Book reviews

*Fire on the Water: China, America and the future of the Pacific*

Robert Haddick
ISBN: 978-1-6125-1795-7
US$37.95

Reviewed by Commander Robert Woodham, RAN

Depending on who you believe, the likelihood of open conflict between the US and China at some point in the future ranges from remote to inevitable. In contrast, there is no doubt about China’s growing military might, and extrapolation just a few years into the future will see China present significant challenges to US power-projection capability in the Asian region. That is, of course, if the US does not do something first.

This compelling, in-depth and highly-readable analysis unpicks both the military and diplomatic facets of the challenge and offers strategies for the US in the years ahead. It also discusses the potential role of regional allies and partners—and how these might be managed by the US. The author does not see conflict as inevitable, instead offering strategies for influencing Chinese behaviour by imposing costs and providing rewards, acknowledging China’s legitimate ambitions and concerns as it grows as a world power. It is a competitive approach but one specifically designed to avoid conflict. In this year of the ANZAC centenary, and the bicentenary of Waterloo, a strategy to avoid future conflict between powerful peer adversaries is particularly appealing.

A detailed review of recent Chinese military modernisation and likely future trends is presented, including anti-ship cruise missiles, advanced fighter and strike aircraft, such as the J-20, attack submarines, highly-capable surface-to-air missiles, and particularly the DF-21D anti-ship ballistic missile. By 2020, the author expects China to possess at least 80 DF-21Ds on mobile transporter-erector-launcher vehicles, which are obviously hard to target.

With a range of up to 1500 kilometres and minimal vulnerability to current missile defences, the DF-21D capability alone presents a substantial area-denial challenge to the US Navy. Of the US Navy’s future carrier-borne aircraft, the F-35C Joint Strike Fighter has a combat radius of about 1,100 kilometres and can, therefore, only hold at risk targets in mainland China if the carriers come within DF-21D range; moreover, the proposed Unmanned Carrier-Launched Surveillance and Strike aircraft looks likely to be capable of being used only in lightly-defended airspace.

Adding to US difficulties, the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty of the late 1980s banned the US (and the then Soviet Union) from possessing land-based missiles with ranges between 500 and 5500 kilometres. Both countries have complied with this requirement since 1991. So the US is forced to look on while China constructs an ever-larger short- and medium-range missile arsenal, enhancing its land-based area-denial capability while the US is powerless to match it with an equivalent capability. Again, the prospect of the US helping to defend Taiwan with medium-range missile strikes from, say, Guam, is not necessarily a likely scenario. But mere possession of the capability complicates Chinese risk evaluations and behaviour.

It is well known that the much-publicised ‘Asia pivot’ policy is short on detail, though it at least acknowledges that the US is in the early stages of engagement in Asia. The US-China relationship is complicated on many levels, including deep economic interdependency. Similarly, the Air-Sea Battle concept purports to present a strategy to counter Chinese area-denial challenges in the Pacific theatre. However, as has been discussed in a recent book by the same publishers (*Anti-Access Warfare*, reviewed in Issue 193 of the *ADF Journal* in 2014), it does not wholly convince, at least in its present level of detail. This may be due, in part, to security considerations. In any event, we should hope that intelligent
procurement decisions in the coming years help to redress the balance of power. This book sketches out what a number of those procurement choices should be.

My only serious criticism is that this book has a rather dewy-eyed view of the beneficence of US influence in the Asian region, making frequent reference to the promotion by the US, since the end of the Second World War, of ‘rules-based institutions, respect for rights and autonomy, and peaceful development’.

In reality, for much of the post-war period, the US has propped up a rogue’s gallery of unpleasant dictators in the region (and further afield), requiring them only to be anti-communist in order to find favour, financial support and warm words from the US. The interests and ambitions of the US would be better served if these facts were honestly admitted and confronted. Otherwise, it is harder to argue that Chinese regional hegemony is not preferable to an American one.

This is a thought-provoking and highly-informative read which will be of great interest to the ADF Journal’s readership.

**Anzac Treasures: the Gallipoli collection of the Australian War Memorial**

Peter Pedersen
Murdoch Books: Crows Nest, 2014
$69.99, 432 pages

**Charles Bean’s Gallipoli Illustrated**

Phillip Bradley (ed.)
Allen & Unwin: Sydney, 2014
ISBN: 978-1-7423-7123-8
$59.99, 198 pages

**Reviewed by Air Commodore Mark Lax, OAM, CSM (Retd)**

It is hardly surprising that with the centenary of the Anzac landings fast approaching, a whole swag of books would hit the market celebrating and retelling the story of the Gallipoli campaign. These two presage the rush and I am sure we can expect more as the official celebrations pan out.

