes may leave the scene. Therefore, the value of the adaptive approach should be apparent to others—and the implementation systemic enough—to ensure they survive the departure of that advocate. This continuity of approach is vital.

Finally, it is not enough to implement systems that ensure that friendly military organisations are adaptive. It is just as vital that friendly forces interfere with the adaptive capacities of those that seek to hinder our capacity to achieve our objectives. There must be an aggressive approach to degrading the fitness of opposing forces. There are actions in both the kinetic and non-kinetic realms that we and our coalition partners, civilian and military, are able to take that can hinder the capacity of our adversaries to effectively adapt. The conduct of counter-adaptation operations against adversaries must be part of any adaptive approach that is set in motion in military organisations.

To inculcate military organisations with an ethos that encourages a greater level of innovation takes time. It will take both time and effort for more leaders to come to understand and appreciate the potential benefits of an adaptive approach based on a comprehension of complex adaptive systems. While some individual units may develop their own techniques, ensuring a consistent method across Army and the other Services will require a significant education campaign—and investment in the various training and education mechanisms—from the top to the bottom of the organisation. Ensuring a military unit is able to undertake effective adaptation takes an investment in both human and financial resources. However, the return on this investment is likely to be significant.

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Ensuring a military unit is able to undertake effective adaptation takes an investment in both human and financial resources.

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## CONCLUSION

*With so many successful insurgencies ... the temptation will always be great for a discontented group, anywhere, to start the operations. Above all, they may gamble on the effectiveness of an insurgency-warfare doctrine so easy to grasp, so widely disseminated today that almost anybody can enter the business.*<sup>14</sup>

The aim of this paper has been to explore one practitioner's view of implementing an adaptive approach in military operations. Just as Krulak's 'three-block war'<sup>15</sup> brings to mind a multitude of different types of joint and interagency operations, the term 'winning the adaptation battle' seeks to encapsulate an entire concept—a way of doing business. What the reconstruction task force undertook, seeking to be a more adaptive organisation, represents the initial steps. But even this posed significant challenges before, and during, the conduct of RTF operations.

Counterinsurgency operations are very complex undertakings. They require the commitment of a range of national resources, only one of which is the military. They present military organisations with particular challenges. The historical strength of an army, the coordinated and disciplined destruction of an enemy force, can at best only have a tactical effect in a counterinsurgency campaign.

Given the low entry threshold of insurgencies, counterinsurgency operations are likely to absorb the attention, and resources, of Western military organisations for some time to come. The junior officers that are graduating from their basic training today could be conducting these types of operations for their entire careers. Consequently, military organisations must be able to adapt themselves, from top to bottom, to be able to remain an effective and relevant option for governments in countering the likely range of insurgencies in the coming decades.

In her paper *The Implications of Complex Adaptive Systems Theory for C2*, Dr Anne-Marie Grisogono has identified that learning from experience to produce more effective future performance is a defining characteristic of complex adaptive systems.<sup>16</sup> By adopting a systemic approach to learning from experience and using those lessons to adapt and better influence its environment, the experiences of the 1RTF provide important lessons for the implementation of the adaptive approach in military units.



## ENDNOTES

- 1 Anne-Marie Grisogono and Alex Ryan, 'Adapting C2 to the 21st Century: Operationalising Adaptive Campaigning', Paper presented to 12th International Command and Control Research and Technology Symposium, June 2007, Newport, USA.
- 2 F Hoffman, 'Neo-Classical Insurgency?', *Parameters*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 2, Summer 2007, p. 71–87.
- 3 Major al-Qaeda, Taliban, Haqqani Network (HQN), and Hezb-e Islami Gulbiddein (HiG) sanctuaries exist in Waziristan in eastern Pakistan; see AH Cordesman, 'Winning in Afghanistan: Challenges and Response', Testimony to the US Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, February 2007.
- 4 It must be acknowledged that the influence of DSTO research into adaptation and complexity in Defence was significant in implementing the RTF's approach to adaptation. The theoretical work completed in the last few years by DSTO provided a good foundation for the subsequent introduction of systems to facilitate an adaptive approach for RTF operations.
- 5 This requires the adaptive approach to be accepted by the majority of personnel, and all key leaders, in a unit as the preferred approach to the conduct of operations and the means to constantly increase chances of success and better influence the environment in which that military unit finds itself.
- 6 Lieutenant Colonel D Kilcullen, *Future Land Operating Concept: Complex Warfighting*, Army Headquarters, Department of Defence, Canberra, 2004, p. 5.
- 7 For a more detailed view of this environment, see M Ryan, 'The Other Side of the COIN: Reconstruction Operations in Southern Afghanistan', *Australian Army Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Winter 2007, pp. 124–43.
- 8 J Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2005, pp. 6–7.
- 9 Commonwealth of Australia, *Adaptive Campaigning*, Army Headquarters, Department of Defence, Canberra, 2006.
- 10 Ibid, p. 7.
- 11 The PMS is a technical engineer project management process developed by the Australian Army's 19th Chief Engineer Works.
- 12 Commonwealth of Australia, *Adaptive Campaigning*, p. 7.
- 13 D Starry, 'To Change an Army', *Military Review*, March 1983, p. 23.
- 14 D Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, Frederick A Praeger, New York, 1964, p. 143.
- 15 The term 'three-block war' was first used by United States Marine Corps Commandant, General Charles Krulak, in an article for *Marines Corps Gazette* entitled 'The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War' in 1999.



- 16 Anne-Marie Grisogono, 'The implications of Complex Adaptive Systems Theory for C2', Paper presented to the 2006 Command and Control Research and Technology Symposium, p. 5.

### THE AUTHOR

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Lieutenant Colonel Mick Ryan graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon, in 1989. Since graduation he has served in various command and staff appointments in Australia and overseas. His most recent appointments include ADC to the Land Commander (1998), Officer Commanding 1 Field Squadron, 1 CER (1999–2000) and Deputy Director Future Warfighting in Military Strategy Branch, Defence Headquarters (2004–2005). In 2000, Lieutenant Colonel Ryan served as the Engineer Liaison Officer for the 6 RAR Battalion Group, East Timor, and, in 2005, served as the Deputy J3 for the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq, in Baghdad. From August 2006 until April 2007 he commanded the 1st Reconstruction Task Force in southern Afghanistan.

Lieutenant Colonel Ryan is a graduate of the ADF School of Languages, a Distinguished Graduate of the United States Marine Corps (USMC) Command and Staff College and a graduate of the USMC School of Advanced Warfighting.

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## MILITARY HISTORY

# THE 1ST AUSTRALIAN DIVISION IN 1917

## A SNAPSHOT\*

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LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROBERT STEVENSON

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### ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the three themes of tactics, training and technology on the Western Front during 1917 from the perspective of the 1st Australian Division. The introduction of the Lewis gun led to a process of innovation at the tactical level, producing changes in both tactics and training. Such changes were indicative of widespread adaptations that were occurring throughout the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in 1917.

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### INTRODUCTION

From the time of Napoleon the 'division' became a standard feature of most European military establishments as they harnessed the political and technological advances of the French and Industrial Revolutions to

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\* This is an edited text of the presentation given to the 2007 Chief of Army's Military History Conference. Used by permission.

field larger and larger armies. By 1914, all European armies had adopted the division as the basic building block of their military forces. European armies were measured in the number of divisions, regular (or first-line) and reserve (or second-line), which they could put into the field on mobilisation. The measure of an army was in the number and quality of those divisions and the number of guns that supported them.

When the nations of Europe went to war in 1914 they mobilised their armies—France with sixty infantry and ten cavalry divisions; Germany in the west with seventy-eight infantry and ten cavalry divisions, tiny Belgium with six infantry and one cavalry division; and mighty Britain also with six infantry and a single cavalry division.<sup>1</sup> These divisions were what historian Cyril Falls labelled the real ‘unit’ of the Great War.<sup>2</sup>

The 1st Australian Division was the senior of the five Australian infantry divisions on the Western Front in 1917. It suffered more casualties than any other Australian division and its units were awarded more battle honours and Victoria Crosses than any other Australian formation in the First World War. It was the premier division of the Australian Imperial Force.

### THE MAKING OF THE 1ST AUSTRALIAN DIVISION

On the outbreak of war the Australian Government offered Britain an infantry division and light horse brigade as its initial contribution to Imperial defence. Although there was no permanent divisional organisation in Australia, some pre-war planning had been undertaken and, in accordance with broad principles negotiated at a series of pre-war Imperial Conferences, Australia had agreed to the creation of an Imperial General Staff and the standardisation of its home forces

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on British models but without committing itself to establishing an expeditionary force for Britain’s use in wartime. The 1st Australian Division officially came into being on 15 August 1914 when the Governor General approved the raising of the AIF, with command of the force going to Brigadier William Throsby Bridges. He was the first Australian officer to be promoted to the rank of major general and the first Australian officer to command a division.

The 1st Division was raised in the remarkably short period of just six weeks. By the beginning of November, its 18 000 men, twenty-six medium machine-guns, thirty-six field guns, and nearly 5500 horses were aboard their transports waiting to sail for

Britain. It was a remarkable achievement. It was however, a fragile organisation. The pressures of mobilisation and the decentralised manner in which it had been raised meant that training was rudimentary at best. Most infantry units had only managed to fire the recruit rifle practice, and only one of the Division's artillery batteries appears to have fired a live-fire practice before leaving Australia. Less than 7 per cent of its men had seen previous active service and 35 per cent had never served in uniform.<sup>3</sup> It was always the intention to complete divisional training overseas, but it would be difficult to reject Jeffrey Grey's conclusion that 'the 1st Division was probably the worst-trained formation ever sent from Australian shores.'<sup>4</sup>

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In the shadows of the great pyramids, the 1st Division was for the first time fully assembled. The Division then reorganised its infantry battalions—bringing them into line with the new British four-company structure—and raced through company, battalion, brigade and divisional training in three months. It even managed some rudimentary mission-specific training for the forthcoming Gallipoli campaign.

The Division's main manoeuvre elements—its infantry battalions—had very limited organic firepower. Nearly 70 per cent of the Division's manpower was held in its battalions, but each of these contained only four machine-guns, with the rest of its firepower being generated by bolt-action rifles. Although the gunners made up the second-largest grouping within the Division, with 15 per cent of the manpower, their problem was the number and size of their guns. While British divisions in France contained roughly one gun for every 159 bayonets, the 1st Division had less than half this, with only one gun for every 336 bayonets. Compounding this problem was the ammunition shortage and the initial reliance on shrapnel shells, a round requiring considerable skill to employ and quite ineffective against entrenched troops. While the Division deployed with modern quick-firing eighteen-pounder guns, their relatively flat trajectory was a distinct disadvantage on the rugged ridges of the Peninsula. In fact the complete absence from the Division's arsenal of any howitzers or heavy mortars to provide high-angle fire would mean that the Division could never provide sufficient fire to neutralise, much less destroy, the well dug-in Turkish soldiers.<sup>5</sup> All of these factors ensured that the Division did not achieve its full potential at Gallipoli.

Following the withdrawal, the 'old' 1st Division was vivisected and reorganised. It lost half of its veterans to the two new AIF divisions, providing the majority of the new brigade and battalion commanders. The fire-support assets were overhauled and expanded. The divisional artillery was finally brought into line with the British establishment, doubling in size. Further firepower was added with the raising of divisional heavy and medium trench mortars, and each infantry brigade raised a

light trench mortar and a medium machine-gun company. The infantry battalions received their first issues of the Lewis light machine-gun. The engineering capability was also expanded with a new pioneer battalion—the division's 'jack of all trades'. By the end of the process, however, less than half of the Division that sailed from Egypt were veterans, the majority being raw reinforcements.

