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REACHING THE TOP WITH YOUR MESSAGE?

The advantages of advertising in the Australian Defence Force Journal are far reaching.
Introduction

Defence Education and Training is a big system. Individual education and training consumes $1.6b or approximately 15 per cent of Defence outlays. The Defence Efficiency Review (DER) identified 1400 people working in the Defence Education and Training system, with 14,000 trainees at any one time. By any measure it is a big and complex system.

The performance of this system is a key element of Defence capability. It is the primary means by which our people acquire the skills and knowledge that enable them to do their jobs. It is one of the means by which we create, sustain and deploy our intellectual capital. If the education and training system degrades, so too does our Defence capability.

This is something we have always known, which is why in Defence we have always given high priority to education and training and backed up that priority with resources.

I believe that our education and training system performs well. Our people are highly regarded worldwide for their professionalism and competence. This is clearly demonstrated in the day-to-day performance of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and one only has to look at the succession of successful operations the ADF has been engaged in over the last two decades. Our education and training systems and processes have depth and have provided us with outstanding professionals in all fields over many years.

We are highly regarded in the region. Our regional neighbours look to us as a source of ideas and guidance. We have extensive education and training links with them. Some of these links have gone back decades. They include participation by foreign students across the full range of ADF courses, personnel exchanges, and placement of foreign personnel in Staff Colleges, both as instructors and students. These links are an important part of the fabric of our Defence relationships. Our experience is that these countries look to Australia as a source of expertise and, on occasion, as a model.

We also have a good reputation with industry. Our people, when they leave Defence, are highly employable.

These are real achievements. Defence as an organisation, and those individuals who have contributed to them, can take some justifiable pride.

Can we relax, confident that the system will continue to do its work?

My answer is no. Not now, and certainly not in the future.

In December 1997 the Minister agreed to a proposal put by Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) that the personnel objective for the ADF would be 50,000 uniformed personnel, with 65 per cent employed in combat or combat related areas. Implementation of this will mean extensive and ongoing restructuring of the workforce. Traditional career structures are no longer stable or, in some cases, viable.

The structure of the relationship between work, education and training is changing, both in response to pressures in Defence, and to broader social trends.

The strategic, operational, management, social and technological environments our people must function in are becoming both more complex and more demanding, particularly as those environments interact in unexpected ways. Our people are being asked to make decisions in a world where feedback loops are almost instantaneous, and where they can come under public scrutiny for their actions and decisions almost immediately. In the media age of instant communications, tactical or operational decisions can have strategic implications.

It is clear that the Defence budget is unlikely to increase substantially, but the cost of capability is rising all the time. We need to get better leverage
from what we have and what we intend to get. This means becoming more efficient in the way we do business. It also means drawing support more effectively from the community.

Regional access to technology is improving. We can no longer assume that technological superiority is guaranteed for the long term, or that superiority in this area alone is enough to give us the winning edge.

What this adds up to is the reality that people will be more than ever the key to our future Defence capability. How we manage our people, how we grow and develop them will, in the end, determine our level of capability. In this emerging world the education and training system becomes a significant strategic asset that we neglect at our peril.

**Major Elements of Defence’s Response**

The Joint Education and Training (JET) Executive was created to achieve efficiencies and to improve the effectiveness of Defence Education and Training. The JET Executive’s fundamental role is to help orient Defence to a future where the intellectual resources of our people will be our primary source of competitive advantage.

As part of this role, the JET Executive is an advocate for the role of people in achieving capability, and for the importance of education and training as a means of supporting this.

What are we doing?

Our broad strategy is aimed at improving the quality of our education and training system and ensuring that services are provided to the right people at the right time. This broad strategy has a number of elements.

- **Rationalisation**
  - At the most basic level we are rationalising our systems and processes in order to achieve efficiencies and free up funds for other purposes. This work is basic, ongoing and critical to our success. The importance of it lies not just in the money freed up, but in the culture change achieved as a result of getting rid of redundant or unnecessary processes. In this sense, this work is a pre-condition for some of the other strategies we are pursuing. Our ability to rationalise processes sensibly and to be innovative about the provision of education and training services to our people is a useful indicator of the degree of cultural change we have been able to sustain.

  - Our rationalisation studies are well underway and over the next few years we will see many new ADF schools emerge. These schools will be tri-Service and will use to the maximum extent possible, innovative ways of delivering their services.

- **Getting the Requirement Right**
  - The key to effective education and training is getting the need right. We want our people educated and trained to be able to do the right job at the right time. This means that the alignment of education and training systems with personnel systems is a critical efficiency and effectiveness issue. At what point in their careers should people have access to education services? Under what conditions? What are the optimal relationships between career structures and education and training processes?

  - Management of this alignment is a key issue. It determines the level of redundant, unnecessary or even counter-productive training we might be doing.

- **A Learning Organisation**
  - Learning takes place in a multitude of ways in our day-to-day work. We all know this intuitively. Yet it is a rare organisation that recognises this and works through the implications for education and training processes.

  - A major challenge for the future is to recognise the many ways in which learning takes place and to harness the opportunity. At the most strategic level, this means understanding that in the age of knowledge workers, learning and work should be
indistinguishable. We could perhaps take this one step further and say that in the Defence Organisation, learning should therefore be considered a tangible contributor to capability.

The challenge for all of us is to understand and exploit this insight in the way we construct our organisations and manage our workplaces. We need to embed learning in our processes and capture the results of that learning for Defence as a whole.

We hear much talk about becoming a learning organisation and of the intellectual capital tied up in the Defence workforce. I believe that we have hardly begun the task of creating a learning organisation capable of harnessing and managing its intellectual capital to achieve optimum capability. But if we believe the intellect of our people is a key component of capability, then the need to do so is a clear strategic imperative.

Integration with the National System

The idea of integration with the national education and training system is the key externally directed element of our strategy.

National Trends

The national education and training system is undergoing a process of extensive restructuring as a result of Government policy initiatives directed at improving its capacity to support the development and competitiveness of the Australian workforce in a global economy. A major result is an increasingly competitive environment for the provision of flexible education services. We are seeing this manifested in a number of ways.