The first book, *Anzac Treasures: the Gallipoli collection of the Australian War Memorial*, purports to tell the Anzac story as never before. In a sense it does but not as the reader might expect. This beautifully-produced and lavishly-illustrated book draws from the extensive collection of the Australian War Memorial, much of which is not on public display.

Dr Pedersen has followed the campaign chronologically but, rather than a war diary narrative as one might expect, he has chosen the photos, *objets d’art*, maps, personal diaries and militaria specifically to let the collection tell its own story. It is very effective and rather than go from start to finish, the reader can jump into this book, literally into any page, and be enthralled by its narrative which stands alone.

What makes the book so attractive are the spectacular photographs that accompany each story. The Memorial’s collection spans the large objects, such as *Ascot’s* landing boat, field guns and statues, including of Simpson and his donkey, down to the smallest, such as the Mauser bullet that killed Corporal Thomas Gooda of the 7th Battalion. The book weighs 2.5 kilograms, testament to the good quality semi-gloss paper that has been used throughout. This one is certainly not for bedtime reading but rather should grace the coffee table.
Much of the Anzac Gallipoli campaign has become legend, thanks in no small part to Charles Bean's efforts in covering the soldiers' stories rather than the stuffy, official histories that praise the admirals and generals. However, much of that Anzac legend is presently being challenged as Australians consider the implications of the Great War now 100 years past and whether it really was a time of Australia's coming of age.

The second book, *Charles Bean's Gallipoli Illustrated*, is editor Phillip Bradley's commentary on and publication of extracts from the 21 diaries written by Bean while he was on the peninsula. It comes fully illustrated with hundreds of unpublished photos, most from private collections. Through Bean's words, you can come to understand how the Anzac legend began.

The reader can follow Bean's Gallipoli campaign as he wrote it—a very readable and human narrative that I believe no later writer could improve. Bean himself made changes after the war to correct facts and style, as all journalists are want to do before publication. However, the story remains fresh and absorbing. As Bradley states:

> The diary extracts chosen ... tell us as much about Charles Bean's nature as they do about the nature of fighting at Gallipoli. His early writing imparts a sense of excitement and wonder that gradually fades over the course of the campaign.

The book follows previous attempts to capture the essence of Bean, such as Ross Coulthart's *Charles Bean: if people really knew*, which also tells the Bean story. But it is in Coulthart's words and covers the entire Great War period. For seeing the Gallipoli campaign as Bean saw it, *Charles Bean's Gallipoli Illustrated* certainly achieves the aim.

**The Centenary History of Australia and the Great War: Volume 1, Australia and the War in the Air**

Michael Molkentin
Oxford University Press: South Melbourne, 2014, 284 pages
$59.95

Reviewed by Kristen Alexander

Dr Michael Molkentin believes good commemoration involves more than the emotion and sentiment currently rife in works purporting to honour the Great War. It needs to begin and end with sound history: rigorously researched and well-written history, which does not claim to be definitive because 'definitive' often leads to intellectual stagnation. Above all, history has to be honest, even if the truth revealed is unpalatable.

*Australia and the War in the Air*, the first volume of the *Centenary History of Australia and the Great War*, passes Dr Molkentin's tests. It is rigorously and broadly researched, drawing on private records as well as material from Australian, British, Canadian and German archives, including items not available over 90 years ago to the official historian, Frederick Cutlack. Pitched to a general, interested readership, this is exceptionally well written. It is tightly argued with no digression, and no padding or wasted words.

Much as it is tempting to say that this is the definitive work on Australia's aviation experiences in the Great War, it is not—and Molkentin makes no such claims. *Australia and the War in the Air* only touches on the technical aspects of machinery and hardware and, while the author draws on the Australian airmen's personal experiences to illustrate points, it is not about the men. Even so, Molkentin does not ignore their stories, finely blending them into the narrative. It is a technique he developed in *Fire in the Sky* (which is about the men) and again expertly deploys.
Australia and the War in the Air focuses on the strategic and operational aspects of air warfare, looking at the subjects from a number of different perspectives, such as policy, political organisation, leadership, training and logistics. Importantly, Molkentin ‘positions the air war’s modern Australian dimension in the imperial and operational contexts that define it’. This is perhaps where the truth is unpalatable.