In March 1916, after the division landed at Marseilles, its sun-burned diggers entrained and were shunted through the French countryside north of Paris and deposited in the Armentieres sector. This part of the British line was regarded as a 'nursery' sector for new divisions. Here the 'new' 1st Division was introduced to the realities of the Western Front and was issued with steel helmets, more Lewis light machine-guns, factory-produced grenades, light, medium and heavy trench mortars, 4.5-inch howitzers, and much of their worn-out heavy equipment and weapons were exchanged for newer items from the British depots. Officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers were also sent to attend British schools of instruction on many of the novelties to which the Division was being introduced.<sup>6</sup>

It was not until mid-July that the 1st Division moved south to launch the AIF's first major and successful action on the Western Front. Operating as part of General Hubert Gough's newly formed Reserve Army, the Division seized Pozieres in what was seen as a significant achievement. The Division's performance was not flawless, however, and neighbouring British formations advised that there was a noticeable tendency for the Australians to pack their forward trenches resulting in unnecessary casualties. Undoubtedly this approach stemmed from the Division's experience on Gallipoli. There the weaker Turkish artillery was not as dangerous as the German guns on the Western Front, and the closeness of the opposing lines required a high density of troops to ensure the line could be held. What it demonstrates is that the 1st Division, despite its Gallipoli credentials, still had much to learn about the conditions in France and the new foe. So why did the 1st Division succeed at Pozieres when earlier attacks had failed?

One Australian historian suggests that the key factor in the 1st Division's Pozieres success was 'the quality of the troops'. The Division was fresh, well-trained and experienced after its Gallipoli service.<sup>7</sup> There may be something in the claim about the quality of the troops and the fact they were rested but, as for the others, these

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do not stand up to scrutiny. The Division had spent less than three months in Egypt following the withdrawal during which time it had undertaken some rudimentary training but it had been focused on the expansion and reorganisation of its new units. Training had to be rushed and was far from complete. In France, the three months spent in the north were occupied with administration, front-line acclimatisation and only limited collective training. The artillery was still extremely raw.<sup>8</sup> As for the Gallipoli experience, the 1st Division never conducted a divisional attack during its time there—Pozieres was its first. In reality there were other, more subtle and telling factors at play and the first of these was the quality of its commander.

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extremely raw.

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When Bridges was mortally wounded at Gallipoli, Lieutenant General William Birdwood, Commander AIF, selected an old Indian Army subordinate to take over the 1st Division. Harold Bridgwood Walker was a British regular and he would command the 1st Division for more than two and a half years. One of his officers recalled of him:

Colonel Walker was one of those ‘milestones’, which crop up from time to time in the history of most Regiments. He was an outstanding soldier, who brought his Battalion to the highest state of efficiency ... Colonel Walker was a wonderful trainer of troops. His exercises were well thought out and instructive. His criticisms concise and to the point. There was no time for boredom. He never fussed, but kept his Battalion on the tip of its shoes, eager, and active ... [and] when he left Wellington [India] I doubt if there was a better-found battalion in the British army. He was the ideal Commanding Officer, one whose steely eye and incisive manner caused him to be feared, yet deeply respected.<sup>9</sup>

Walker proved to be an astute and trusted leader, making no secret of his affection for his troops and this affection was reciprocated to an uncommon degree. One of his COs in 1917 described him thus:

Cool and courageous in action, possessing a military knowledge of the highest order, of distinctive attainments and striking personality. His motto ‘What we have we’ll hold’ was lived up to by the 1st Division, and there can be no doubt as to the personal influence he exerted.<sup>10</sup>

Walker is an example that the human dimension did count, even on the Western Front, and good General Officers Commanding (GOCs) made good divisions.<sup>11</sup>

The second factor that played a key role in the early success of the 1st Division was its ability to turn battlefield observations into lessons learnt. Even as it was arriving on the Somme, the divisional staff was seeking out lessons from the fighting the BEF had endured. On 14 July, just nine days before the 1st Division’s assault,

Thomas Blamey—the Division's General Staff Officer Grade 1 (GSO1) and *de facto* chief of staff—issued General Staff Memorandum Number 54.<sup>12</sup> This document recorded a series of lessons drawn from the recent fighting of the neighbouring 7th and 19th British Divisions. His choice of divisions is interesting. Gary Sheffield has suggested that these divisions were picked because of their relatively recent successes on the Somme.<sup>13</sup> Following quickly on from Memorandum 54 came a series of other divisional documents summarising further observations from the recent fighting.<sup>14</sup> Walker's background as a British regular and Blamey's pre-war training at Quetta would also have assisted this process.

The third key factor in the Division's success was its own staff work. Good troops die just as easily as poor ones if they are mismanaged and, in France in 1916 and 1917, it was the mass of administrative and operational details that often made the difference between success and failure. Although Sheffield is rightly critical of Australian staff work on the Somme, especially in the 2nd Division, the standards set in the 1st Division by Blamey were not typical of the AIF or the BEF for this period. Not only did Blamey seek to incorporate recent lessons into the Division's plan but he was also scrupulous in coordinating the staff to ensure that all possible measures were taken to assist the assaulting troops. When Blamey finished his two-year course at Quetta in 1913 he was granted a 'B' pass and was described by the Commandant in the following terms:

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[A] factor that played a key role in the early success of the 1st Division was its ability to turn battlefield observations into lessons learnt.

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He came here uneducated (in a military sense) but all his work during his first year was characterised by a very genuine determination to overcome this defect. By the end of the first year he had succeeded beyond all expectations. During his second year his work has been well up to the standard of his Division both in quality and quantity. His views are sound and thoughtful and his judgement, in general, is good ... He has always had the courage of his opinions and, as he has advanced in general military knowledge, he has expressed his opinions with greater freedom ... A self reliant man who knows what he wants and means to get on ... If he is not gifted with a large amount of tact he is not, in any way, conspicuously devoid of that very necessary quality.<sup>15</sup>

His importance to Walker can be seen in the lengths to which Walker went to keep him. On two occasions in 1916 and 1917 Blamey left the staff to gain command experience at battalion and brigade level but on both occasions Walker insisted that he be returned because he was, in Walker's estimation, just too valuable to the Division to be employed in a regimental command.<sup>16</sup>

In accordance with the doctrine of the day, the development of the Division's plan was to be based on 'An Appreciation of the Situation', which Walker and Blamey would conduct independently.<sup>17</sup> Walker was expected to develop the concept for his attack, sketching an outline but including his key requirements such as the timing and direction of the attack and the support needed. It was Walker who decided that the 1st Division's assault was to be launched from the south-east of the village and that the frontage allotted to the attack required two brigades. Charles Bean makes clear that Walker developed his plans in conjunction with Blamey.<sup>18</sup> Blamey and the staff then filled in the details to produce the operational orders to meet Walker's concept.

The other factor working in favour of the 1st Division was the strength of the supporting fire. The bombardment in support of its attack began on 19 July and included the heavy artillery of the Reserve Army and the artillery of X Corps. Among this support was the 45th Heavy Artillery Group, which included one of the two Australian siege batteries armed with 9.2-inch howitzers. There was also the 1st Division's own trench mortars and its four brigades of field guns and howitzers, commanded by the talented Brigadier (later Lieutenant General Sir) Joseph Talbot Hobbs.<sup>19</sup> It is worth noting that, for the first time, an early version of the creeping barrage was fired in support of the Division during its capture of Pozieres. This fire support was, according to Charles Bean, 'famous even among the many famous bombardments on the Western Front'.<sup>20</sup>

After holding Pozieres through severe German shelling, the Division was withdrawn for a short rest. Two more tours on the Somme followed, with fruitless fighting around Mouquet Farm, before the division was withdrawn north to the relatively quiet sector of Ypres in Belgium Flanders. Later in the year the Division returned for the final phase of the Somme campaign as the offensive petered out in the mud and rain of a bitter winter. By the end of the year the 1st Division, along with the other Australian divisions, had earned a reputation as being 'reliable'—perhaps the ultimate accolade from General Headquarters (GHQ).<sup>21</sup>

The 1st Division began New Year 1917 still holding the line in northern France. Towards the end of February it was involved in following up the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line, but in March it was pulled out, rested and given three weeks in which to train. The focus

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of this training was the new platoon organisation that had just been promulgated in Stationary Service (SS) pamphlet Number 143—*Instructions for the Training of Platoons for Offensive Action*.<sup>22</sup>

In April the Division was drawn back to the new front opposite the Hindenburg Line and involved in a series of sharp actions clearing a number of villages in the German outpost zone. In response, on 15 April the Germans launched a counterattack at Lagnicourt against a thinly held 1st Division line and, although part of its gun line was overrun, the counterattack was defeated. The Division's second major action of 1917 was when it was sucked into the fighting around Bullecourt in May. On this occasion each of its infantry brigades rotated into the fight but operated under the control of the 2nd Australian Division.

Following Bullecourt, the 1st Division was given an extended four-month period of rest and training. During this time all units of the Division were retrained. Training proceeded steadily from platoon and company exercises to battalion, brigade and division. Demonstrations were also a frequent feature with the 1st Division's artillery and trench mortars providing examples of barrages and aircraft of the 3rd Squadron, Royal Flying Corps assisted with air-ground contact training. By the end of this period, Charles Bean claims that the Australian divisions were probably at their zenith.<sup>23</sup> At the end of July, the Division moved north to the rear areas of Belgium Flanders in preparation for its first operation in the Third Battle of Ypres, or what was to become known as the Battle of Passchendaele.<sup>24</sup>

The Battle of Menin Road was the first of these operations. For this attack the Division was only one of eleven British divisions attacking on a frontage of thirteen kilometres. At 05.40 am on 20 September, the lead troops of the Division stood up and advanced behind their barrage. The Division attacked on a frontage of 1000 metres with two brigades making the assault. The brigades were arrayed in depth, leap-frogging their battalions as they secured the three objective lines and biting 1500 metres out of the German defences. The Germans, held at bay by a standing barrage, were unable to counterattack. Although there was some German resistance, notably some of the machine-gun crews housed in concrete pillboxes, they were swiftly dealt with using the new platoon tactics.<sup>25</sup>

So what led to this signature success and how does it compare with Pozieres more than a year before? The first factor, and the first among several 'equals', is stability. The Division's command structure had managed to remain relatively unchanged. Walker still headed the Division, becoming the longest serving AIF divisional

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[S]tability gave ... 1st  
Division significant  
advantages over British  
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to the next.

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commander, and Blamey was still his GSO1. The Division was also fortunate in that it had remained for this entire time part of the same corps—I ANZAC—under its old chief (William Birdwood) and his chief of staff (Cyril Brudenell White). This stability gave Walker and the 1st Division significant advantages over British formations that tended to be moved from one corps to the next.

The second factor for the success was, like Pozieres, the quality of the staff work. This extended from the headquarters of the Second Army, where General Hubert Plummer and his chief of staff Charles Harrington were meticulous in their preparations, and down to the divisional staff. For example, during the night of 19–20 September as the preliminary bombardment intensified, the Division's two assault brigades moved forward. They did so along especially constructed tracks to their assembly positions. Each brigade followed a separate track that was sign-posted and guides were waiting at any points where it seemed the troops might take the wrong direction. The battalion forming-up areas were all taped out on the ground by their Intelligence Officers. Each soldier had a small colour paint patch on the rear rim of his helmet, denoting the objective line at which he was to hold.<sup>26</sup>

The third factor, and one linked closely to the quality of the staff, was the strength of the artillery support. To deal with the new German 'zone' defences, the 'rolling' or 'creeping' barrage, first trialled on the Somme in the previous year, had by now been perfected. No longer was the barrage just a single line of shells moving forward at the pace of the infantry. At Menin Road, the rolling barrage consisted of five successive lines of fire extending 900 metres deep. The first line was fired by the eighteen-pounders, the second by a combination of eighteen-pounders and 4.5-inch howitzers, and the furthest three by Vickers machine-guns, and the heavy guns of the corps and army artillery. From the beginning of the assault through to the anticipated defeat of any German counterattacks the I ANZAC barrage was to fire continuously for eight hours and eight minutes.<sup>27</sup>

The final factor in the Division's success was the quality and training of the troops. The 'new model' Australian infantry had been trained to a high level in the summer months leading up to the offensive. Advancing in well-armed groups, with Lewis guns and rifle grenades, and closely supported by their own medium machine-guns and trench mortars, they were shepherded across no-man's-land by a creeping barrage that protected them as they consolidated and dug-in on their objectives. While the 1st Division still suffered more than 2500 casualties, the diggers were left elated with their success while the effect on the Germans was crushing.

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At Menin Road, the rolling barrage consisted of five successive lines of fire extending 900 metres deep.