National education training policies are increasingly directed at promoting user choice. This has lead to greater competition and greater diversity of supply of education services.

We are seeing increasing flexibility in the packaging of education and training services, such as greater accreditation and cross recognition of qualifications.

There is increasing integration of vocational and higher education as part of a single education continuum to support whole-of-life learning.

Flexible learning and the introduction of new technologies are removing geography and time as constraints on service delivery.

We are seeing the implementation of Government and business efficiency and quality agendas aimed at reducing costs and increasing effectiveness.

We are seeing increasing demands for accountability of service providers.

Trends in Defence

In Defence there are complimentary trends. There is a greater focus on the need to prepare people to apply knowledge and technology as a key capability element.

We are starting to explore the development and implementation of concepts such as learning organisation and intellectual capital. Both concepts are based on the primacy of people in achieving Defence objectives.

We are moving towards the development of the concept of a learning partnership between Defence and its people as part of broader performance management frameworks.

We are starting to recognise and explore the implications of new technologies such as modeling and simulation to support flexible learning at both the individual and organisational level.

The convergence of these trends, some of which are technology driven, are creating a new environment that can be described as one where Defence has access to a vast and ever expanding variety of education and training services to support the development of its workforce.

Increasingly, these services can be delivered anywhere from a variety of platforms. We are seeing developments that were rare or unthinkable even five years ago.

Defence’s Fundamental Interests

In this environment Defence’s fundamental interests might be described as follows:

We have an interest in access to education and training services for all Defence personnel from any location. Our workforce is diverse and geographically mobile. In the past this has impeded education and training. We cannot afford to let this happen in the future if we want to develop the intellectual resources of our people.

We want quality services achieved through competition among providers and through access to diverse sources of supply. We do not believe that any single provider can meet our needs, or that we know the market so well that we can afford to make choices without testing it. Accreditation is, in this context, an important vehicle for quality assurance.

We want economy of resource use through efficient use of capital from process rationalisation and outsourcing. We want to be the world’s best Defence Force, not the world’s best manager of training facilities.
And we want **flexibility in timing, location and mode** through access to and exploitation of emerging learning technologies. Our needs are diverse and often specific for Defence. We want to be able to package education and training services to meet our needs. We don’t want to expend resources adjusting to the structures or processes of the providers unless this is critical to the maintenance of service quality.

The strategic challenge for Defence education and training is to determine how best to position itself in ways that enable it to optimise its access to the national system to support these interests, even as that system continues to restructure. This means that Defence has to establish itself as a strategic customer and to offer incentives for the national system or its components to organise themselves in ways that enable them to respond to Defence needs cost effectively.

Management of this strategic relationship primarily involves removing impediments to the efficient access to and utilisation of national resources.

In relation to the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Sector, the National Training Framework (NTF) provides strategic policy framework for management of relations with that sector. The Commonwealth, State and industry consultative machinery is well developed.

Over the next few years our aim will be to improve Defence’s participation in it through an exchange of staff with the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), better coordination of participation on the Industry Training and Advisory Boards (ITABs), and possibly Defence representation on the ANTA Board.

Our aim is to develop a much closer relationship with the VET sector in order to help it meet our needs. We want as seamless a transition between our systems and VET sector systems as possible. The multiple efficiencies and benefits in terms of our capacity to leverage external systems to support Defence are obvious.

There is no equivalent machinery for the higher education sector. However, our interests remain the same.

**The Australian Defence College**

The creation of the Australian Defence College (ADC) provides an opportunity to develop an institution that can exploit more effectively than current arrangements Defence’s position as a significant consumer of national education services, particularly in relation to the higher education sector.

It would do this by enhancing Defence’s capacity to manage its education system as a continuum. It would also consolidate professional and management expertise within one institution, thus allowing better use of resources and better harnessing of potential synergies.

In this environment, the minimum critical specifications for a successful ADC would be for it to have the capability to coordinate the customisation and delivery of education and training services to a diverse range of Defence constituencies. It would do this in ways that both maximise learning effectiveness and administrative efficiency.

It would also have the capacity to present Defence requirements to education providers in ways that ensure maximum competition among them.

I see the ADC in a mediating relationship between Defence as a consumer of education services and the higher education system as a provider. This would have several major advantages over current arrangements.

The creation of a peak or premier coordinating institution such as the ADC will place current institutions within a policy and institutional framework designed to support the Defence education continuum as a whole. It thus creates the conditions for an ongoing critical examination of how different elements of the continuum (e.g. Staff courses) might best contribute to the education outcomes served by the college and associated institutions.

A new institution strengthens Defence in relation to the market by consolidating resources and rationalising requirements. Increasing Defence’s flexibility and organisational weight also allows Defence to structure its requirements to force the market to respond in ways that deliver efficiencies or other benefits. Through it we are able to exploit the size of Defence to our advantage.

In creating the ADC, both as a vehicle for providing education services to Defence personnel, and as a means of getting leverage with the higher education sector, we are building on the idea of a partnership. We don’t believe that we can meet the task of educating our people alone. We need partners, people and organisations who can bring their intellectual capital to help us, to challenge us, to work with us to build the capability embodied in the skill and talent of our people. In this sense we see the ADC as a partnership that joins Defence with a global network of relationships that can support our learning, and as a means by which we can support the learning of others.
I use the term partnership deliberately. I think it is worth reflecting on what this means. To my way of thinking it means a relationship between equals, a relationship in which each partner is clearly accountable for the outcomes served by the partnership.

To return to the brief comments I made on the idea of a learning organisation, I said that we had hardly begun. In this respect I see our involvement with the national system and our policy objective of developing a partnership as having the potential to transform our learning culture. It can do this through the flow of new ideas and perspectives, and through the exciting challenge of working within networks that have global reach.

Will it happen? Will we get the partnerships we need?

In pondering this question it becomes clear how each element of our strategy are interrelated, each reinforcing the other.

Our efficiency agenda is simply the other side of developing new partnerships with external providers. Partnerships will not reach their potential unless we are serious about learning at the individual and organisational level.

I am confident that our strategy will succeed and that it will give us an education and training system capable of responding to the needs of Defence in the next century. I believe that there is a general recognition within Defence of the correlation between our capacity to learn, both as individuals and as an organisation, and our capability.