It would be a natural tendency to think Australia played a key role in the Great War’s aerial arena given an ongoing, falsely-premised belief in the distinctiveness and independence of Australian Flying Corps (AFC) operations. Our involvement, however, was only small. But it was valuable. Indeed, Molkentin acknowledges that ‘although small in size, the breadth of Australian participation permits an evaluation of the role aviation played in the war; that is, the contribution it made to the empire’s effort to engage and destroy the armies of Germany and her allies’. He then expertly analyses and well illustrates that contribution including, for instance, a case study of the AFC’s 2nd and 4th Squadrons to highlight the significant part fighter aircraft played during the climactic battles of 1918.

Following a roughly chronological format, Molkentin covers the origins of Australian military aeronautics, including the foundation of military flying training at Point Cook; the evolution of Australian military aviation organisation and administration; recruitment and training of the AFC; and Western Front and desert operations. He stresses that Australian participation was not limited to the AFC and notes that many men joined the Royal Flying Corps, the Royal Naval Air Service and later the Royal Air Force, which was formed in 1918 after the amalgamation of the other two.

Molkentin concludes with a commentary on the legacy of Australia’s wartime involvement, touching on the prevalence of Great War airmen in civil and military aviation in the interwar years, with a small cadre reaching the peak of their careers in the Second World War. Also of note is his careful discussion of air power which, as a concept, did not exist prior to the Great War, nor in the earliest stages of air warfare. Aeroplanes were there initially to supplement land forces. Accordingly, it is anachronistic to analyse the effectiveness or otherwise of air power in the war’s early stages. Appropriately, however, Molkentin shows the reader the gestation and evolution of the principles of air power.

Australia and the War in the Air has good maps, as well as an abundance of decent-sized photographs illustrating the text which Molkentin sourced from private hands and public archives, including many previously-unpublished ones from the Museum of Australian Army Flying’s collection. These photos are a credit to the museum and its volunteers who have done much diligent work to restore them. All in all, this is a quality production: case bound and stitched with appendices, index, endnotes and a bibliographic essay.

The latter is not usual but, as Series Editor Dr Jeffrey Grey explains, it was included to comment on the strengths, weaknesses and themes encompassed by the subject’s secondary literature. In a sense, this was not necessary as Molkentin deftly reveals his opinion about some of his secondary sources (for instance, he refers to Trenchard’s ‘enamoured biographer’ and A.J. Barker’s ‘classic’ account). I must admit I prefer bibliographies, as I treat them as handy source summaries from which I can springboard to further research. However, I enjoyed Molkentin’s discussion so won’t bemoan the absence of a traditional bibliography. I will, however, quibble over the font size. I could not read this otherwise excellent book until I had upgraded my glasses prescription to one with maximum magnification.

In his preface, Dr Molkentin doffed his hat to the work of former RAAF Historian Dr Chris Clark, and hoped that Australia and the War in the Air would prove a fitting prequel to Dr Clark’s The Third Brother (Allen & Unwin, 1991). It is more than a worthy prelude. This fine work is an important part of an historical and literary continuum of Australia’s Great War air studies, starting with Cutlack’s The Australian Flying Corps in the Western and Eastern Theatres of War 1914–1918 (Angus and Robertson, 1923 and reprints) and including both The Third Brother and Molkentin’s own Fire in the Sky (Allen & Unwin, 2010). Highly recommended.
Of all the weapons of war, mustard gas must be one of the most horrific in its effects on the human body. When people are exposed to it, but its presence is denied because of secrecy, the results can be even more tragic. This happened in Australia in 1943 when waterside workers and RAAF trainees and ground staff were exposed to the gas over a period of time because of the handling procedures in place.

The captain of the ship in which a consignment of mustard gas and phosgene was delivered from the UK was an experienced seaman. However, he had no information on the exact nature of the cargo, other than that it was 'chemical explosive' and that a small team of RAF technicians would be aboard. Phosgene containers were loaded into No. 4 Hold and mustard gas into No. 1 Hold. Being a wartime voyage, other cargo included munitions and aircraft.