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During the year the Division suffered a total of 9082 battle casualties, with 90 per cent of those falling in the four major engagements of Lagnicourt, Bullecourt, Menin Road and Brooseinde. About 65 per cent of those casualties fell on the Division's infantry brigades. Although the Division still had an establishment strength of 18 000, as it had at Gallipoli, the AIF's recruiting crisis ensured that it was never at full strength. Even in August, at a time when it was at its peak following an extended period of rest and training, it was still less than 15 000 strong. In many other ways it was also a fundamentally different organisation from the one that had stormed ashore on the rocky Gallipoli Peninsula.

### NEW WEAPONS AND EMERGING TACTICS

The story of the Lewis gun and the 1st Division is an ideal case study for examining the impact of technology on the development of tactics and training in the BEF in 1917. The Lewis light machine-gun (LMG) turned out to be the best weapon of its type fielded during the First World War and it would eventually provide the British infantry with their own intimate direct-fire support.<sup>28</sup> The 1st Division was introduced to the Lewis gun in Egypt, following the withdrawal from Gallipoli, when each brigade formed a machinegun company by the relatively simple expedient of stripping the Vickers guns out of each of the battalions. These were replaced with a single battalion section of four LMGs.<sup>29</sup>

This additional firepower then drove internal changes within the battalion's organisation and the way it fought. By late-July 1916, the battalion LMG Section had disappeared from the 1st Division to be replaced by six LMG detachments, each equipped with two guns. This allowed the guns to be dispersed to lower levels and each rifle company was now provided with a permanent two-gun detachment, with the remaining two detachments being held with battalion headquarters as the Commanding Officer's reserve.<sup>30</sup> By the end of the year enough LMGs had been issued so that each company now had on average four Lewis guns. With this change came the first permanent allocation of guns to platoons for both training and operations.<sup>31</sup> This trend, however, was not consistent and there were considerable local variations even within Australian battalions.<sup>32</sup>

Although the BEF learned many lessons from the 1916 Somme fighting, it was, by the end of the year, in a state of low-level organisational chaos brought about by the plethora of new weapons and emerging tactics. What became clear in the review

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... it was ... a fundamentally different organisation from the one that had stormed ashore on the rocky Gallipoli Peninsula.

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of the years' fighting was that there was significant variation in the manner in which units and formations were organised, how they trained and how they fought. I ANZAC, after reviewing the way in which its divisions were conducting operations, issued its own guidance on how the battalions of the corps were in the future to be organised and trained.<sup>33</sup> Of note is that this circular, General Staff Circular Number 33, stressed the role of the platoon as the basis of infantry minor tactics—but this learning process was still very uneven across the BEF.

Two weeks after I ANZAC published its revised tactical notes, the corps' superior headquarters, the newly renamed Fifth Army, was expressing concerns at the slow progress that many of its formations were making. The GOC, Hubert Gough, called a conference for his senior commanders and staff and expressed his displeasure at the state of affairs:

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This additional firepower then drove internal changes within the battalion's organisation and the way it fought.

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I have asked you to meet here to-day because, as a result of inspecting the five divisions now out of the line and training, I have realized that the old principles of company and battalion organization are being neglected in a good many units, and therefore, that all training in these units is of little value and will not lead to the results necessary to ensure success in any attack ...

In some units not a single platoon was organized. Sections were broken up, section commanders did not know who were in the sections or that they were expected to command them, platoons did not have their bombers organized as a section under its own commander, bombers were scattered haphazard throughout sections..., platoon commanders never exercise nor train their bombers, on drill and route marching parades as well as in billets section organization was entirely neglected and broken up ...

Now as regards the organization of companies, I found that platoons were broken up on parade and that the temporary formations formed were not divided into sections and section commanders detailed. Again, company commanders did not make platoon commanders train platoons and did not supervise their training. Again, company commanders did not train or even exercise the Lewis gun detachments, nor did they train or exercise their bombers, or in some cases indeed ever see them.<sup>34</sup>

Given the BEF's propensity to constantly move divisions between corps, there appeared to be little hope of achieving any conformity until General Headquarters (GHQ) stepped in—this took until February of the following year.

In February 1917 GHQ issued its new 'SS143'—*Instructions for the Training of Platoons for Offensive Action*. This new doctrine called for a major restructure of the battalion and the reorganisation of the platoon, finally establishing the platoon as the basis of infantry operations. This was to be achieved by redistributing the company light machine-guns, bombers and rifle-grenadiers so that they were no longer to be regarded as specialist weapon systems but were now added to the growing inventory of the standard infantryman. From March 1917, each of the 1st Division's infantry battalions was restructured to maintain its four companies but they would now have four platoons each organised identically with a section of bombers, a LMG section, a section of riflemen, and a section of rifle-grenadiers. Throughout the BEF senior commanders all began talking about the platoon fighting its own battles. It was with this organisation that the Division fought on the Hindenburg outpost line, at Bullecourt and during Passchendaele.<sup>35</sup>

By the end of 1917 the BEF's platoon organisation reached maturity and from then on it came to be seen as the basis of tactical manoeuvre for the infantry. Although this process had started even before the Lewis gun's arrival, the issue of the LMG down to platoon level increased its firepower and stimulated the development of more sophisticated tactics. These changes, however, were more far-reaching than infantry minor tactics. Just as the introduction of the four-company battalion had shifted the power structures within the battalion, the introduction of the Lewis gun accelerated this process, driving more authority and responsibility to even lower levels. In 1914 the 'platoon' was a new, and in some quarters undesirable, development. By 1917 it was the basis of infantry tactics.

What is most remarkable about the Lewis gun is not so much its technology—after all machine-guns had been around for half a century—but it is more in the process of organisational development that it sparked. Initially introduced as a one-for-one replacement of the Vickers, its early employment was as a simple replacement and its control was kept centralised. But as more of these weapons became available their use became more widespread, leading to low-level experimentation occurring without any direction from GHQ or the War Office. Indeed the higher echelons of the BEF initially had little control or influence over these developments. Only when it was realised that these changes had led to irreversible alteration did GHQ seek to capture these

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Throughout the BEF senior commanders all began talking about the platoon fighting its own battles.

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By the end of 1917 the BEF's platoon organisation reached maturity ...

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developments and institutionalise them in doctrine. By 1917, experienced officers were for the first time (but not the last) reflecting that it was these developments that gave rise to the saying so often heard during the Great War, ‘This is a Platoon Commander’s War!’<sup>36</sup>

In 1916 and 1917 there were literally dozens of technologies that were being exploited and that were driving change. The use of the Lewis gun, as well as the hand grenade and rifle grenade played their part in the growth of the platoon, but within the division there were many others. Motorisation was gradually replacing horse-power and revolutionising battlefield logistics. The field artillery was becoming more accurate through the widespread use of field survey, calibration and meteorological data. The same guns were becoming more versatile through the use of different rounds and fuses to generate different battlefield effects. Although it was not until the spring of 1917 that a safe instantaneous fuse—the 106 fuse—was fielded, it joined a growing number of new types of artillery rounds—non-fatal gas in September 1916, smoke in November 1916 and lethal gas in May 1917. By combining different rounds, including shrapnel, high explosive, smoke and chemical, and varying the intensity of the bombardment, the gunners could mix and match the effects of their fire. This allowed different artillery tactics and techniques to be perfected, including wire-cutting, the creeping and box barrage, and most important—accurate predictive fire. These changes were underpinned by the emergence of radio and exploiting air power for close air support, artillery direction and aerial photography. Outside of the division the development of British flash-spotting and sound-ranging techniques allowed the BEF to gain the upper hand in the counter-battery battle. The tank was added to the combined-arms team. On the administrative front, enormous advances were made in the medical sciences preventing disease and preserving manpower. All of these played a part in what was nothing short of a revolution in military affairs.<sup>37</sup>

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‘This is a Platoon  
Commander’s War!’

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## CONCLUSION

So what does this snapshot of the 1st Australian Division reveal about the role of technology, training and tactics on the Western Front in 1917? The first is that the BEF was wracked by several competing trends as it struggled to expand and master the challenges of trench warfare and the 1st Division experienced the full force of these trends. When the 1st Division landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula its combat power was generated primarily by the rifles of its infantrymen. Against a resolute defender, well dug-in, the result could only be bloody stalemate. In search of a



solution, commanders were forced to centralise scarce resources to ensure better coordination but simultaneously it deprived units of their ability to generate firepower. Improvised expedients were tried but they failed because they could not tip the balance on their own in limited numbers. Until additional man-portable weapons could be developed and produced in sufficient quantity there was little the infantry could do for themselves. Rather, they had to rely on the artillery to shepherd them across no-man's land.

The greatest initial tactical challenge the BEF faced was in its indirect fire support. Although the first response to the lack of firepower was to increase the divisional artillery establishment, it was soon realised that this response lacked flexibility. In the wake of the Battle of the Somme, GHQ assessed that too much of the BEF's field artillery was held in the division. Experience had shown that attempting to mass guns for operations had 'led to the divorce of the Divisional Artillery from its Division being the rule rather than the exception'. To overcome this GHQ decided to reduce and standardise the divisional artillery establishment and thereby create a number of independent artillery brigades. These Army brigades, along with the increasing number of medium and heavy artillery groups, could then be placed at the disposal of higher command and be deployed as needed without disrupting the internal economy of the divisions.<sup>38</sup>

Capitalising on the hard-learned lessons of 1916, the more astute commanders of the BEF would in 1917 devise a solution to the deadlock on the Western Front. With massed guns, generally under the control of the corps and army artillery staff, and sustained by better logistics, the BEF would undertake limited 'bite and hold' attacks to seize sections of the German line and then smash any counterattacks under a deluge of shells. By Passchendaele the BEF's progress toward the centralisation of its artillery reached its peak with most indirect fire support assets firmly under army and corps control.

Although the most dramatic and obvious changes in 1917 were in the artillery, there were equally important but quieter changes in the infantry. In 1914 the company was the tactical unit of the battalion, but as early as 1915 this began to change and by the August offensive on Gallipoli there emerged a platoon organisation that was as much tactical as it was administrative. The firepower that was being devolved to

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The same guns were becoming more versatile through the use of different rounds and fuses ...

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The greatest initial tactical challenge the BEF faced was in its indirect fire support.

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the junior infantry commander also led to the development of new low-level tactics based around the platoon. By 1917 the platoon reached maturity as a fighting organisation, becoming one of the key building blocks of the BEF's new tactical doctrine. New infantry tactics combined with the additional and increasingly accurate and effective indirect firepower would eventually allow a return to manoeuvre on the battlefield. This certainly did not happen overnight, but by 1917 a combined-arms revolution was well underway and leading to what Jonathon Bailey has described as the birth of modern warfare.<sup>39</sup>

In the midst this bloody revolution in military affairs (RMA)—an RMA Williamson Murray considers to be the RMA of the twentieth century—the human element was crucial.<sup>40</sup>

Not so much the individual courage of the front-line digger, although that was of course still vital, but rather it was the intellectual and moral powers of commanders like Walker and his not so humble servant Blamey. Throughout the BEF, in dozens of divisions, like-minded professionals grappled with the implications of new technology, experimented with new tactics to exploit it and adapted the way they organised and trained their troops. It was not a neat process, but war is never neat and often bloody. It was a process of adaptation and improvisation that was characterised by competing trends—centralisation or decentralisation, concentration and diffusion, the specialist versus the generalist. By the end of 1917 they had 'cracked the code' and in the following year they would drive their opponents from the field.

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... by 1917 a combined-arms revolution was well underway ...

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## THE AUTHOR

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## RETROSPECT



In this edition of the *Australian Army Journal* we are pleased to extract an article penned by Major FJ Cross of the Royal Australian Engineers on the employment of engineers in counterinsurgency warfare. This article highlights the value to the military professional of careful scrutiny of the past. Despite stark differences in physical terrain, Major Cross would feel at home serving with Lieutenant Colonel Mick Ryan's Reconstruction Task Force in southern Afghanistan. His appreciation of the key elements of success in providing engineering support to a Civic Action Plan, based on his experience in Vietnam, underscores that very few military problems are entirely novel.

Both Ryan and Cross agree on the unique capacity of military engineers to operate in a complex and dangerous environment while also utilising skills that differ 'from traditional warfighting competencies'. Likewise, both authors emphasise the importance of separating the population from the insurgent using non-kinetic effects. Major Cross identifies the 'quick win' as an important component of winning hearts and minds: 'the most valuable investment is the tangible, quickly completed civic action project'.