I will leave you with two propositions that encapsulate what I have tried to convey in this article. Our education and training system is our capability edge. Managed and developed wisely, it can give us strategic leverage.

---

Rear Admiral Lord joined the Royal Australian Naval College in 1965, and after qualifying courses and training at sea, served in Vietnam in HMAS Brisbane and Papua New Guinea in HMAS Aitape.

Following a posting on the personal staff of the Chief of the Naval Staff, Rear Admiral Lord qualified as a warfare and navigation specialist in the United Kingdom. He subsequently served as Navigating and Operations officer of HMA Ships Vendetta, Hobart and Supply. Also, he served on the staffs of the Commander Mine Warfare and Patrol Boat Forces and Fleet Commander in Sydney.


He attended the Royal College of Defence Studies in London in 1993, and on promotion to Commodore, assumed the appointment as Commodore Flotillas in Maritime Command. Rear Admiral Lord was the first Navy Commander of Northern Command in Darwin from December 1994 and commanded Blue forces during Exercise Kangaroo 95.

Prior to assuming his present appointment as Head of Joint Education and Training Executive in Defence he was Naval Training Commander.

Rear Admiral Lord was made a Member of the Order of Australia in January 1999.
Images from the Back Seat is a collection of some of the more interesting airborne photographs taken by Defence photographer Denis Hersey. Some of the images portrayed in this publication have been used for publicity purposes. However, many have never been published before.

The majority of the collection is of Royal Australian Air Force aircraft past and present. There is also a fine display of air-to-air photographs of aircraft from the Army and Navy as well as aircraft from New Zealand, Britain, Italy, United States and Singapore. The book is available from the office of the Australian Defence Force Journal at a cost of $19.95.

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The Unique Qualities of Indonesian Islam

By Lieutenant Commander P. Flynn, RAN

Southeast Asia has been a cultural crossroads for millennia. As a result of the flow of people and ideas passing through or settling there, the modern nation states of the region have constructed social, cultural, religious and political structures which contain elements from many sources. This process of syncretisation, and, to a degree, multiculturalism, is nowhere more pronounced than in the island states, and the Indonesian approach to Islam is a particularly striking example of regional syncretic tendencies. Unlike established Islamic states, the most populous Muslim nation on earth has no political party based on Islam, does not proclaim itself as a Muslim state, and does not profess Islam as the state religion, despite the overwhelming majority of its 200 million inhabitants identifying themselves as Muslims.

At first glance the unique situation of Islam in Indonesia could be explained by the political structure of the nation, where Suharto’s New Order government valued social cohesion and national unity above individual freedoms, and all religious groups and other possible sources of disquiet were politically emasculated to prevent opposition and unwanted change. With the recent departure of Suharto; the role of Indonesian Islam may well change, and we have already seen openly political statements by the leaders of Islamic groups which would have been unthinkable only a short time ago. As Johns puts it “... the revolutionary rallying cry for the honor of God and the rights of the people may be biding its time”.1 Whether this is indeed probable or not remains a moot point, particularly in light of the incredible complexity of the Indonesian social structure and the array of factors which would influence any post-New Order political structure.

What is certain though is that the unique qualities of Indonesian Islam which have developed over the last seven centuries, even without political interference or suppression, will continue to influence the way in which the religion develops within the archipelago, and it is those qualities which we will now examine. As a maritime trading region, heavily dependent on overseas trade for prosperity rather than mere existence, the islands of the Indonesian archipelago were visited by seaborne Arab Muslim traders in the 8th century, commencing with the northern tip of what is now Aceh province, and gradually advancing until ending up in what is now the islands of the Philippines. Unlike the historical sweep of conquest throughout Europe, Asia and Africa by the sword during the great age of expansion of Islam, these traders were peaceful individuals who often settled in the region. As Siddiq says “Islam came [to the islands] as a liberating force and with a smiling face”.2

While acknowledging that Islam came to the islands as a benign influence, we should also consider what kind of Islam it was that arrived there. Within the Muslim heartland, the hearth of Islam, the religion was practised as a monolithic, fiercely dogmatic construct of rigid paradigms demanding total obedience – as with most organised religions, particularly those of Judaeo-Christian origin – as was the case with Christianity when it was introduced later to the region. Within Islam though there is a strong element of mysticism which had come to be distilled in the beliefs and practices of the Sufi orders, and although mainstream orthodox Muslims have long regarded Sufism with a degree of moral apprehension, it was Sufism that made the greatest impact in the Indonesian islands, aided by the ground-breaking syncretic tendencies of much older Hindu-Buddhist influences.

Ruthven states that one of “… the most signal historic contribution[s] of the Sufi orders was towards the spread of Islam in the peripheral regions”.3 Based on the purest principles of the Koran, yet denying the ritual and dogma of organised religious practice, Sufism sought truth through awareness and had much in common with the mystic approach in other major religions. Acknowledging personalities rather than mindless rote learning of scripture, and recognising saints rather than secular constructs such as governments and religious hierarchies, Sufism had a powerful influence on the people of the Indonesian islands because it elevated and built on their existing religious practices rather than trying to replace them. As Wright puts it, “The appeal of Sufism is its universality. It relates to every civilization, every religion, and every epoch in human history”.4

While the basic tenets of Islam continued to spread throughout the Indonesian islands for centuries, this impetus was reliant upon the continued expansion of the religion as a world force. From the
16th century onwards, as the fortunes of Arab Muslim states around the Mediterranean gradually waned in the face of the European Christian powers, and the spread of Islam lost its momentum, those outposts of the religion furthest from the centre became increasingly isolated; the development and spread of Islam in the Indonesian islands stagnated, and Islam was increasingly absorbed into the traditional religious practices of the people, generally referred to as *Adat*, or customary practices. This was a quite natural process to the local people, who had long grown accustomed to absorbing and adapting foreign ideas to their own use, and who had always held that religion was a deeply personal and private matter of faith rather than ideology.