The trouble began at loading. No. 4 Hold was not suitable for the quantity of drums involved, and during the voyage one fractured, with much of its content leaking and soaking into the bituminous lining of the hold. As a safety measure, the hold containing the mustard gas drums had been double-sealed with tarpaulins before sailing, so nothing was known of the leak until these were removed.

The responsible Air Force officer in Australia was Wing Commander R. Le Fevre, RAF, a former lecturer in organic chemistry and, since 1940, an adviser on chemical armaments. He arrived in Australia after escaping the debacle in Malaya and was appointed chemical warfare adviser at RAAF Headquarters, Melbourne.

Some of the cargo was to be unloaded in Melbourne and the rest in Sydney. Problems began in Melbourne when the unloading crews became aware of the effects, although Le Fevre refused to admit the presence of chemical weapons. This continued in Sydney and, despite whole unloading gangs being seriously affected, Le Fevre blamed 'dust' from other cargo for the problems. Reasonably enough, the waterside workers refused to continue and RAAF trainees and ground staff were brought in, at first with no warning apart from the advice that gas masks were available but would not be needed.

As the men were not wearing protective dress and were working in hot conditions, the potential for the gas to have its designed effect was almost perfect. As it was most effective on the human body where sweat is generated, the armpits and groin area were attacked, as well as the eyes and mouth.

The tragic results continued, though at least the RAAF conducted an investigation, at which Le Fevre still refused to admit presence of the gas. There is evidence that despite the official posture, local people at several storage locations became aware of the presence of the gas as soon as it arrived. (This is similar to the official secrecy in World War 2 on the presence of Spitfires in Australia, and substitution of 'Capstan' as the term to be used; when the fighter was the most famous aircraft in the Allied world, no-one was deceived.)

Many of the men involved in unloading the gas drums from the ship, both civilian and RAAF, had health problems for the rest of their life. One waterside worker died, and there was a post-war death. A recluse in the Northern Territory found a small mustard gas bomb, opened it, and decided to put the contents on himself as a cure for arthritis and as a fly repellent, with lethal results.

Post-war, at court cases, Le Fevre did admit the cause of the damage to the waterside workers and RAAF men was mustard gas but claimed that he was bound by wartime secrecy. As this officer knew the capabilities of the gas, and that it was four times more powerful in warm climates than in cool, and that he
witnessed the distress inflicted on the unloading crews, his continued denials of its presence could be seen to be criminal. Given the nature of these weapons, there was a casual disregard for the destruction of stocks at the end of the war. As recently as 2009, containers of wartime origin were still being destroyed.

Readers might smile to read of wharf labourers described as ‘workers doing their best to support the war effort’, when other writings on the attitudes and work practices of those people during the war present a very different picture. But this incident did nothing to build trust in the authorities by the waterside unions.

While the book indicates the extensive research by the author, and there are photos of many of those mentioned in the text, with the proceedings and results of post-war court cases, and lists of men affected, there is one important group not mentioned or identified. The prime minister of the day is seemingly anonymous and no-one is identified who was involved in the political decision-making to request the chemical weapons, or the delivery and storage for them, nor anyone responsible for adequate post-war disposal. It was the Curtin Australian Labor Party government, of which the War Cabinet comprised Messrs F. Forde (Army), A.F. Drakeford (Air), N.J.O. Makin (Navy and Munitions), J.A. Beasley (Supply & Development), with Ben Chifley as Treasurer and Dr. H.V. Evatt as Attorney-General.

This book is obvious reading matter for those whose responsibilities include occupational health and safety, regardless of the field; a classic example of refusal to admit the obvious because of a regulation.

To Kokoda

Nicholas Anderson
Big Sky Publishing: Newport NSW, 2014
ISBN: 978-1-9221-3295-6
$19.95, 236 pages

Reviewed by John Donovan

Australian military history has enjoyed something of a revival in recent years, and no doubt this will continue as the anniversaries associated with the centenary of the First World War occur. Within that revival, some battles receive only occasional attention, such as Fromelles (except around the time of the discovery of the Pheasant Wood burials), most battles on the Western Front, Greece, Crete and Syria, Alamein, the 1943-44 campaigns in New Guinea, and those in 1945 on Borneo and Bougainville. Some others, notably Gallipoli, Tobruk and Kokoda, are regularly the subjects of books.