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... 'the most valuable investment is the tangible, quickly completed civic action project'.

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## RETROSPECT

The ability of engineers to produce improvements to the living conditions of a supported population during counterinsurgency operations makes them a vital force multiplier. The security challenges of a contested battlespace often militate against effective action by aid and non-government organisations. This leaves a void in the provision of infrastructure—including basic education and skills transfer—that only combat engineers can provide.

Despite the unique operational climate and geography, Ryan and Cross each stress the complexity of dealing with linguistic and cultural differences. Effective civic action requires high levels of linguistic specialisation and a deep appreciation of the customs of the supported population. It is clear from his reflections that Mick Ryan grasped this critical point. His detailed study of military innovation, with reference to Afghanistan's particular ethnic and social conditions, provides the template for future commanders of a Reconstruction Task Force.

Major Cross highlights that engineering-capable forces, wisely employed with local freedom of action, possess 'the goodwill key to many doors.' While it is a truism that there are never enough engineers, employed to maximum effect through sound doctrine and planning they are as vital to success in counterinsurgency today as they were in the Vietnam War.

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# ENGINEERS IN COUNTERINSURGENCY

## A DIFFERENT APPROACH\*

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MAJOR F. J. CROSS, ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS

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### INTRODUCTION

In the counterinsurgency environment Australian forces are most likely to face, one of the most important contributions to an effective civil affairs program will be military civic action. Although, in its broadest sense, military civic action is a responsibility of every soldier, it is the specialist who will provide the greatest return from a short-term investment.

In South-East Asia the most valuable investment is the tangible, quickly completed civic action project. The public works project in particular provides material improvement to economic and social conditions. This in turn will have a beneficial effect on the hopes of the local population and its attitude towards the established government. Furthermore, the desire to preserve the new work should encourage the creation and maintenance of effective self-defence measures.

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The public works project in particular provides material improvement to economic and social conditions.

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\* This article first appeared in the *Australian Army Journal*, No. 255, February 1968.

## RETROSPECT

### CIVIC ACTION AND THE ENGINEERS

More than any other corps the engineers can provide the most effective assistance in the material aspects of civic action. No new engineering skills are required. Only the working environment changes. In addition to construction skills, the engineers possess other valuable advantages. Their instructional experience provides opportunities for them to impart basic skills to others more readily and easily. Their military training provides an understanding of the problems of local protection and defence and a sound background knowledge of health and hygiene.

### THE CURRENT CONCEPT

Currently the engineer squadrons provide the only source of skilled manpower for the implementation of public works programmes. This concept raises important questions. For example (1) Are the engineer squadrons adequately trained to undertake such tasks for the maximum gain? (2) Will the effort be available for the duration of the project? The answer to both questions must be No.

The engineer unit possesses the technical and basic military skills and the administrative backing for such work. It lacks, however, particular skills such as language and comprehensive area familiarisation, essential for effective civic action.

In counterinsurgency operations, particularly in undeveloped areas, very heavy demands will be made on available engineer effort for purely military tasks. It will be a rare occasion when technical manpower can be released for civic action. Again the diversion of committed effort from an incomplete civic action project, because of an urgent unforeseen military requirement, could have a disastrous effect on civil affairs as a whole.

Our army possesses a very small engineer capacity when considered in the light of our commitments. Clearly it would be unwise to plan on diverting a portion of this limited capacity to civic action, no matter how important the particular project may be. A new line of approach is required.

### THE REQUIREMENTS FOR AN EFFECTIVE CIVIC ACTION CAPACITY

What are the prerequisites for an effective specialist military civic action capacity? As far as we are concerned the most important considerations are:

- **Manpower.** We can ill-afford to divert manpower from essential military duties. Any element intended for exclusive employment on civic action projects would need to make very small inroads into our regular manpower strength.



- **Competence.** The sensitive nature of civic action work calls for high standards of professional ability, intelligence and all-round proficiency from those involved. Proficiency in the local language and a thorough understanding of the area concerned are also necessary.

THE SPECIALIST TEAM

There is a definite need in our army for specialist civic action elements. A small, thoroughly trained civic action team could provide a contribution to counterinsurgency operations out of all proportion to its size.

What form should such an element take? I suggest that the best solution is a small, lightly equipped, self-sufficient team. Although the equipment holdings should be kept to a minimum, they should be commensurate with the team's technical capacity. The team organisation would be:

Officer-in-Charge (professionally qualified)	Captain	1
Clerk of Works (Construction)	Warrant Officer	1
Construction Specialists	Carpenter & Joiner	2
	Plumber & Pipefitter	2
	Bricklayer	1
	Blacksmith/Welder	1
Team Specialists	Plant Operator	2
	Electrical Mechanic	1
	Mechanic	1
	Medical Orderly	1

As far as equipment is concerned the scaling must be such as to make the team self-sufficient and allow it to function within its construction capability. Some reliance must be placed on local resources for such specialist equipment as engineer plant. In addition to tradesmen's kits and other selected construction equipments and stores, the team would need to carry weapons and ammunition, accommodation stores, medical stores and necessary general stores. To be fully mobile the team would require about five vehicles.

... the scaling must ... make the team self-sufficient and allow it to function within its construction capability.

## RETROSPECT

### SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

Stringent requirements apply in the selection of suitable personnel for such teams. The team would be expected to operate in comparative isolation, in a primitive and potentially hostile environment. They would be subjected to morale and psychological pressures different from those applicable in conventional organisations.

### TRAINING

Training for the civic action specialist would need to be thorough, extensive and set against the background of the most likely area of operations. With thorough cross-training in trade and other special skills the team's work capacity and effectiveness could be improved well beyond that of its trade composition.

Because of the peculiar nature of the work, training and general preparation of the team would need to satisfy the following essential requirements:

- **Language.** One of the keys to the problem, language training to a predetermined standard must be the priority consideration. The course need not be long. An initial period of intensive schooling to conversational standard would be necessary. Proficiency could then be developed with continuous practice and usage throughout the remainder of the training period.
- **Versatility.** Each man should be trained to acquire, as a minimum, proficiency in at least one skill other than his own. For example, a carpenter should be able to perform an electrician's or plumber's basic duties if the occasion demanded. A man trained in only one skill would have no place in such a team. Improvisation would be the rule rather than the exception. Consequently, ingenuity in the use of locally available materials would need to be encouraged and developed.
- **Country Familiarisation.** This would include geography, the political and economic structure of the country involved and local materials and construction methods. Emphasis would need to be placed on the laws, culture, customs and problem-areas of the local population. An indoctrination period in counterinsurgency would also be desirable.
- **Military Training.** Additional military training in special techniques would be necessary. These would include village defence, communications, escape and evasion and survival training to name a few.
- **General.** Each team member would need to be proficient in first aid and have a basic knowledge of the health problems of the particular environment. He would also need an understanding of instructional techniques.

### EMPLOYMENT OF THE SPECIALIST CIVIC ACTION TEAM

Having been thoroughly prepared for its role, how should the team be employed?

In the simplest circumstances the team would be part of an Australian force assigned to a particular area or zone of operations. It would be employed under the force commander's direction in accordance with predetermined national policy guidelines. Its specific task areas would be allotted in the light of overall civil affairs policy. Of necessity the team would work in very close cooperation with the force Civil Affairs section and designated local government authorities.

After receiving its directive the team would then be ready to carry out the work. Once committed to a specific project or task area, it should not be interfered with except in abnormal circumstances. In the execution of the work the team would aim at achieving maximum local participation. Its task would be to assist, supervise and advise rather than complete the work itself.

Effective employment of the team would not be limited to the circumstances depicted above. Its capability is such that it is admirably suited to independent Cold War tasks as well. Properly controlled, such a team would be a valuable asset to Australian standing in any one of a number of undeveloped South-East Asian countries. There are additional problems, however, in this form of employment. These would have to be analysed on the political level and feasibilities determined.

The team as proposed is a complete entity. It should not be split and employed in separate smaller elements. Its effectiveness would depend on its remaining intact.

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Engineer works, by their very nature, usually please and seldom irritate.

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### FINANCE

Special mention must be made of the finance problem. Without access to project funds or construction materials the team would frequently be rendered inactive. Before committing the team it would be necessary to ensure that arrangements are made for the provision of adequate project funds or construction materials.

## RETROSPECT

## CONCLUSION

Engineer works, by their very nature, usually please and seldom irritate. In undeveloped countries engineer service is urgently needed, gratefully accepted and rarely resented. It can be the goodwill key to many doors. Our present division is the result of a great deal of experience and thought. At minimal cost to the Army as a whole, its capability could be further enhanced by the inclusion of a small number of Specialist Civic Action Teams.

## THE AUTHOR

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Major Cross graduated from the Royal Military College in December 1956. He attended the Royal Melbourne Technical College (1957–58) for his Diploma in Civil Engineering. Having served in Vietnam with Headquarters, 1st Australian Task Force, he was awarded the National Medal, the Distinguished Service Medal and was made a Member of the Order of Australia. He retired from the Australian Defence Force with the rank of Brigadier.

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## BOOK REVIEW

### CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES ON PRIVATE MILITARY CONTRACTORS

Dina Rasor and Robert Bauman, *Betraying Our Troops: The Destructive Results of Privatizing War*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2007, 274pp.

Jeremy Scahill, *Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army*, Serpent's Tail, London, 2007, 438pp.

Reviewed by Antony Trentini

The role of private contractors in war is no longer considered solely in terms of the prosaic issues of homeland logistical support and chartered flights to move personnel from barracks to theatre. In the present wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, contractors deliver supplies into Baghdad, deploy technicians to frontline units, and even provide troops, helicopters and aircraft for battlefield use. Private military contractors (PMCs) now pervade almost every corner of the modern battlespace. Both Dina Rasor and Robert Baumann's *Betraying Our Troops: The Destructive Results of Privatising War* and Jeremy Scahill's *Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army* cover the involvement of such contractors on operations around the world today.

In *Betraying Our Troops*, Rasor and Baumann focus specifically on the war in Iraq and the performance of the company Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR) in fulfilling their US Army Logistics Civil Augmentation Program contract, or LOGCAP. Scahill, for his part, diverges from Rasor and Baumann's concentration on efficiency in war, and instead focuses on the more 'exciting' aspect of battlefield privatisation—mercenaries—in his book, *Blackwater*. While their focus diverges, both works concur in their condemnation of US contractors. The authors argue that private contractors have acted in a thoroughly corrupt fashion because the weak legal framework in which they operate simply cannot deter malfeasant behaviour.

Rasor and Baumann, for their part, argue that KBR endangered US forces through negligence and incompetence and that the company criminally defrauded the US Government while fulfilling its LOGCAP obligations. The LOGCAP contract was a 'cost plus fee' arrangement, whereby KBR was reimbursed the costs it incurred plus a percentage. Thus KBR had a strong incentive to see its costs rise as high as possible.

If the authors' allegations are to be believed, the scale and extent of KBR's fraudulent activity is staggering. For example, KBR employees were told to claim they worked twelve hours per day even if they only worked a fraction of that time. KBR trucks were deliberately allowed to break down so that they would be looted and destroyed, allowing KBR to bill for their replacement. KBR subcontractors were encouraged to present inflated bills to KBR so that costs would rise even further. All of this activity, the authors insist, was to drive up costs, and thus profits. The LOGCAP contract incentive scheme encouraged KBR to focus not on delivering supplies, but on finding means to raise costs.

Scahill's work closely examines the alleged criminal negligence of one of KBR's subcontractors, Blackwater USA. At the heart of this book is the death of four Blackwater contractors in Fallujah in March 2004. These four contractors were ambushed by insurgents and killed. Their bodies were then set alight and hacked to pieces before the remains were hung from a bridge by an enraged Iraqi mob. Blackwater USA has now been sued by the families of these men in a claim alleging negligence. The dispute centres on the fact that, despite contractual provisions guaranteeing a minimum convoy size of six armed men in two armoured vehicles equipped with two light machine-guns, the four contractors were sent on duty by Blackwater management in a group of only four, in unarmoured vehicles and with no light machine-guns.

The real implications of this case will go far beyond the families of the dead contractors. What is at stake, ultimately, is the entire framework of legal provisions that companies such as Blackwater USA have put in place to immunise themselves against the ramifications of both their (alleged) 'corner-cutting' and indiscriminate violence in Iraq. Around this central event, Scahill examines in detail the critical people and events that have enabled and fostered this legal 'grey zone' in which Blackwater and others have operated so profitably, giving the reader a thorough contextual setting for the operations of private military contractors in the Global War on Terror.