As with most islands, the further inland one goes, the more entrenched are traditional beliefs and practices, whereas those living on the coast are more often exposed to and receptive of external influences. So it was and is with Indonesia, where although Islam exerts a very strong integrative force at the national level:

> ... at the micro level there are wide divergences within Islam. The major difference is between the coastal Muslims with their characteristically purer, simpler faith and the interior Muslims, particularly in Java, who practice a traditionalist syncretic faith, an Islam mixed with beliefs carried over from a past of animism and ancestor worship or Hindu beliefs, an Islam suffused with magico-religious elements. In Java this dichotomy is expressed in the contrast between the santri, those who hold the purer, more orthodox beliefs and adhere to the strict Muslim laws, and the abangan, who are more affected by their strong pre-Islamic heritage and their ancestral traditions”.

The arrival of the Catholic Portuguese in the islands at the beginning of the 16th century, and their takeover of the existing major ports, drove the Muslim traders out to other areas of the archipelago, where they proceeded to set up rival trading centres. This Diaspora effect reinforced Islam in many areas of the islands, and when the Dutch arrived a century later and replaced the Portuguese, they found a fragmented religious and political environment which they were able to exploit to their considerable advantage. Recognising the hostility of those areas where the *santri* held sway, and the far more amenable attitude of the *abangan* hierarchy, they proceeded to engage in a series of regional conflicts where they supported the *abangan* at every opportunity. These conflicts lasted up until the 20th century, and saw the Dutch and their *abangan* surrogates gradually take political, economic and military control over the entire archipelago.

From the beginning the Dutch forced a church-state separation on Islam within the islands; in the purely religious sense their presence slowed dramatically the interaction between Islam and *adat*, and forced the *santri* into a defensive, insular posture from which it was almost impossible to develop further, particularly as the *abangan* were loathe to lose their own power and prestige and therefore fully supported the Dutch in their repression. As a political force Islam was totally suppressed; the Dutch controlled the country through the *abangan*, whose religious practices were tolerated, and orthodox Islamic activity came to be synonymous with rebellion and savage military reprisals. This rigidly enforced separation of church and state, unlike any other in Muslim states and in direct contravention of the tenets of Islam (which dictates that religion is an inseparable part of all life, including politics), continues to this day and has created a unique approach to political activity within the mainstream Islamic movement in modern Indonesia.

Both Sukarno and Suharto, and most of the high ranking members of the armed forces (ABRI – who are the power brokers in the nation) were *abangan*, and they, along with the majority of the Javanese *Priyayi* (or ruling class), practiced a highly developed form of the religion known as *Kejawen* – a mixture of pre-Islamic beliefs and Sufism. Broadly, these were the type of people who created the modern state of Indonesia; primarily Western educated *abangan*, who had absorbed the theories of nationalism and the secular state, they did not want to establish a religious state – be it Islam or any other religion – but wanted to build a nation on unity, which precluded any state structure which excluded individuals or groups purely on the grounds of religion. Islamic nationalists (frequently *santri*) who had played a major part in establishing Indonesia, felt betrayed by the final draft of the *Pancasila* (the five principles), the ideology upon which modern Indonesia is founded, which as its first principle called for Belief in God, rather than in Islam.

Impatient and intolerant of the precepts of *Pancasila*, Islamic nationalists, whose beliefs and activities had long made them outsiders on the political scene, engaged in a number of rebellions aimed at establishing religious states within the newly formed nation during the formative years of the Republic; these Muslim rebels were defeated by Muslim soldiers, obeying the orders of a Muslim President. Their timing could not have been worse, as
ABRI were initially fighting a bitter war against the colonial authorities, and then trying to bring the country together as a unifying force.

*These acts of rebellion naturally earned Islam a bad name politically, further reinforcing the “outsider” tradition in both the minds of the secular nationalist elite outraged by Islamic “treachery”, and in those of the Muslim supporters of these failed rebellions. Significantly ... the idea of Islam as a potentially dangerous and disloyal force became deeply ingrained in ABRI as a result of its bitter experiences in defending the Republic against these rebellions.*

With nationalism the binding force of the Republic, not religion, Indonesia has Pancasila as its ideology, and Islam as one of its faiths; truly a unique situation and one which can be argued is the only way in which such a disparate and geographically separated group of people could be brought together in a functional polity. As a result of the church-state separation, and the deep hostility of the rulers towards orthodox Islam, both before and after independence, the santri were contained and restrained within their own communities, and further split between Traditionalists and Modernists. Commencing at the beginning of the 20th century, the Modernists wanted to purify Islam of its local cultural overtones, whereas the Traditionalists resisted what they saw as a backward step which would remove accepted practices and replace them with alien (albeit original) Islamic procedures. This split continues to this day (although the protagonists show signs of mellowing), and adds to the political marginalisation of the santri.

One of the main reasons why Modernist (or Reformist) Islamic activities are regarded with apprehension by the great masses of abangan is because “... the reformist ethos tended (and tends) to produce an inflexibility of personality and a fondness for black-and-white judgements that, in a sense, is felt to be “un-Indonesian”, especially in Java”. Consensus, give and take, appreciation of the other person’s views and “face”, tolerance of others beliefs and an oblique approach are the preferred Javanese way of dealing with issues. In other words, within Indonesia – with its myriad of peoples and languages – “... it is these cultural features of religious practice that are far more important as integrating elements than religious dogma, which is frequently divisive”. Indonesian commentators have pointed to the stagnant societies of the Middle East, trapped in their hatred of the West and in a rigid literalist approach to Islam, as examples of why they wish to avoid Traditionalist Islamic tendencies.

Outside of politics however, orthodox Islam is one of the most powerful social forces in Indonesia, creating a wide range of organisations to support people in their everyday lives. Schools, hospitals, newspapers, periodicals, welfare groups and a host of other social mechanisms are organised and run by Islamic organisations, almost exclusively for Muslims. This in itself can (and does) sometimes provide a focus for religious, social or racial antagonism with non-Muslim groups, and the government keeps a very close watch on their activities. This is not to say that the government has been averse to mobilising these forces when it suits their interests, they have done so in the past and have a habit of “buttering them up” when elections are due, but generally speaking Islam as a social force has been as strictly controlled as every other area of religious activity.