Nicholas Anderson has produced an informative history of the campaign in New Guinea up until the recapture of Kokoda, with some useful summary judgments on its place in the history of the war against Japan. The style of recent books on Kokoda varies from popular ‘yarns’ to detailed academic studies. This book, like others in the Australian Army Campaign Series, is academically rigorous but written and published in a highly-readable style.

The descriptions of events during the Australian retreat and subsequent advance are well written, enabling the reader to understand events as they occurred. Anderson avoids the temptation to over-analyse events, which led one recent author (Peter Williams, The Kokoda Campaign 1942, Myth and Reality, 2012) to produce somewhat artificial estimates of the numbers engaged at specific times.

Anderson’s account describes the logistic problems of operating along a tenuous foot track, with air-dropped supplies capable of providing only a limited supplement to the work of Papuan carriers. As an illustration of the difficulties of the Kokoda Trail, some wounded from the early part of the Australian advance back across the mountains could not be evacuated until weeks after the battle had moved on. These difficulties did not seem always to be understood by senior officers in Port Moresby, leading to friction between them and the commanders on the Trail.
Anderson's summary of the significance of the campaign is balanced. Kokoda did not save Australia from invasion, however, as Anderson notes, the information available at the time suggested that a ‘battle for Australia’ was underway. There might not have been an actual battle for Australia but it probably seemed at the time as if there was. That the Japanese had already decided against invasion was recorded in Japanese accounts that were not then available to Australia’s intelligence authorities (but some recent historians seem to ignore this reality).

Pre-war strategy held that the Singapore strategy would ensure Australia’s safety. In the event, however, Australia’s security from invasion during the Second World War was ensured by the maritime power of the US Navy at the battles of the Coral Sea and Midway, not by the Royal Navy operating from the Singapore base. After those battles, Japan’s ability to land troops at Port Moresby was minimal. This led to the Kokoda campaign, as the Japanese attempted an overland advance.

As Anderson points out, Guadalcanal was more important than Kokoda (or Milne Bay) because the Japanese made it so. Japanese power could not support both campaigns, particularly if they gave priority to holding Guadalcanal. They did this, easing the pressure on the Australian forces on the Kokoda Trail. Success at Kokoda, however, did keep space between Japanese forces and the Australian mainland. The campaign also provided the opportunity for the Australian Army to learn jungle-fighting skills, which were valuable well beyond the end of the Second World War.

Anderson deals fairly with the relief of senior officers during the campaign. Brigadier Potts lost his command in part because, under pressure, he was insufficiently informative in his reports. He might have been reinstated had Lieutenant General Rowell remained in command. But his successor, Lieutenant General Herring, would not accept Potts. The impact of his sacking on the 21st Brigade was exacerbated by poorly-worded (to put it tactfully) speeches by Herring and General Blamey to the brigade at Koitaki, implying that the troops had not fought bravely.

Rowell allowed his personal dislike of Blamey to overcome his discipline, and was sacked; even lieutenant generals cannot persistently be insubordinate! Major General Allen was replaced in large part because of his poor relationship with Blamey and Herring. His successor, Major General Vasey, arrived just as the Japanese withdrew from Eora Creek, leaving the way to Kokoda open. Vasey then gained the credit for Allen’s work.

Anderson sees the experiences of the individual soldiers along the Kokoda Trail as the most significant legacy of the campaign. It is invidious to select any one soldier to exemplify those who fought on the Kokoda Trail but Sergeant Bede Tongs of the 3rd (Militia) Battalion stands out.

On 17 October 1942, the 3rd Battalion was preparing to attack strong Japanese positions at Templeton’s Crossing. Tongs identified a Japanese machine gun post as a potential obstacle to the attack. He crawled forward alone and threw a hand grenade into the post, destroying it. Tongs then ran ‘like a Stawell Gift runner’ back to his platoon, where the company commander ordered him to ‘get that attack going Sergeant Tongs’. He then led his platoon forward in their successful attack. Thousands of such young Australians combined to win the campaign.


The first sentence of *Why We Lost*—‘I am a United States Army general, and I lost the Global War on Terrorism’—opens General Bolger’s brutal analysis of war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each of the book’s 18 chapters commences with vignettes spanning modern and ancient conflicts across the globe. They examine and recognise the actions of colonels, majors, captains, sergeants, specialists and their joint equivalents, as well as civilians, fighting intractable enemies. General Bolger greatly admires these people.