The central narratives of both *Betraying Our Troops* and *Blackwater* highlight the evidently loose legal regime in which private military contractors work, and the serious problems of accountability that have subsequently arisen. Of the two books, *Blackwater* offers the most comprehensive account of the legal details involved, and examines the

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Government ...

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laws, doctrines, precedents, cases and judgements regarding the contractors' current operations. Both books, however, clearly demonstrate that the legal environment at present equates to little more than a 'blank cheque' for contractors. The indiscriminate violence and cruelty against Iraqis and Afghans of which these private military contractors stand accused can irreparably damage the 'hearts and minds' campaign being waged by the coalitions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The legal 'limbo' in which such acts are committed and the immunity private military contractors enjoy must be eliminated if such campaigns are to be efficiently and effectively prosecuted. This is made amply clear by Scahill in *Blackwater* and to a lesser extent by Rasor and Baumann in *Betraying Our Troops*.

However, Rasor, Baumann and Scahill tend to undermine their arguments through an apparent lack of objectivity. For example, Rasor and Baumann dismiss KBR's primary defence against such allegations as 'corporate

smooth-talking'. KBR officials testified that the original LOGCAP contract specified that the company was to be responsible for provisioning 25 000 troops, and up to an absolute maximum of 50 000 troops. In the opening phases of the Iraq War, they were obliged to provision 200 000 troops—fully eight times their contractual obligation. This fact alone plausibly explains many of the problems with supply shortfalls and incomplete management that the authors raise. In their outrage, the authors have seized upon emotive writing and the quality of the work suffers accordingly.

Similarly, in places, Scahill gratuitously covers—in great detail—the history of alleged covert operations by several US Administrations, such as President Reagan's support for 'death squads' in Honduras, or President Nixon's support for the suspect Pinochet regime in Chile. Scahill also examines criminality of a more recent vintage, such as the questionable behaviour of Pentagon Inspector General Joseph Schmitz. Each of these topics bears only tangential relevance to the *Blackwater* story but are included regardless, seemingly to bolster the overarching anti-conservative theme of the work. While these are all certainly incidents deserving closer inspection, their inclusion obscures the focus of Scahill's book, and unfortunately lowers it to the level of partisan writing.

Most serious, perhaps, is that fact that both books only briefly touch on the central issue of private contracting in military operations—the US Government's decision to sub-contract much of its logistic responsibilities in the first place. It was key figures in the US Government, such as Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Vice President Dick Cheney, who made this decision. The people who mandated privatisation of logistics and force protection to meet 'troop caps' and 'just in time'

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schedules are the figures who are responsible for the absence of sufficiently robust oversight of contracted provisions. The corrupt practices of companies that carry out these tasks are simply unfortunate side effects. Again, Scahill's book examines this particular topic in more detail than Rasor and Baumann's, but he refrains from making any thorough critical analysis of the wisdom of the initial decision.

As the 'privatisation of war' is likely to continue, both works overlook 'rolling back' such activity and rather examine the legal shortcomings in oversight of private military contractors. Both works highlight the recent modifications to the US Uniform Code of Military Justice. These changes may once again place contractors under military legal jurisdiction, and would certainly go a long way to restoring their accountability. However, as Scahill observes, this measure will almost certainly be bitterly resisted in the courts, and it will be years before any definitive outcome is achieved.

In all, both *Betraying Our Troops* and *Blackwater* easily hold the reader's attention. However, Rasor and Baumann's work is plagued by tedious textual errors that appear every few pages, reducing the flow of an otherwise engaging book. The arguments within *Betraying Our Troops* are one-sided at times, which hinders the reader's ability to form their own judgement from the wealth of primary sources presented. The book is important, however, in that it brings to light the many serious problems plaguing the more mundane aspects of privatising war. Issues such as privatised logistics receive little attention in a field of analysis dominated by the highly publicised activities of private security contractors, and *Betraying Our Troops* goes some way towards redressing this difference.

*Blackwater* focuses on the subject of 'private armies' in an engaging fashion. It stands apart from other accounts in that it presents to the reader a great deal of contextual material that the casual observer may otherwise have overlooked. This is especially the case regarding the intricate web of business and personal contacts that underpin Blackwater USA's phenomenal rise. This strong network of politicians, national executives, business figures and ideologues is clearly laid out for the reader, and is arguably the greatest merit of *Blackwater*.

For anyone only recently made aware of the controversies surrounding private military contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan—or indeed their very existence—and who desire grounding in this issue to inform future observations, both *Betraying Our Troops* and *Blackwater* will be of considerable interest.

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## BOOK REVIEW

Craig Stockings, *The Torch and the Sword: A History of the Army Cadet Movement in Australia*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2007, 328pp.

Reviewed by Lieutenant General John Coates (Retd)

For those among the reading audience who were never school cadets, this book is unlikely to be a riveting read. It is a subject that has not been handled comprehensively before, and as part of the frequently febrile defence debate, it deserves its place in Australia's military and social history. The book began life as a PhD thesis, and has all the hallmarks of a rigorous treatment of the subject. Yet, as the author points out in the introduction, it also tells a tale of intense human interaction, especially given the importance placed on the cadet organisation over time by politicians, military officers, teachers, educational administrators and the public at large. Throughout its 140-year history from 1866 until now, it has had various titles and is currently known as the Australian Army Cadets.

In his own foreword to the book, the Governor-General, Major General Michael Jeffery—the author was once his aide-de-camp—records how much the school cadets meant to him:

Like most schoolchildren who have donned a uniform I gained much from my cadet experience. Far more than the joys of nights spent under canvas and hours spent on the rifle range. I learnt a sense of self-discipline and confidence that stood me in good stead in the years to come. It was cadets that decided me – and many like me – on a military career and for that I will be forever grateful.

That statement will almost certainly be endorsed by all of us who came out of the school cadets, then moved on to Duntroon or Portsea and thence into the Army. In fact, building on a whole set of statistics about cadet service leading to service in the regular Army, Army apprentices, and

'I learnt a sense of self-discipline and confidence that stood me in good stead ...'

generally as a conduit to adult military service and perhaps to high command, Professor Ian McAllister, the then-head of the Politics Department at the Australian Defence Force Academy, found in an investigation in 1995 that ‘a strong link existed between cadet membership and institutional (military) values’. He concluded his study by pointing to the cost-effectiveness of the Australian Cadet Corps as a recruiting asset that far outweighed other informal means of recruitment, given, for example, the heavy cost of media advertising and other measures intended to entice young men and women into the Army.

Stockings takes all this on board. Moreover, early on he establishes a template to marshal and assess the material with which he is working. His general finding is that throughout cadet history, four fundamental forces have shaped the form and character of the movement: first, and foremost, the Army itself; second, the ‘educationalists’ in state education departments or among bureaucrats, headmasters, teachers, ‘or any union thereof’; third, social attitudes concerned with the moral, ethical, physical and attitudinal disposition of Australian youth—‘The movement’s history’, he states, ‘is steeped in rhetoric concerning character development issuing from political, religious, military, educational and parental sources, and key decisions concerning the cadet movement are still made under those social constructs’. The final force concerns finance—when the fiscal situation has tightened, the cadet movement has been preyed upon by its military and educational patrons in the name of cost-cutting.

Using this four pillar model, the author has then examined cadet development spanning 1866–2006, noting that when the pillars are in equilibrium with each bearing its share of the weight, the organisation has thrived and been happy; when one or other sags or crumbles, equilibrium is lost and the movement itself loses momentum and occasionally loses its way. Using the model, Stockings then surveys the cadet experience in ten chapters, commencing with its Colonial genesis from 1866 to 1905, concluding with a chapter entitled ‘Healing, harmony and hope, 1996–2006’ which, by its very title, underlines the vicissitudes that have arisen within the movement as it has made the transition from a relatively simple framework that concentrated on drill within schools aiming to instill simple discipline and social responsibility, to a much more advanced and complex set of expectations and purposes that fit the present, much more hectic military and social milieu.

The quality of the narrative lies very much in the author’s ability to illuminate the bumps and potholes that the whole Army has undergone over this period of nearly a century and a half as it has made the transition from a diverse set of

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colonies, through two World Wars, then into the turbulent Cold War experience of ‘proxy wars’, peacekeeping, and sectarian strife characterised by the continuing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. And, while it may sound brutal to say so, the cadet movement has been forced to tag along, fairly much at the bottom of the food chain, while dedicated officers and NCOs wrestled with the dilemma of how to sustain its spirit and relevance in rapidly changing sets of circumstances.

At this point, let me indulge in a brief piece of nostalgia. For me and my Duntroon classmates, about half of whom started out as school cadets, the period of the late 1940s and early 1950s was just about the golden age of the movement: we had enough training time, ammunition in plenty (there was still a lot left over from the Second World War), a terrific group of regular Army warrant officers and senior NCOs as mentors and role models, specialist courses for Vickers machine-gunners and anti-tank weapons. To then reach the dizzy rank of cadet second lieutenant—with all its peer prestige—culminated some of the best of life’s early experiences.

In my opinion, two happenings in particular shattered this ideal state.

The first was the disastrous decision of the Whitlam Government in 1975 to disband the entire organisation, which is covered in the book. This, at the very time that the Australian Army as a whole was coming to terms with the scars of Vietnam and re-orienting itself to a totally novel set of strategic circumstances. By definition, the cadet movement could only go onwards and upwards from there.

The second grew out of Paul Dibb’s ‘Review of Australia’s Defence Capabilities’, which was then presented to Parliament as the *Defence of Australia 1987*, and which postulated several changes. The report called for government outlays of 2.6 per cent to 3.0 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, through the life of a vast program of expenditure, which included relatively little for the Army. How did this affect cadets? It did not do so directly because cadets were not mentioned. But indirectly, because Defence’s slice of the GDP pie never came within a bull’s roar of the fabled 2.6 to 3 per cent, most of which was earmarked for future capital equipment

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purchases for the other Services, it was axiomatic that Army's personnel outlays would be cut, both then and in a further review in 1991. Anyone who had to work through the dialectics of that period, which concentrated on the benefits of a specious 'moat' strategy that also involved real setbacks for the Army, realised that there was much more at stake than dislocation of the cadets.

Happily, in the wake of all this the Australian Army Cadets, as it is now known, has survived as an organisation and in the author's estimation is headed for a better future. We all share that hope.

*The Torch and the Sword* is a well-organised survey of an important subject. It deserves to be read.

## BOOK REVIEW

Paul Ham, *Vietnam: The Australian War*, HarperCollins, Sydney, 2007, 813 pp.

Reviewed by Brigadier John Essex-Clark (Retd)

The Australian reading public have been presented over the past few years with books about Australia's military history. Paul Ham, who previously authored *Kokoda*, has now contributed again with another blockbuster and *tour de force* in *Vietnam*. Like his previous book, this is a weighty tome, figuratively and literally, with 813 punchy pages including adequate maps and illustrations. It covers all the significant matters of Australia's involvement in the war, from 'go to whoa', in a well-balanced, comprehensive and challenging style.

Ham's facts have been thoroughly researched and he narrates them with crisp, direct and convincing words. The highlights of the war itself and the reasons for Australia's commitment are clearly described.

The book narrates with balance the duped and the duplicitous, the brave and the cowardly, the wise and the stupid; the politician, the protester and the conscientious objector—the politically inspired angst and opposition is well-preserved for history. It describes the various attitudes to the war of the United States, the North and South Vietnamese, and the Australians, both soldier and civilian. The antics of the world and Australian media—compared with the efforts of the Australian soldiers and their principal leaders—are spotlighted and analysed. The bigger and more significant battles are adequately described from the viewpoint of those who fought or were embroiled in them, including civilians. His discussions with the enemy commanders and soldiers opposing the Australians in Phuoc Tuy Province,

It covers all the significant matters of Australia's involvement in the war ... in a well-balanced, comprehensive and challenging style.

whether Viet Cong or North Vietnamese Army, are surprisingly revealing and illuminating, as are the vicious action of the communist cadres to control the civilian population.