There is a strong feeling within the region that Islam has its own distinct identity in Southeast Asia, a historically more tolerant and widely based religion – a broad church if you will – that may well be different to that practised in the Middle East, but one which nevertheless is relevant and worthwhile to its practitioners. Amien Rais, leader of one of the largest Indonesian Islamic social organisations, the Muhammadiyah, rejects the anger of the Arab nations towards the West; “They sell themselves as the protectors of Islam. We cannot accept this argument. We are Muslims; we read the Koran. We want to see an equal partnership with the West”. And there is an increasing view within Southeast Asian Islamic organisations that the centre of Islamic power could move to the region because of its modern approach to Islam, which would be far more acceptable to adherents and the West alike than the state ideologies of the Middle East – Asia certainly has the numbers on its side.

The unique qualities of Indonesian Islam, and the political environment in which it exists, have created another unique situation whereby Indonesia attends the Organization of Islamic Conference, but not as a member. A full participant in OIC activities, Indonesia has declined to sign the Organisation’s charter as an Islamic state, but attends as a state “... that honours the principles of the Non-aligned Movement and the Bandung Conference”. This unusual situation actually works to the advantage of both Indonesia and the other member states because it frees Indonesia from adhering to Islamic political policies, yet provides an avenue for reconciliation between those members whose rigid dogma prevents
them reaching compromise on difficult issues. “Indonesia’s position in the OIC is unique; it has not only been accepted by the Islamic states but has served as mediator in conflicts between OIC members”.

Finally, Johns explains what is perhaps the most unique characteristic of Indonesian Islam, its diversity:

... there is not one but many Muslim communities in Indonesia. Although all follow the Shafi’i school of law, regional loyalties are still vigorous and in some cases primary. The influence of premodern, prenational history in many areas is still strong. ... from region to region there are great variations between what has been called the scope and focus of Islamic awareness. Responses to Islam include adherence to a fundamentalist scripturalism, the elaboration of complex syncretic theosophies, the absorption of Islamic elements into primal religions, the eclecticism of intellectuals, and combinations of all of these.

Indonesia requires that all of its citizens officially declare their allegiance to one of five approved religions, which includes Islam; the depth to which many Indonesians commit themselves to Islam though is debatable because, as Drakeley points out, when “... asked about their religious affiliation, a frequent response is still “Muslim KTP” (identity card), meaning, “I am a nominal Muslim”.”

In conclusion, the unique qualities of Indonesian Islam can be summarised as those of a multicultural, multi-ethnic, tolerant, non-political, syncretic social and religious construct which, on the surface at least, rejects the extremes and welcomes an even, balanced approach to faith and worship. Imbued with a combination of the principles of Islam, Sufism and the culturally desirable activities of local customs, Indonesian Islam has been adapted to its environment in a way which gives it the flexibility to accept, reject or modify local or introduced paradigms. The unique church-state separation may not always exist, but in a country where there are many forms of Islam, and where religion is a deeply personal act of faith – not an ideology – and reality forces government to practice unity above all else, it appears to be a sensible and healthy approach.

NOTES
11. ibid.

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Indonesia’s Defence Policy

By Major D.J. McNicholas, RAA

Our aim must be: a secure country in a secure region.

Minister for Defence, Ian McLachlan, 1997.1

Introduction

Australia’s security interests have generally been defined in terms of wider issues. The Australian nation has defended the British Empire, fought Nazism and Japanese expansion, opposed communism and acted in concert with other nations to achieve common military and strategic goals. Rarely has Australia been directly threatened. In one sense, Mr McLachlan’s aim for Australia was nothing new. Successive governments have recognised the fact that Australia is unable to stand alone in a hostile world, and that we have a role to play internationally. In another sense, however, the Minister flagged the primacy of regional issues over global factors – issues which are more likely to be of direct relevance to Australia. In particular, he heralded a renewed interest in collective regional security.

The Federal Government’s emphasis on regional matters was recently articulated in two key documents: In the National Interest;2 a Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper; and Australia’s Strategic Policy (ASP 97);3 a Defence Department document which drew heavily on the former. Each reviewed Australia’s relationship with a variety of nations and outlined their probable impact upon Australia’s strategic objectives. In regional terms, Indonesia figured prominently. In the National Interest stressed the fundamental importance of the existing bilateral relationship, and promised a continuing emphasis on engagement between the two countries.4 ASP 97 noted that Indonesia has unique strategic significance to Australia and that it will be a key determinant of Australia’s security.5

Overview

Indonesia published its first State Defence and Security Policy in August 1995.6 Although it reflected a broad policy direction which had existed for some time, rather than a fundamental review, the paper represented a public affirmation of Indonesia’s focus on defence in a regional context, and provided an insight into the unique nature of the country’s strategic culture.7 In prefacing the document, the Minister of Defence and Security, Mr Edi Sudradjat, highlighted the central role of the armed forces (ABRI) in mainstream society, and stressed that defence and security policy was “inseparable from the political, economic and socio-cultural aspects of national affairs.”8 This view reflected the Constitution of 1945 and the more recent Defence Act of 1982. The former noted the government’s duty in relation to Defence, and the latter enshrined the social and political functions of ABRI.9 A second policy document, upon which the following discussion will be based, was published in 1997, with an almost identical preface.10

The Strategic Environment

The State Defence and Security Policy, 1997 (SD&SP 97),11 defines Indonesia’s strategic environment in global, regional and national terms. Most notably, it concludes that geopolitics, based on concepts of the “balance of power”, has been replaced by the emergence of geo-economics, with an emphasis on market forces and regional security. Whilst the impact of the current economic crisis on this approach is yet to be seen, global factors noted in Indonesia’s strategic outlook include the rise in interdependency resulting from economic globalisation, the link between trade and foreign policy, the impact of international capitalism on developing countries, and the growth of territorial conflicts since the end of the cold war.