His thesis is that the war in Iraq and Afghanistan required America’s generals to ‘use a tactically superb force to contain and attrit terrorist adversaries ... [but that] in this task, America’s generals failed’. He contends that the reasons for this failure include:

- An inability to identify or understand the enemy;
- Recommending to successive US governments that the military fight ‘two unlimited irregular conflicts with limited forces’;
- Campaign hubris, believing that ‘demonstrated US military capabilities and ... superb volunteers’ could ‘rebuild two shattered Muslim countries, and do so under fire from enraged locals’; and
- Persisting in failed courses of action, in Iraq and Afghanistan, for too long.

However, General Bolger is also positive about US campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. In particular, he praises US senior leadership for adapting quickly as the war evolved to organise, train and equip deployed forces, ‘especially the hard-pressed US ground services’; the early mobilisation of the US Army National Guard and Reserve which ‘guaranteed support for the troops in every county in America’; and US weaponry, equipment, training and small unit leadership that ‘far outstripped anything arrayed against them’. These advantages included the joint aspects of intelligence, logistics and air power.

Finally, of interest to readers is General Bolger’s observation that ‘the American character has not changed all that much in two centuries and a few decades, and so we see more than a few echoes of [US] military heritage’. Stressing this point, General Bolger compares General David Petraeus to the innovative yet overly-ambitious Douglas MacArthur, and tough Marine General James Mattis to George Patton or Marine General Lewis B. ‘Chesty’ Puller.
Continuing the comparisons, he contends that General Stanley McChrystal ‘evokes hard-bitten Matthew Ridgway, come to energise a floundering war effort’; General George Casey ‘conjugates up thoughts of the stolid Ulysses S. Grant’; collegial General John Allen mirrors Dwight Eisenhower’s ‘overriding regard for the alliance’; and General Raymond Odierno, ‘school in this hard war he rose to run’, compares to Omar Bradley.

For himself, General Bolger identifies with ‘Vinegar Joe’ Stilwell of the China-Burma-India theatre in World War 2 who, according to Bolger, ‘told it like it was, eventually got sent home for it, and deserved a better war’.

The Accidental Admiral: a sailor takes command at NATO

James Stavridis
US$32.95

Reviewed by Craig Beutel, Department of Defence

As James Stavridis never expected to advance past lieutenant, in his newest book the former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) claims status as an ‘Accidental Admiral’. Seeing only a future for himself in a law school, he was convinced to continue in the US Navy by the future Admiral Mike Mullen, with an offer to study at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, which specialises in international affairs.

Stavridis, now Dean of the School, writes his part-biography, part-manifesto reflecting on a naval career unbefitting to the expectation of higher rank. The first Admiral to be appointed SACEUR, the professsed innovator is cut from similar cloth as other warrior scholars of his era, such as James Mattis, H.R. McMaster and Stanley McChrystal.

The Accidental Admiral is in part a chronicle of Stavridis’ time as SACEUR, with particular insight into the genesis of security challenges still relevant to the ADF. He showed early concern with the policy of NATO expansion into what the Kremlin considered ‘greater Russia’, as he predicted it would be a ‘hard sell’ to defend Georgia and Ukraine. Russia casts a long shadow in the former Soviet satellites he warns, and perpetual ‘old skeletons of history rattle in the wind’ all over Europe.

The Admiral constructively lobbied European partners to support General McChrystal’s troop surge and underwrote the International Security Assistance Force’s handover of security responsibility to the Afghans. Stavridis advocated a Libya-style approach to Syria, questioning whether the current operations in Iraq against ISIL would have been better focused against the Assad regime. He foresaw an outcome in which either Assad survived and retaliated further against his own people, emboldening Iran, or partially prophetically, radical elements in the opposition would ultimately overthrow Assad and establish an al Qaeda mini-state. However, he does see benefit in an Iran focused on a fractious Iraq, instead of fixing on the destruction of Israel, of which he is very fond.

Building on lectures he delivered in the TED Conference forum (run by a non-profit organisation, under the slogan ‘ideas worth spreading’), Stavridis advocates a form of ‘smart power’ for the 21st century based on ‘international, interagency, and public-private connections in creating security’, asserting that:

No one of us is as smart as all of us thinking together—no one person, no one nation, no one alliance, no one organisation. Our combined knowledge is vastly greater than our individual inputs. So ideas must be shared, and strategic communication—our self-talk—matters deeply.
The former operational commander of the West’s oldest security alliance advocates open strategic communication that transparently advocates its shared ‘enlightenment values’. The convergence of security threats outside of their traditional stovepipes drives Stravridis’ argument but he does little to address the disparity in public-private agendas or how the ‘enlightenment’ ideas of democracy, liberty, freedom of speech, and religion are applicable in a 21st century world.