History is based on the memories and writings of the participants, and Ham's descriptions reflect this; yet he is not afraid to challenge the opinions of many of the earlier pundits. Not all will agree with Ham's interpretations or perceptions about the thoughts or the actions of the principal actors in the story, but all will agree they should be scrutinised. Ham seeks the full truth in all the myths that abound about Vietnam, and he probably gets nearer than most. Some might disagree, however, with the significance to the Australian involvement that Ham gives to such notables as Colonel Ted Serong.

The aftermath of the war within the Australian community is shown—from the hatred displayed toward many returning Vietnam veterans, right through to the finally ameliorating Welcome Home Parade in Sydney in 1987. Not avoided are the attempts to diminish their unconscionable anti-soldier action by embarrassed politicians and their acolytes, nor the shocking effects of PTSD on some of the Australian participants. Ham also makes telling points about the attitudes and lack of remorse by anti-war protagonists. His comments about the media are sure to stir a hornet's nest of controversy by the lazy and arrogant of that profession. Ham also brilliantly describes the thoughts and reactions of the Australian soldier. He recalls the time-hackneyed abuse of the soldier by the civilian, and quotes Graham Greene's '... to the soldier the civilian is the man who employs him to kill, who includes the guilt of murder in the pay envelope and escapes responsibility.'

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about Vietnam ...

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Ham does not attempt to compete with the dry and very comprehensive official military history books, *To Long Tan* and *On the Offensive*, published by the Australian War Memorial, or the plethora of 'battle' books, or the historically based and dramatised fiction novels. This is not just military history but a significant part of the history of our nation. It is the story of the war from an Australian perspective and Ham's narrative is brutally thought-provoking and hugely informative.

The Australian Digger in Vietnam, in Ham's perception, was a fine exemplar of the average Australian male at that time: courageous, spirited, fair, loyal, humane, and well-balanced, as is this book.

In time, Ham's *Vietnam: The Australian War* may well become the average reader and history student's textbook on the Vietnam War.

## BOOK REVIEW

Bernard Rougier, *Everyday Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam Among Palestinians in Lebanon*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge: Massachusetts, 2007, 298 pp.

Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Jason Thomas

This is not a text that will find its way onto the shelves of your local bookshop, though the reason is not because it has a title that raised a few eyebrows when I carried it onto some domestic airline flights. Bernard Rougier is a French academic who appears to have spent a considerable amount of time in and around the Palestinian refugee camps of Lebanon. This book is a translation of Rougier's work and has only recently been published by the Harvard University Press. It is current and topical.

Rougier describes in a detailed, balanced and non-judgmental fashion the rise of Salafist militancy in the Palestinian refugee camps of Lebanon. A key strength of his narrative is the analysis of direct sources, either interviews, research of sermons or Sunni militant websites and newspapers. Rougier is not a supporter of any faction or cause; indeed, he is equally damning of the damage the short-term political games of the states engaged in Lebanon (Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Israel *et al*) as he is of the nature of Sunni fundamentalist rhetoric.

This is not a book for those wish to begin reading in to the complex, tragic and still delicately balanced situation that is the Palestinian/Israel/Lebanon entanglement. With an unsteady Israeli peace with Egypt, Jordan and even Syria, Rougier describes a potentially disturbing change in the Lebanon balance. For decades the treatment of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon has, even by standards of the region, been 'oppressive', with no or limited opportunity for work, education or the right to vote. There are reasons for this containment of the refugees, but it has provided fertile ground for the rise of an extreme form of Sunni fundamentalism with a doctrine of global jihad. This dogma reaches beyond the confines of Lebanon, in terms of both who it is attracting and what it wishes to change. The means do not match the rhetoric, but nor are they withering on the vine. At the

very least the potential for regional instability is growing and it is a form of militancy that sees only black and white—even Hezbollah and the United Nations are seen in a dark shade. Perhaps my only criticism of this text, aside from a relatively dry translation (or maybe Rougier writes this way), is that he provides no indication of future capability or intent emerging from within Lebanon. For a man who has probably shown considerable bravery in going into the camps, this is disappointing.

*Everyday Jihad* is not recommended for someone wishing to start understanding (or at least trying to understand) this tortured and pivotal part of the world. The *Iron Wall* by Avi Shlaim and *War without End* by Anton La Guardia are, for example, better starting points. Rougier's text is academic in tone, leaving the reader to deduce what lessons need to be learnt. It does, however, provide salient warning to those (particularly in the United States) who believe that military power alone will win the war on terror. It is also fertile ground for background analysis, in particular for those that will deploy to UNTSO or may wish to rigorously debate the blithely accepted *Adaptive Campaigning*. There are deep-seated issues folded into the description of the Palestinian microcosm presented by Rougier. They are worthy of great reflection for military and civilian strategic planners alike, in particular the fundamental importance of never disenfranchising any ethnic group in a nation or community, be they there by choice or otherwise.

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## BOOK REVIEW

J Robert Lilly, *Taken By Force: Rape and American GIs in Europe during World War II*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2007, 272 pp.

Reviewed by Narelle Biedermann

Reading a book that discusses rape so confrontingly and transparently in any context makes for a challenging and often difficult read. Sociologist and academic J. Robert Lilly sets himself an extraordinary task to make this unpalatable and highly sensitive topic approachable, and surprisingly, manages to do this reasonably well.

The central text of the book is hidden behind twenty-one introductory pages consisting of an acknowledgement, preface to both the French and English editions, and a foreword. The inclusion of such an extended and detracted series of additions was extremely frustrating and self-indulgent in places. The author of the French preface goes to extremes to point out that this book was selected for the French market before being accepted in the US market because of American distaste towards negative stories relating to the US military. Indeed, Lilly himself comments that his goal was not to tarnish the wartime contributions of more than 16 million GIs who served in the armed forces during the Second World War. Nevertheless, he argues that this story still needed to be told because the collective memory of the Second World War neglects the conflict's rotten underbelly. War is never pure and clean. It involves murder, sexual violence, torture, and a whole host of acts deplored by most civilised societies. And yet the collective memories of war tend not to include such acts.

War is never  
pure and clean.

The book sets out to explore patterns of rapes committed by US servicemen across the European theatre of operations in the Second World War and the Army's responses to these crimes. It begins with the presence of US military personnel in the United Kingdom, before moving to France and Germany. In each of these theatres, Lilly explores the who, what, where, when and why of rape, drawing on court records

and anecdotal evidence to attach a human face to the perpetrator. His analysis provides several interpretations of rape in war: cultural/genocidal weapon; form of male communication; part of the military culture; revenge and elevated masculinity; part of the 'rules' of war; sexual comfort; strategy; 'imperial right'; and gratuitous/random behaviour. However, it is unfortunate that the consequences for the victims were explored in broad-brush means. Perhaps this is indicative of the ways female victims of rape and other violent crimes in warfare are viewed as an afterthought or an unfortunate by-product. Indeed, rape during wartime was not considered a crime against humanity until 1946; prior to this time, it was an ancillary subject of international and military law.

The work is extensively researched and referenced, making pursuing further reading in this area possible. Court records, newspaper articles and US Judge Advocate General trial transcripts serve to provide rich, detailed and objective analysis. Reflecting the racial segregation prevalent in Second World War America, Lilly's analysis highlights the extant racial division of military justice, particularly in relation to the discrepancies in punishment between black and white perpetrators.

This would be a useful book to include as part of ethical discussions of warfare, military culture, and social behaviour. While general military history tends to ignore the reality that rape committed by military personnel has happened, Lilly holds no reservations to name and shame. Early in the Foreword, Dr Peter Schrijvers from UNSW notes that 'rape in war and conflict is of all times and all armies' and to assume otherwise is both foolish and ignorant.

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## BOOK REVIEW

Roger Bourke, *Prisoners of the Japanese – Literary Imagination and the Prisoner of War Experience*, University of Queensland Publishing, Brisbane, 2006. 165 pp.

Reviewed by Captain Kate Tollenaar

In Australian popular consciousness, the POW experience under the Japanese in the Second World War has always been significant, and importantly, this understanding has largely been gained from representation in narratives and film over the last sixty years. Roger Bourke's *Prisoners of the Japanese* is an interesting and unique analysis of how the prisoner of war (POW) experience is understood by the wider community. Bourke examines to what extent these narratives have contributed to our understanding of that experience, and his central argument addresses a statement made in 1959 by Ian Watt, English literary critic and former POW, that 'the actual life of a prisoner of war is probably the last subject in the world for fiction'.

Bourke's premise is that the majority of books and films that depict the POW experience are based on a mythologised concept of the prisoner, and that from these sources a set of common myths emerge that have directly influenced the popular consciousness. Bourke states that these myths are an important literary device by which the author can try to translate the POW experience. Further, he believes that these myths have also been important for those who seek to assign meaning to their captivity and allow them to contextualise their experience.

... the majority of books and films that depict the POW experience are based on a mythologised concept of the prisoner ...

The first of these myths is of the prisoner as a Christ-figure, and that the experience of imprisonment and release is akin to a 'death' and 'resurrection'. Bourke quotes Nevil Shute's *A Town Like Alice* (1952) as a primary example, and argues that, despite the prison camps being represented as 'worlds where myth is of no avail and traditional significance has long ago been given up for lost', a considerable number of prisoner fictions do align with the soldier as a Christ-figure. This is where many of the religious analogies end, however, and Bourke quotes numerous examples in novels of literal rejections of religious symbology, where prisoners are described using pages of the Bible as cigarette paper. As Bourke explains, this particular evocative image supports the historian Paul Fussell's claim that POW literature in the Second World War is characterised by a 'laconic refusal to reach out for any myth'. However, with this exception, Bourke's study challenges Fussell's statement throughout.

Bourke argues that the second myth concerns the David Lean film *Bridge Over The River Kwai* (1957). Bourke upholds the widespread criticism of the film, based on the novel by Pierre Boulle, which criticises Boulle's lack of first-hand experience (Boulle was a prisoner of the French rather than the Japanese) and a perceived lack of historical accuracy. Bourke argues that the novel has 'given so many people such a false picture of POW life' by creating a largely 'imagined' work and notes the 'sad historical irony that the most popular account of POW experience is the least authentic.' However, what has been neglected in much of the criticism of *Bridge Over The River Kwai* is that the novel includes a myriad of personal prisoner experiences, including the writer's own, and has characters based on British servicemen who served on the Burma–Thai Railway. Boulle's intention in writing his novel was to 'illustrate the 'absurdity of war'', and a more relevant question is whether *Bridge Over The River Kwai* successfully conveys an 'emotional' truth of war rather than a stridently 'historical' truth, and if the text works dramatically rather than historically.

The third myth is the soldier as a 'Robinson Crusoe' figure and Bourke's fourth chapter discusses the lesser known text *King Rat* (1962) by James Clavell. *King Rat* conveys the concept of the prisoner as an entrepreneur and an embodiment of the Darwinian 'survival of the fittest'. In the novel, the prisoners are depicted as industrialists skilled at creating black market prisoner-economies and the 'art of

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survival' as they adapted to the brutal conditions. Importantly, *King Rat* described Changi Prison as a 'hell hole', and 'the most notorious prisoner of war camp in Asia.' This idea significantly influenced popular perception, and it was not until the POW conditions on the Burma–Thai Railway became known that it was understood that Changi was in fact one of the better-run Japanese prisoner camps where the chances of survival as a prisoner were significantly higher than other camps.

*Prisoners of the Japanese* concludes by discussing why the experience of imprisonment under the Japanese in the Second World War features so prominently in Australian popular consciousness, arguably on a similarly evocative level as Tobruk and Kokoda. Bourke notes that the prisoner experience remains the most difficult to interpret with reference to the traditional representations of Anzac. The events in 1941, beginning with the surrender of Singapore to an 'inferior' force and the mass imprisonment, indignity and death that followed, sat awkwardly against traditional notions of valour and victory. Importantly, Bourke identifies that much of the experience of imprisonment has been entirely marginalised in official narratives. He argues that much of the fictional literature that does describe the prisoner experience asserts that Australians were better survivors in captivity, and that many narratives reiterate traditional Anzac qualities such as mateship, initiative and larrikinism, though in new and more complex ways.

The book loses some focus when it delves into a comparison of the POW experience under the Germans; however, this does not detract from the overall impression of a thoroughly researched and referenced study. While aimed at an academic audience, *Prisoners of the Japanese* is easily readable and will interest readers wanting to learn more about the fictional representations of the POW experience. It is an important addition to this aspect of Australian military history that warrants further attention.