Key regional factors include the importance of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), including its potential to have a security dimension.12 The region is considered to be generally secure, and SD&SP 97 notes the sound relations existing between Indonesia and its neighbours. Australia appears to be well regarded and the growing economic influence of China and Japan is acknowledged. Surprisingly, the US is not discussed in any detail, although its continuing role in the region is noted. Finally, SD&SP 97 states that national strategic factors include geography, the diverse nature of Indonesia’s population, natural resources and social issues.
The Influence of Strategic Culture

SD&SP 97 cannot be judged without reference to the impact of Indonesia’s strategic culture on national policy:

*For Indonesia, therefore, security policy has never been confined solely to military security, which conventionally looks at a country’s ability to defend itself against armed aggression from outside, as it is commonly understood in the west. Instead, for Indonesia security has a much more comprehensive meaning, encompassing territorial, political, social, economic as well as military security.*

Indonesia’s strategic culture derives from a combination of three key factors: geography, population and resources; history and experience; and the political structure and defence organisation. The main implications of strategic culture for defence and security policy include:

a. An inward looking focus for security, deriving from Indonesia’s dispersed geographical nature and remarkable degree of cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. Indonesia is beset by fears of instability which could be exploited by other forces.

b. A related emphasis on defence policies which contribute directly to building national unity.

c. A strong focus on self reliance, in this case arising from Indonesia’s revolutionary history.

d. The acceptance of a major role for ABRI in political life. This has the effect of linking security policy directly to broader national objectives, and permits a wide range of social and political issues to be defined or resolved in security terms.

Clearly, the key difference between Indonesia’s strategic culture and that of Australia is the influence of the defence force in Indonesian society. ABRI is not a servant of the state in the same fashion as the ADF. It is, instead, a fundamental component of the nation, with influence far beyond traditional defence matters. For that reason, it is difficult to accurately determine Indonesia’s defence budget, or to apportion it between expenditure on internal and external security. Most significantly, the natural tendency for such a state to view issues in security terms has implications for Australia in all aspects of foreign affairs, trade and defence.

**Key Aspects of SD&SP 97**

SD&SP 97 places a great deal of emphasis on the role of defence and security forces in achieving national objectives, whether those objectives be internal, external or social. This approach reflects the unique strategic culture of Indonesia and the prominence of defence and security policy in national affairs noted earlier. Key aspects of SD&SP 97 include:

a. A broadly geo-strategic strategy, based on the concept of layered security. The innermost layer encompasses domestic security, defined in terms of the archipelago and surrounding waters. The ASEAN nations comprise a second sub-regional layer, and the security of neighbouring nations within South East Asia forms a final regional layer.

b. An emphasis on the concept of regional security, in which all nations produce defence white papers and regional conflict management procedures are agreed upon. This approach remains balanced by a dislike of alliances and a view that each nation ultimately relies upon itself for defence.

c. The underpinning of defence and security policy with the concept of “national resilience”, derived from the integration of ideology, politic, economic, socio-cultural, security and defence resilience. Although regularly referred to, national resilience is poorly defined in the paper.

d. A continuing focus upon internal security and the socio-political role of ABRI.

e. A doctrine of “Total Peoples Resistance”, characterised by the involvement of all citizens in defence, the mobilisation of all national resources and the use of all state territory as a base of resistance.

f. A capability structure based on broad national capabilities rather than designated required defence capabilities. Such an approach is conducive to applying a very wide interpretation to the role of the defence and security forces.

g. Modest increases in the size of all services and the police force, with a comparable rise in defence spending to 2-3 per cent GDP.

SD&SP 97 remains in many ways a statement of national values, beliefs and ideology, rather than a clear enunciation of defence policy. As such, and notwithstanding the points noted above, the paper must be partly viewed as an internal public relations document, with the aim of cementing the role of ABRI in Indonesian society. In that regard, SD&SP 97 is not fundamentally different from its 1995 predecessor, which is perhaps unsurprising given the central role of defence and security policy in national development.
Security Policy and National Objectives

SD&SP 97 defines Indonesia’s national objectives in terms of the preamble to the 1945 Constitution. They include the protection of the population and territory; prosperity; improving the lives of Indonesian people; and contributing to a world order based on freedom, external peace and social justice. In supporting those objectives, Indonesia’s security policy reflects the dual function of the defence force, which has a social-political role in addition to responsibility for defence and security. In many ways, therefore, the defence and security policy is the articulated national policy. At the very least, it is extremely difficult to separate the two.

It would seem self evident that SD&SP 97 contributes directly to the achievement of Indonesia’s national objectives – it has defined the objectives and the manner in which they are to be achieved. Strengths of the policy include a clear link between defence and security policy and Indonesia’s national objectives; an ability to gain public support for a wide range of government policies, by defining them in security terms; and stability in defence planning. It is proposed, however, that aspects of the strategic culture underpinning SD&SP 97 are no longer conducive to the achievement of Indonesia’s national objectives.

Policy Shortfalls

From a security perspective, the key problem inherent in SD&SP 97 is found in a strategic culture which reflects the strategic realities of an earlier period in Indonesia’s development. In particular, the traditional preoccupation with internal security, and a failure to differentiate conceptually between that and the external dimension of security, adds complexity to the development of defence and security policy. ABRI, as a result, is not well placed to support the regional focus espoused in the document. Nor is it structured and equipped to deal with the non-military security issues, such as drugs and smuggling, which are being addressed by other countries in the region. Similarly, the concept of “Total Peoples Resistance” has little relevance to the types of threats Indonesia is likely to face in the future. Despite a degree of rhetoric, SD&SP 97 offers no solutions to these problems.

Aspects of SD&SP 97 also have the potential to be at odds with the national objectives of prosperity and improving the lives of the Indonesian people. Whilst it could be argued that such judgements are essentially ideological in nature, it is difficult to reconcile the prominence of ABRI and the military elite in national life, with the type of environment generally considered conducive to economic and social development, particularly where that development entails interaction with more liberal societies.

Given the current Indonesian political system it is quite obvious that decision-making is monopolised by a very small elite dominated by the military. Socio-political forces outside the military and the bureaucracy have had very little impact on the decision making process. Parliament has mostly acted as a rubber stamp and political parties have remained small and weak.

The recent Asian financial crisis provided a good example of the negative effect such an approach to national policy can have. Whilst the system worked within a regulated economy, albeit dependent on foreign aid, Indonesia struggled when faced with the full impact of the global economy. It will be interesting to note the extent to which the Government implements the changes demanded by the IMF. In a general sense, it seems unlikely that Indonesia will move forward while the majority of national issues continue to be seen in the security terms espoused in AD&SP 97. At times, the protective response triggered by such an approach will be inappropriate, particularly in the areas of economic development and social policy. In addition, too many defence stakeholders have financial or other interests which might suffer as a result of the necessary reforms.