Nevertheless, this is an important conversation for Australians to lend an ear to, not least as the US Government considers the affordability of its traditional ‘hard power’ predisposition across the world and seeks alternative policies. Stavridis’ ‘smart power’ concept, which has lineage through Hillary Clinton and Joseph Nye, would continue to be a part of US foreign policy should a Democrat succeed President Obama. Concurrently, Australia also has strategic interests that we alone cannot secure, suggesting that Stavridis’ charter is also worth contemplation closer to home.

A key method of his approach, Stavridis defines strategic communication as providing audiences with truthful and timely information that will influence in a precise way. However, he struggles to employ an application framework to the concept. After discussing 14 somewhat contradictory ‘golden rules’ and four recommendations, he admits that strategic communications are fraught with false starts and mistakes. However, he does point to the Arab Spring as a reason why mastery of strategic communication is an important endeavour to pursue.

Perhaps of most interest to the planner, Stavridis suggests that long-term strategic forecasting is erroneous in the modern world and that, far from the predictability of the late 20th century, we are now ‘entering a very tactical world’. Within his time as SACEUR, he points to an operational environment which was hard to assess due to rapid change. He offers justification through examples of the Arab Spring, the Global Financial Crisis, Iran nuclear issues, Snowden, global oil markets and the fact that Facebook and Twitter respectively now have the third and fifth largest populations on earth.

In his office, Stavridis aptly has a picture of the battleship USS Maine, whose sinking sparked the Spanish American war, to remind him that ‘life has a way of sending us down hidden paths’. In attempting to face the challenges of this tactical, dynamic world, he warns that slow-burn issues of strategic importance get lost as the ‘iron law of politics’ is to manage crises as they emerge.

While one might consider Stavridis’ ideas to be overly ‘blue sky’ and ungrounded in the ‘tactical’ world, readers should consider the book as broad strategic guidance and not a manual for success. The Accidental Admiral aims to dilute a lifetime’s worth of observations into concepts that Stavridis believes are worthy of consideration by a new generation of leaders.

Stavridis writes with a career’s worth of confidence in never being too concerned with rocking the boat. He continues to consider himself a ‘disruptive innovator’, based on a career advanced with ‘house money’ and never expecting advancement. In The Accidental Admiral, he appeals to modern militaries to consign their traditional introspective and repetitive practices and instead develop akin to the modern technological world, which embraces risk and innovates rapidly.

**Bush War Rhodesia 1966-1980**

Peter Baxter
Helion & Company: Solihull UK, 2014, 130 pages
ISBN: 978-1-9099-8237-6
UK£16.95

Reviewed by Lex McAulay

This is No. 17 in the series Africa@War, which presents accounts of wars on that continent since 1945. Other titles deal with the Mau Mau, Selous Scouts, Biafra, the South African Air Force’s Border War, and ‘Congo Unravelled’.
The text of *Bush War Rhodesia 1966-1980* presents a concise, balanced account of the political and military events of the warlike activities in Rhodesia's fight for independence. However, it also makes it plain that the whole effort after the 1965 Unilateral Declaration of Independence (by the government of Prime Minister Ian Smith, declaring independence from the UK) was doomed on a continent where colonial regimes were being replaced by black governments or dictators, and the very idea of white minority rule was anathema both locally and internationally.

Ian Smith’s stubborn stand for rule by a minority white population is described as ‘dogmatic’ but other terms could be used instead. No other government recognised Smith’s regime, and apart from support by neighbours trying to cope with guerrilla forces and international communist assistance to those elements, Rhodesia was forced to combat alone an expanding internal adversary that enjoyed international support and base areas provided by compliant adjoining governments.

At first, the Rhodesian forces easily dealt with the incompetent and amateurish attempts at incursion and armed action. But when the people who had been trained overseas returned and put into effective operation Mao Zedong’s principles of guerrilla warfare, things changed for the worse and never improved. Once it was made brutally clear to black Rhodesians that government forces could not protect them all 24 hours a day 365 days a year—and that ‘traitors’ would be killed violently in front of their families and fellow villagers—government sources of information dried up overnight.