## BOOK REVIEW

Edward G Longacre, *General Ulysses S. Grant: The Soldier and the Man*, Da Capo Press, New York, 2007, 338 pp.

Reviewed by Joseph K Smith

The United States is in the middle of a bloody Civil War that continues to polarise public opinion. Opposing camps have emerged which comprise those supporters of the conflict who do not want to 'cut and run' and those detractors who desire peace and a withdrawal from the conflict. The Administration is struggling to maintain public support for the conflict because of a lack of military success which is brought about by a failure to develop successful military leadership, both in the field and in Washington. In an attempt to change the course of the conflict, the President gives overall command of US operations to the one officer who is seen to have achieved some success in the conflict. This story may be reminiscent of US operations in Iraq, though it took place during the American Civil War.

*General Ulysses S. Grant: The Soldier and the Man*, written by Edward G Longacre, covers the life of the man credited with saving the United States during the Civil War, from his early childhood to the surrender of Confederate General-in-Chief Robert E Lee at Appomattox Court House, Virginia in 1865. Longacre is an accomplished writer who has written extensively on the leadership of the Civil War. His previous works have focused on the protagonists of the conflict and the clash of personalities at the command level, not just the struggle between armies in the field. Longacre's desire to examine these men as people, with all of their flaws, and not just as military commanders brings an interesting twist to the military biography genre. Longacre has undertaken vast amounts of research and attempts to give a balanced view of Grant, covering the positive and negative aspects of his personality and military command. This approach relies heavily on contemporary accounts, both favourable and not, then uses historical works to place these narratives into context and explains the motives and reasons behind them. Overall, Longacre argues that Grant is a man who should be understood, not a military commander who should be lauded or criticised.

Unlike other biographers, Longacre devotes significant effort to discussing the personal issues that confronted Grant during his pre-Civil War life. Longacre pays particular attention to the troubles of Grant's youth; how he was shy and struggled to make many friends, how he preferred to spend time with horses, and how his average performance as a student was brought about not by his level of intelligence, but by lack of interest. Grant's initial military career is described as one of an officer who was frustrated at his role in the US Army; by his failure to gain a commission with the cavalry, his minor role in the Mexican–American War, and his hatred of the constant relocation and boredom of peacetime service. Particular attention is paid to Grant's bouts of loneliness and depression and his problems with alcohol, all of which were brought about by separation from family. These problems would follow Grant throughout his entire career. Unlike other authors, Longacre seems more forgiving of Grant's failures as a civilian, arguing that they had as much to do with bad luck as with bad decision-making.

It was difficult for anyone to be apolitical during this time in US history, even more so for the US General-in-Chief. Yet Longacre describes Grant as a typically apolitical military officer who sought to avoid partisan politics, though one who was politically astute. Grant is clearly identified as a 'Northerner' with concerns over the 'Southern' desire to gain political control of the United States or secede if unable to do so. During the Mexican–American War, Grant privately criticized the political motives behind military operations in the Southwest and the Southern politicians that wanted to expand the country through conquest. Grant would only identify himself as a Republican in the lead up to the onset of the Civil War. Throughout the conflict his primary concern was the maintenance of the Union and he appreciated that the only way to achieve this was through military success. Failure on the field would lead to peace negotiations and the formal recognition of the Confederacy.

*General Grant: The Soldier and the Man* is an easily approachable military biography that covers the complex histories of General Grant, the American Civil War, and nineteenth-century warfare. Longacre explains political and military actions in context, allowing the reader to appreciate the importance of an event, without being lost in highly technical analysis. Longacre does assume a level of knowledge and it would be preferable to have a basic understanding of the conflict, or to be prepared for some background researching while reading. Although there is assumed knowledge, Longacre is able to keep the book to a reasonable length so as not to deter potential newcomers, yet achieves a balance that would keep even the most knowledgeable reader interested.

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## BOOK REVIEW

Samuel W Mitcham Jr., *Rommel's Desert Commanders—The Men Who Served the Desert Fox, North Africa, 1941–42*, Praeger Security International, London, 2007, 214 pp.

Reviewed by Antony Trentini

While many English-language military biographies are concerned with Allied leaders from the Second World War, there is a market for exploration of the lives of great commanders on the other side of the conflict. Samuel Mitcham Jr.'s book, while focused broadly on the immensely popular 'Desert Fox'—Field Marshall Erwin Rommel—does not concentrate solely on a portrayal of the famous general. Instead, Mitcham examines the lives and exploits of the many excellent commanders who served Rommel during his famous North African campaign, who deserve at least equal credit for the legendary performance of the *Deutsche Afrika Korps*. He examines Rommel's commanders in some depth, grouping his miniature biographies of the various subordinates into the campaigns in which they played their greatest roles. The biographies cover the entire lives of the soldiers in question, many of whom served in North Africa under Rommel for only a small part of their careers.

While each biography, taken alone, is interesting, thoroughly researched and generally well-written (a few niggling errors aside), they are monotonously similar when the book is taken as a whole. The few biographies that stand out from the rest are those where Mitcham offers his own opinion on the soldier, such as his refutation of the usual portrayal of *Generalleutnant* Fritz Bayerlein as a brilliant commander, or his argument that, despite anonymity, *General der Panzertruppen* Walter Nehring was the most brilliant German panzer commander of the Second World War. Arguments such as these were welcome and interesting when the author bothered, but were unfortunately far too few, and certainly insufficient to break up the work's tiring uniformity. In this light, therefore, readers will most likely enjoy *Rommel's Desert Commanders* more if it is read in parts or treated as a reference volume.

Another deficiency in Mitcham's work is the lack of historical context. While he does offer brief campaign sketches, they appear seemingly at random throughout the chapters, with no systematic attempt to present a synopsis of each operation. Instead, only those aspects of campaigns relevant to each biography are described, with the unfortunate result that some elements are repeatedly covered. The appearance of a brief campaign synopsis at the start of each chapter would have been better, allowing the reader to familiarise themselves with the campaign as a whole, and the role that each of Rommel's units and formations played, so as to better 'locate' the biographies of the soldiers that follow.

The book's maps are one of its highlights. They successfully show critical information, such as unit locations, axes of advance and major lines of communication, without bogging the reader down in the unnecessary minutia. However, while the maps of the North African campaign are excellent, given the volume of information included in each commander's biography regarding their service on the Eastern, Mediterranean and/or Western theatres, similarly detailed maps of these other fronts would also have been of use.

Overall, Mitcham's book is a good account of the lives and careers of the officers who served with Rommel during the North African campaign. While covering in some detail dozens of German officers, Mitcham manages to avoid glossing over their lives or, conversely, giving too much detail. If the author had structured his book better, and broken up the pattern of work more effectively, it would have been excellent. As it stands, however, it is still a solid work and definitely worthy of a place in the specialist's or generalist's library.

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The book's maps are  
one of its highlights.

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## TITLES TO NOTE

Listed below is a selection from the review copies that have arrived at the *Australian Army Journal*. Reviews for many of these books can be found online in the relevant edition of the *Australian Army Journal* at: <http://www.defence.gov.au/army/lwsc/Publications/journal/journal.htm>

- *Battle of Crete (Australian Army Campaign Series)*, Albert Palazzo, Army History Unit, ISBN 9780980320411, 178 pp. (Copies are available to serving Army personnel—please apply directly to the Army History Unit)
- *China's Rise and the Balance of Influence in Asia*, William W Keller & Thomas G Rawski eds., University of Pittsburgh Press, ISBN 9780800959670, 328 pp. (Distributed in Australia by In Books)
- *East Timor: Beyond Independence*, Damien Kingsbury & Michael Leach eds., Monash Asia Institute, ISBN 978187692449, 320 pp. (Distributed in Australia by In Books)
- *Emergent Conflict and Peaceful Change*, Hugh Miall, Palgrave Macmillan, ISBN 9780333987674, 224 pp.
- *The Ends and Means of a Militarised European Union*, Per M Norheim-Marinsen, Norwegian Institute of Defence Studies, ISBN 9788291571065, 52 pp.
- *Extraordinary Justice: Military Tribunals in Historical and International Context*, Peter Judson Richards, New York University Press, ISBN 9780814775912, 272 pp. (Distributed in Australia by Footprint Books)
- *Forgotten Lunatics of the Great War*, Peter Barham, Yale University Press, ISBN 9780300125115, 464 pp. (Distributed in Australia by In Books)

#### TITLES TO NOTE

- *Hope is not a plan: The war in Iraq from inside the green zone*, Thomas Mowle ed., Praeger Security International, ISBN 9780275994457, 272 pp. (Distributed in Australia by DA Information Services)
- *Iraq and the Lessons of Vietnam*, Marilyn B Young and Lloyd C Gardner eds., New Press, ISBN 9781595581495, 336 pp. (Distributed in Australia by Palgrave Macmillan)
- *Iraq: Preventing a New Generation of Conflict*, Markus E Bouillon, David M Malone and Ben Roswell eds., International Peace Academy, ISBN 9781588265289, 350 pp. (Distributed in Australia by Palgrave Macmillan)
- *Iraq: The Logic of Withdrawal*, Anthony Arnone, The New Press, ISBN 9781595580795, 192 pp. (Distributed in Australia by Palgrave Macmillan)
- *Japanese Military Strategy in the Pacific War: was defeat inevitable?* James B Wood, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, ISBN 97807425533892, 207 pp. (Distributed in Australia by DA Information Services)
- *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace*, Ali A Allawi, Yale University Press, ISBN 9780300110159, 432 pp. (Distributed in Australia by In Books)
- *Religion and Nationalism in Iraq: A Comparative Perspective*, David Little & Donald K Swearer, Harvard University Press, ISBN 9780945454410, 256 pp. (Distributed in Australia by In Books)
- *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency*, Anthony James Joes, University of Kentucky, ISBN 9780813191706, 351 pp.
- *Service to Country: Personnel Policy and the Transformation of Western Militaries*, Curtis Gilroy and Cindy Williams eds., MIT Press, ISBN 9780262072762, 513 pp.
- *A Tale of Two Quagmires: Iraq, Vietnam and the Hard Lessons of War* Kenneth J Campbell, Paradigm Publishers, ISBN 9781594513527, 160 pp. (Distributed in Australia by Footprint Books)
- *Tehran Rising*, Ilan Berman ed., Rowman & Littlefield, ISBN 9780742549043, 218 pp. (Distributed in Australia by DA Information Services)

TITLES TO NOTE

- *The Morality of War: A Reader*, David Kinsella and Craig L Carr eds., Lynne Rienner Publishing, ISBN 9781588263537, 415 pp. (Distributed in Australia by Palgrave Macmillan)
- *Undiplomatic activities*, Richard Woolcott, Scribe Publications, ISBN 9781921215384, 202 pp.
- *Uneasy warriors: Gender, Memory and Popular Culture in the Japanese Army*, Sabine Fruhsutck, University of California Press, ISBN 978052024956, 597 pp. (Distributed in Australia by In Books)

Are you interested in writing a book review for the *Australian Army Journal*? Please contact the AAJ at [army.journal@defence.gov.au](mailto:army.journal@defence.gov.au), stating your areas of interest, and we can provide you of a list of the books available (you will be provided with a free copy that is yours to keep).



## CROSSFIRE

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I thoroughly enjoyed Dr Peter Stanley's thought-provoking paper titled 'What is the Battle for Australia?' in the Winter 2007 edition of the *Australian Army Journal* and would like to make some personal observations.

I agree with Stanley when he states that there was no battle for Australia in the literal meaning of the term. However, in 2007 we should also acknowledge that the ability to confidently make that statement comes with the benefit of hindsight, including some detailed historical research. We should also realise that during 1942–43 the term 'Battle for Australia' would probably have held real significance for Australian military personnel serving in the defence of Australia, especially for those fighting in the jungles of New Guinea, defending the skies over Darwin, protecting our coastline, and around Sydney Harbour on the night of 31 May 1942.