The main shortfalls of SD&SP 97, in relation to the achievement of national objectives, can be summarised as follows:

a. An untested and ill-defined reliance upon regional and collective security, coupled with a failure to match capabilities to the role Indonesia proposes to play in such an arrangement.

b. A continuing preoccupation with internal security, at the expense of a coherent defence policy against external aggression.

c. The potential for long term problems, arising from a failure to separate the defence and security functions from the wider aspects of national policy.
Indonesia’s Approach to Future Regional Security

In regional terms, Indonesia’s security environment is a challenging one. Geographically it dominates passage within the region, and it has land or sea borders with a number of countries. Traditionally fixated upon internal security issues, Indonesia must now come to terms with a changing strategic environment, particularly regarding the role of the US and China, and the pervading influence of the world economy. Whilst internal issues are likely to retain primacy in the immediate future, SD&SP 97 at least provides a basis for a broader outlook. What one commentator has termed a South East Asian “non-revolution in military affairs”, may be accompanied by greater economic, policy, social and cooperative engagement within the region. From Australia’s perspective this trend was heralded by the security agreement signed in 1995, the first such document ratified by Indonesia.

That being said, it is difficult to draw definite conclusions regarding Indonesia’s approach to future security within the region. Perhaps the key indicator provided in SD&SP 97 lies in the emphasis placed upon ASEAN, and the possibility of a security dimension for the association. This is an issue of particular interest to Australia, given the fact that we are not a member of ASEAN. It appears that the document operates on two levels. Externally, Indonesia is focusing on regional engagement and mutual security, whereas domestically the emphasis remains one of internal security and the socio-political role of ABRI. This approach is likely to continue in the immediate future, for both strategic cultural reasons and as a result of the current economic crisis. Indeed, many aspects of SD&SP 97 no doubt reflected a self confidence born of the sustained economic growth achieved up to that time.

The following broad implications for Indonesia’s approach to future security issues in the region arise from SD&SP 97:

a. A continued emphasis on regional security, possibly accompanied by the assumption of a leadership role.
b. An acceptance of continued US involvement in the region, possibly as a balance to the growing influence of China, Japan and India.
c. A gradual shift from an ideological to an economic focus when addressing regional issues. The pace at which this change continues will be determined by the nature of Indonesia’s response to its current economic woes.
d. An increased tempo in defence cooperation programs, both bilaterally and in regional groupings.

This article has explained the key aspects of Indonesia’s defence policy, emphasising the influence of Indonesian strategic culture. Although it noted the apparent correlation between defence policy and national objectives, a number of policy shortfalls have been identified. These include lapses in definition, a failure to specify capabilities in defence terms, and a preoccupation with internal security. In particular, aspects of the policy are considered to be incompatible with the national objectives of security, prosperity and quality of life. Finally, comment was made regarding the influence of SD&SP 97 on Indonesia’s approach to future security within the region, proposing an increased emphasis on regional engagement, and a shift from an ideological to an economic focus on regional issues.

Indonesia faces many challenges in the near future. In conjunction with coming to terms with a change in leadership, it must contend with the geo-economic realities of the global environment, and yet retain the core values it espouses as a nation. In some areas, the manner in which Indonesia has traditionally inculcated and maintained those values is no longer compatible with its development as a prosperous and influential society. Most notably, the central role of ABRI in national policy encourages a fixation upon internal security issues, and mitigates against the policy and cultural changes necessary for Indonesia to overcome its current economic difficulties and benefit from globalisation. The need to reconcile such a diverse range of interests poses a significant challenge for the new President.

Whilst SD&SP 97 doesn’t signify a fundamental shift in Indonesia’s defence and security policy, it represents a change in focus. Defence and security are addressed in regional terms, and the primacy of geo-economics has been acknowledged. Such changes are balanced by a continued preoccupation with internal security and national sovereignty; however, they offer the opportunity for Australia and Indonesia to reinvigorate the close relationship which exists between our two countries.
NOTES
7. Lowry (1996), for example, argues that the regional security focus of the paper had primacy over its claim to inform defence policy.
11. Author’s abbreviation.
12. The ASBAN Regional Forum (ARF) is proposed as the primary means of developing this concept.
15. Ibid., p. 6.
17. Ibid., p. 4.
18. Ibid., p. 19.
20. Ibid., p. 24
21. It should be noted that this goal was first flagged in the 1995 paper, and that SD&SP 97 was published prior to the recent financial crisis.
22. Ibid., p.13.
24. Interestingly, Anwar (199?) argues that ABRI doesn’t trust the people enough to arm or train them.
25 Anwar, D.F. (undated) op. cit., p. 22.

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Major Des McNicholas joined the Australian Army in 1980. Since that time he has served in a wide range of appointments, including 8/12 Medium Regiment, 16th Air Defence Regiment, the Directorate of Artillery and as the Officer Commanding Proof and Experimental Establishment (Port Wakefield). Major McNicholas is a graduate of RMCS Shrivenham and he holds a BBus (HRD) and an MA. He attended Command and Staff College at Queenscliff in 1998 and is currently the Career Advisor – Artillery and Military Police, within the Directorate of Officer Career Management – Army.
The Flight of the Pig, a full colour publication depicts the F111 fighter aircraft in all its glory. The book traces the history of the aircraft over its 25 years of faithful duty with the RAAF. Defence Photographer Mal Lancaster, who has had an affinity with the F111 since its arrival in Australia has spent the best part of his career photographing the “Pig” as the F111 is affectionately known. The book is available through the office of the Australian Defence Force Journal at a cost of $29.95.
The current Southeast Asian security system is dysfunctional. It is an under-institutionalised maze of bilateral alliances which provide little benefit to Southeast Asian states in a rapidly destabilising region. These arrangements, mostly unchanged since the Cold War, inhibit the growth of meaningful security relationships in the region. They offer little scope for genuine confidence building, or for the resolution of territorial and other disputes. Multilateral structures like the Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) are obsolete regimes which inhibit the growth of true multilateralism because of the historical norms associated with their respective foundation. In view of the end of the Cold War and, more recently with the emergence of the economic crisis, there is an acute need to provide innovative solutions to regional security and economic problems using a cooperative approach in the prevailing economic crisis.