When ambushes, murders and robberies became widespread, despite government operations, whites began to emigrate and the basis for white support melted away. Despite this, the Rhodesian forces adapted, and planned and executed some very successful operations at home and into neighbouring nations. Rarely was a set-back experienced and the professional superiority of the Rhodesians, black and white, was demonstrated time and again.

All the Rhodesian forces are described, as is their adaptation and evolution from the early ‘easy’ operations to the highly-skilled bush fighters of later times. Some of the cross-border forays were remarkably successful, and because of the nature of them, it does not seem that prisoners were taken, though documents were gathered when possible, as well as weapons and munitions. Nevertheless, just as the US forces in South Vietnam never lost a battle but lost the political struggle at home and internationally, so did the Rhodesian forces win battles but lost on every other front.

The book is very informative. However, because of its relatively small number of pages, it cannot give a lot of detail regarding some of the operations—and the author states that ‘the last word is a long way from being written’. Otherwise, my main criticisms of the book would be its physical size, a sort of magazine-format page, which is inconvenient for normal bookshelf space, and lack of an index.

For those not deeply knowledgeable of the place and events, the constant usage of acronyms—UANC, ZANU, ZIPRA, ZAPRA, ZANLA and RAR, RLI, RhAF and others—can also be a little confusing. Presumably because of design factors, all the maps are gathered into a central batch, rather than placed at relevant places in the text. Readers also do not need little drawings of the various types of aircraft, in different sizes, on the maps themselves, which are otherwise good.

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**Our Friend the Enemy: a detailed account of Anzac from both sides of the wire**

David Cameron  
Big Sky Publishing: Newport, 2014, 800 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-92213274-1  
$39.99  

Reviewed by Jim Truscott

Having read multiple books on Gallipoli and having recently walked the battle ground, I was eager to absorb this largish book to learn more of the Turkish perspective. I was not disappointed, as it is highly
readable and I enjoyed the many stories all over again. First timers will also benefit from the enemy’s insights. Naturally, the friendly perspective has most detail but I did not sense any lack of balance.

It was good to have read the book after having been to Gallipoli, as each page was vivid to me. Some readers who have not sniffed the ground may find it complex to follow but only 12 months ago I scrambled up all of the gullies on the Australian side and I knew the terrain intimately. I have clawed my way up the steep and mongrel bush from the beach and I could relate to what must have happened on the first and subsequent days.

For a campaign that lasted 9 months, this is a racy book. It puts individual actions at the firing line into a company, battalion, brigade, division and corps context. The first 30 chapters are incredibly racy and full of carelessly-brave individual actions, platoon actions, company actions and fragmented actions. One always learns new perspectives and the early geopolitical quotation from Chris Roberts says it all as:

[T]he campaign had evolved through wishful and at times impulsive thinking in search of highly questionable outcomes, based upon a poor opinion of Ottoman capabilities and an attempt to salvage political reputations.

The author later says it in a slightly different way in that ‘seldom have so many countries of the world, races and nations sent their representatives to so small a place with the praiseworthy intention of killing one another’.

There are some classic insights that I had not heard before. Previous studies had determined that the invasion was only achievable if mounted in secret but that this was not possible. Furthermore, a guide-ship anchored only 7.5 kilometres west of Gabe Tepe the night before, and the landing all depended on the steering of a midshipman who twice altered course without consulting anyone. Then there was the feeble leadership by Bridges, who failed to maintain the momentum to gain the third ridge. It is not surprising in retrospect that seven fragmented Australian battalions ended up facing one and a half battalions of Turks with a solid command structure.

The ferocity of the recapture of Leane’s Trench, above the Valley of Despair, with some reinforcements who had never been in battle before is without parallel. But what made Gallipoli different to other theatres in World War 1 was that the Anzacs lived at Gallipoli with the dead alongside them. The Anzacs who craved water, and who were tortured by lice, faced three enemies consisting of the meat ration and the jam, with the Turks being third!

The accounts of the deception involved in the high-risk evacuation are detailed and almost too good to be true. I still cannot believe that the Turks simply let us go, as it was organised bedlam in the last week. The last 2000 men to leave were called the ‘die-hards’ and a Casualty Clearing Station was also to remain behind if necessary. This detailed account from both sides of the firing line is a long overdue part of Australia’s military history.