Stanley highlights that the term 'Battle for Australia' and the desire to give it recognition and commemorate it as being a fairly recent phenomenon and again I agree with him. As a schoolboy in Melbourne during the 1950s my recollections are that we celebrated ANZAC Day, the Battle of the Coral Sea, Empire Day, the Battle of Britain, Guy Fawkes Day and Remembrance Day. Every September the Battle of Britain was celebrated with Air Force fly pasts, air shows and commemorative services, and the Navy Week celebrations in October coincided with the Battle of Trafalgar. Apart from the publicity that accompanied the annual Battle of the Coral Sea celebrations—featuring warships and sailors from the US Navy—there was not much information provided about or apparent commemoration of the war in the South-West Pacific. At school, emphasis was placed on British and European rather than Australian history. Most of the war books I read as a schoolboy were about British heroes of the Second World War and the battles that they had fought; there were very few books about Australian war heroes or Australia's war in the Pacific. Two Australian war books I remember reading were *Bluey Truscott* [by Ivan

## CROSSFIRE

Southall] and *Fear Drive My Feet* by Peter Ryan. It appeared to me that emphasis was given to the war in Europe and the Middle East and not to the war in the Pacific and defence of Australia.

Further to the previous paragraph I must observe that, during the early 1960s after my first schoolboy visits to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, I was thrilled and inspired to see a Spitfire fighter and a Lancaster bomber plus German jet aircraft from the European theatre of the Second World War. On reflection, I was puzzled by the absence of examples of combat aircraft flown in the war in the South-West Pacific, such as a Spitfire flown in the defence of Darwin, or Kittyhawk, Beaufighter, Beaufort, Hudson and Boomerang aircraft that had flown in combat in New Guinea. I was even more puzzled later in life when I became aware that historic examples of most of these aircraft, including a rare collection of captured Japanese aircraft, plus warships such as HMAS AUSTRALIA and military equipment from the war in the Pacific were scrapped during the 1950s, yet we preserved historic items from the European and Middle East theatres. Fortunately we preserved sections of the Japanese midget submarines from the attack in Sydney Harbour, but we did not preserve any of our own surface vessels from this action or the coastal defence guns that dotted our coastline (apart from Fort Scratchley). It is only in recent years that the Australian War Memorial and Australian aircraft museums have made efforts to acquire examples of historic Pacific War aircraft from civilian sources and gone to great trouble to rebuild wrecked aircraft, because we did not preserve them when we had the chance. After the war, not preserving historic military artefacts from the Pacific War and the defence of Australia seems to provide an official indication that it was not considered important to remember what many now consider a most important part of our history.

Even today, anyone (regardless of their status as a researcher or historian) who has a real desire to know anything about the measures taken to defend continental Australia during the Second World War has to search hard to find information. A feature of our military history is that we have produced detailed war histories and comprehensive books covering battles and campaigns, but we are devoid of comprehensive information concerning the military force provided to meet the threats posed by the Japanese offensive in Asia and the Pacific. We need to know more about how our armed forces were organised, equipped, located and what they were supposed to do if the Japanese had invaded Australia. We also need coverage about the Japanese landings on our coastline that did take place. Such a book would be a useful reference for a wide audience, from casual readers through to military historians and perhaps even for military staff. This book should be written by a recognised military historian to ensure it has the status of an official history.



As I look back it has occurred to me that a prime consideration in the desire to commemorate the 'Battle for Australia' may have come from a new generation of Australians influenced by their desire to be proud of Australian achievement and sacrifice, not encumbered by the thoughts of past generations more closely linked to and inspired by British ancestry. The possibility of Australian republican influence during the past two decades is also a factor that cannot be discounted.

It was Peter Stanley's paper titled 'The Green Hole'—presented at an Australian War Memorial History Conference in 1992—that I believe provided the inspiration for a number of excellent books to be researched and written during recent years about Australia's role in the New Guinea campaigns of 1943–45. Perhaps Stanley's latest paper will inspire new research and writing about the defence of Australia during the Second World War and not only provide a suitable historical reference book, but also help to determine whether we should be commemorating 'The Battle for Australia' or 'The Defence of Australia'?

**Ian Kuring**

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Army History Unit

3 September 2007

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In his 2006 Australian War Memorial Oration, Dr. Stanley questions that there ever was a Battle for Australia. Instead, he attempts to decry the emergence of a concept that thousands have embraced but which few historians have endorsed. He believes it is an idea that has captured popular imagination but is too restricted in concept and generally ill-conceived. I do not agree.

The commemoration of the Battle for Australia seeks to ensure that the knowledge and understanding of the heroism and sacrifice of those Australians who took part in the immediate defence of their country is enshrined in our national memory. It also acknowledges the subsequent defeat of the Japanese.

Prime Minister John Curtin's announcement, following the fall of Singapore, that, "It is now the Battle for Australia" sought to motivate and to mobilise the nation. For the first and only time, Australians believed they would be attacked and the nation invaded, and so they prepared to defend their homeland.

Japan's rapid capture of British Malaya and Singapore, the defeat of US forces in the Philippines and the occupation of the Dutch East Indies brought Japanese forces close to Australian shores.

## CROSSFIRE

Darwin was first bombed on 19th February 1942, and parts of the Australian administered territories in Papua and New Guinea were occupied. The losses of naval and merchant ships in the seas adjacent to Australia, and the Japanese submarine attacks on the eastern seaboard, heightened the fear in the general populace that the Australian mainland was seriously threatened.

The unchecked onslaught of Japanese forces to our north would require an unprecedented mobilisation of Australia's people and resources and much hard fighting before the Japanese threat was contained and then defeated. It would also require significant assistance from our allies.

The Battle for Australia Commemoration, therefore, covers the initial encounter of the Japanese advance through Malaya and Singapore and the sea, air and land battles that sought to counter the Japanese thrust through the Netherlands East Indies, New Guinea and the Coral Sea. Also acknowledged is the bitter fighting required to remove the Japanese from eastern New Guinea and the subsequent campaigns in northern New Guinea and the neighbouring islands.

The Battle for Australia seeks to remember all these actions as well as those activities related to the defence of the homeland.

The attacks on Australia in early 1942—the raids on the northern towns, against Sydney Harbour and the shipping off the east and west coasts—created the belief that invasion was imminent. Starved of detailed information, many fell victim to malicious rumours, such as the existence of the Brisbane Line, which alleged that only the most populous areas of south-eastern Australia would be defended.

Most of the resources and means of production were directed towards the war. Australians had to adjust to a life in which even the most common peacetime commodities were rationed or became unavailable. Industry, science and society were mobilised not just for a remote victory, but also for immediate survival. Air raid precaution measures, including the strict enforcement of blackouts, were introduced.

The threat of invasion gave members of the part-time defence organisations an urgent purpose. The crises caused thousands of Australians to join such organisations as the Volunteer Defence Corps, the Naval Auxiliary Patrol, the Voluntary Air Observers' Corps, the Australian Women's Land Army, as well as the many voluntary groups.

Government took an unprecedented role in people's lives. A Manpower Directorate was established which meant that the civilian population could be conscripted to work in industry and develop the country's infrastructure. The roles of women changed dramatically and they became a significant part of the workforce. Manufacturing became a major sector in the economy.

So why is it important to commemorate the Battle for Australia?

The Battle for Australia Commemoration seeks to inform Australians of a most important event in their history, and to commemorate the service and sacrifice of those who served. In so doing it acknowledges that:

- For the first and only time, Australians were forced to defend their own country.
- The country prepared for war in an unprecedented manner and every community was affected.
- The veterans of the Battle for Australia are rapidly declining in numbers and the opportunity to honour their service will soon be lost.
- The events surrounding the Battle for Australia are not well known, partly as a result of wartime censorship, partly because until recently little has been written about them.

A single commemorative event, specifically relating to the Battle for Australia, which seeks to incorporate, but not replace, the events and campaigns of the Pacific war, including homeland defence, will ensure that the entire series of operations is commemorated and not simply a particular battle or activity.

The consequences were far-reaching. Increasingly independent, Australia would embark on a path of national development and enhanced international relationships that would result in a proud, confident and prosperous nation.

Of the 557 000 Australians who served overseas during World War II, some three-quarters of this number served in the Pacific war, and many of the 39 427 who died did so in this campaign. Indeed the battles of the South-West Pacific resulted in the greatest loss of Australian lives in any campaign apart from the Western Front in the First World War.

The Federal Government and Opposition, the Returned and Services League of Australia, the Australian Veterans and Defence Services Council and other major ex-service organisations support the initiative.

To ensure that this significant period of our history is not forgotten, the following actions are in hand or proposed:

- Proclaim the first Wednesday in September to be the Battle for Australia Commemoration Day. This day should be observed in a manner similar to Remembrance Day with annual commemorative services in national and state capitals and regional centres.
- Develop educational programs, covering all aspects of the Battle for Australia, for schools.
- Foster a commemorative relationship with Papua New Guinea and our other allies.
- Establish a memorial site in Canberra on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin at the end of Anzac Parade.

## CROSSFIRE

The commemoration of the Battle for Australia in no way detracts from ANZAC Day. It is a fitting and complementary commemoration that acknowledges those who gave so much during the Second World War to preserve our freedom and way of life.

The service and sacrifice in the defence of our homeland must always remain a part of our national heritage, known and understood by all Australians and never forgotten.

**LTCOL Ted Lynes, RFD ED (Retd)**

Chairman

Victorian Committee

Battle for Australia Commemoration

### RESPONSE TO DIRECTOR, AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

The Winter 2007 edition of the *Australian Army Journal* published an article by Dr Peter Stanley titled 'What is the Battle for Australia?' The article reproduced an oration delivered by Dr Stanley on 10 November 2006. Staff of the *Australian Army Journal* approached Dr Stanley for permission to reproduce this speech, which he granted. The *Australian Army Journal* mistakenly but honestly believed that Dr Stanley was also authorised to provide permission on behalf of the Australian War Memorial. The Director of the Australian War Memorial, Major General SN Gower, AO, (Retd), has since made clear that this was not case and the *Australian Army Journal* incorrectly asserted that the article was published with the permission of the Australian War Memorial. Permission was not in fact obtained prior to publication but has since been provided. Dr Stanley's views do not represent the position of the Australian War Memorial. The *Australian Army Journal* regrets any offence caused to the Australian War Memorial.

## NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The editors of the *Australian Army Journal* welcome submissions from any source. Two prime criteria for publication are an article's standard of written English expression and its relevance to the Australian profession of arms. The journal will accept letters, feature articles, review essays, e-mails and contributions to the *Point Blank* and *Insights* sections. As a general guide on length, letters should not exceed 500 words; articles and review essays should be between 3000 and 6000 words, and contributions to the *Insights* section should be no more than 1500 words. The *Insights* section provides authors with the opportunity to write brief, specific essays relating to their own experiences of service. Readers should note that articles written in service essay format are discouraged, since they are not generally suitable for publication.

Each manuscript should be sent by e-mail to <army.journal@defence.gov.au>, or sent printed in duplicate together with a disk to the editors. Articles should be written in Microsoft Word, be one-and-a-half spaced, use 12-point font in Times New Roman and have a 2.5 cm margin on all sides. Submissions should include the author's full name and title; current posting, position or institutional affiliation; full address and contact information (preferably including an e-mail address); and a brief, one-paragraph biographical description.

The *Australian Army Journal* reserves the right to edit contributions in order to meet space limitations and to conform to the journal's style and format.

### GENERAL STYLE

All sources cited as evidence should be fully and accurately referenced in endnotes (not footnotes). Books cited should contain the author's name, the title, the publisher, the place of publication, the year and the page reference. This issue of the journal contains examples of the appropriate style for referencing.

When using quotations, the punctuation, capitalisation and spelling of the source document should be followed. Single quotation marks should be used, with double quotation marks only for quotations within quotations. Quotations of thirty words or more should be indented as a separate block of text without quotation marks. Quotations should be cited in support of an argument, not as authoritative statements.

## NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Numbers should be spelt out up to ninety-nine, except in the case of percentages, where arabic numerals should be used (and *per cent* should always be spelt out). All manuscripts should be paginated, and the use of abbreviations, acronyms and jargon kept to a minimum.

## BIOGRAPHIES

Authors submitting articles for inclusion in the journal should also attach a current biography. This should be a brief, concise paragraph, whose length should not exceed eight lines. The biography is to include the contributor's full name and title, a brief summary of current or previous service history (if applicable) and details of educational qualifications. Contributors outside the services should identify the institution they represent. Any other information considered relevant—for example, source documentation for those articles reprinted from another publication—should also be included.