The article argues that a meaningful security mechanism for Southeast Asia requires a significant shift in strategic policy by regional states, firstly by dismantling of the obsolete regional mechanisms like the Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA). This policy shift is based on a neoliberal premise that anarchy can generate cooperative behaviour and that the development of institutions within the Southeast Asian region will “alter concepts of self interest, reduce uncertainty and stabilise expectations facilitating peaceful change.” The article advocates the evolution of a culture of cooperation in the form of a South East Asian Security System (SEAS). Evolution is advocated over replacement so that the resultant security structure reflects a regional requirement, loosely based on cooperative security principles advocating consensus, transparency and confidence building to overcome tension and resolve territorial disputes while providing credible track two initiatives for the region. Cooperative security is defined as a method of achieving military and non-military security objectives based on a norm of reassurance between member states, allowing for the gradual development of multilateralism using existing bilateral and balance of power arrangements as its basis.

The article’s contention is that the existing level of military and economic cooperation within the region is at odds with the complexity of the emerging geostrategic situation. Multilateralism offers greater regional benefit both in terms of regional security response and as a mechanism for resolving regional economic and security problems at a track two level. South East Asia Security System (SEAS) offers an ability to promote regional forms of cooperation at a pace amenable to all participants. The dismantling of irrelevant institutions like the Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) and the modernisation of ASEAN offers an ability to establish new dialogues and security behaviours in order to resolve historical disputes over time. “The whole process is a journey, not a destination.” As a stepping off point the most important element is developing a new regional culture. Development of regional institutions using the existing infrastructures is the obvious security solution from a cost benefit perspective. The article develops this argument by addressing three key issues from the liberal perspective, the emerging security environment including post-Cold War regional trends and the impact of the Asian economic crisis; the obstacles to establishing a regional security system; and finally the character and nature of a sub-regional security system.

The underlying assumption in the article is that multilateralism offers broader scope for tangible security solutions in a complex regional environment than existing bilateral arrangements.
(a) The emerging security environment

While neoliberalism suggests avenues for security problem resolution, the paradigm of neorealism “articulates a security problem”.10 Realism alerts the world to the potential problems developing in the region, by highlighting matters of national interest in terms of state power relative to the power of other states. For example, Mohan Malik, a neorealist,11 is concerned that China’s defence budget has doubled in the 1990-95 period with comparative drops in US, Japanese and Russian defence spending.12 A nuclear state, China is developing a blue water naval capability with speculation over purchases of one or more aircraft carriers,13 significantly increasing China’s power projection capability. This change to the regional strategic balance together with China’s claim to the entire Spratley Island group is viewed with concern within Southeast Asia, particularly by Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines and Brunei, states which also claim islands within the Spratly group. These concerns are becoming increasingly significant, in the light of a renewed Chinese “assertiveness that has taken a nationalistic form” and the shift in China’s strategic policy from a continental to a maritime orientation.14 Yahuda admits concern that a failing communist regime in China could be replaced by a nationalist-based regime based on rising nationalist sentiment.15 According to Paul Dibb the “table thumping nationalistic rhetoric emanating from the Chinese Ministry of Defence and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs would tend to endorse the theory that China is serious about her claims to the South China Sea.”16 This supports concerns that a rearmed nationalist China may attempt to recapture past glory which she believes to have been destroyed at the hands of Japan and the West.17

The question of nationalism also arises with regard to Japan and India in terms of being seen as emerging regional powers. Japan’s comprehensive security policy has been described as “a smoke screen behind which the hawks can expand defence spending.”18 While “Pax Nipponica” is considered to be an unlikely possibility in the current economic climate,19 Yahuda likens Japan’s military potential to a volcano that could easily erupt if the pressures upon it were suddenly to change. A renewed nationalism, post-economic crisis like the “assertive nationalist mood which existed during the Nakasone period (1982-87) may tip the scales in favour of a more assertive Japan”,20 particularly over the US bases issue.21

Nationalism has also become a major force in India. The newly elected Government, which swept itself to power on a nationalist ticket has moved towards more state centric economic, political and security policies in recent times. India’s recent nuclear testing has illustrated India’s nuclear preparedness as she attempts to establish herself as a nuclear, space and information power.22 The India-Pakistan tit for tat nuclear testing has seen the expansion of nuclear weapons into the South Asia region23 and legitimised fears of nuclear technology expanding into the Southeast Asian region.24 Moreover, the spectre of a nuclear arms race between strategic rivals India and China is, according to Ball, a possibility.25

Malik has identified the East Asian region as one within which “the potential for Medium Intensity Conflict is high”.26 This signifies the need for expanded cooperation between regional security partners, to encourage transparency between regional states, allowing for the resolution of differences and thus the reduction of the potential for conflict. A cooperative approach is especially important when the economic crisis has limited the region’s ability to operate and maintain defence forces at pre-economic crisis levels.27

The need for tangible multilateralism in the Southeast Asian region

In 1995, prior to the 1997 economic crisis, the United States (US) published its security strategy for the East Asia region. The US highlighted the fact that it would continue to provide security for the region, based on the belief that if the US does not provide the “central stabilising force then it is quite possible that another region might”.28 However, this is an expensive undertaking. It is possible then that the US security strategy in the East Asian region may change in the future for two reasons. Firstly the region (except for China) is moving into deeper economic recession and is spending much less on defence infrastructure than it was when the US strategy was outlined in 1995.29 Secondly, the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union has reduced the geostrategic significance of the Southeast Asian region to the US. A weakening US currency and the globalisation of the economic crisis could foreseeably facilitate the withdrawal of US forces from the region for US self help reasons.30 Any decrease in US presence in Southeast Asia lends itself to the view that a sub-regional security system for South East Asia,31 advocating a credible self reliant security posture is necessary. The existence of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) supports the view that the US advocates expanded multilateralism provided it remains compatible with ongoing US unipolarity.32

While the ARF is a proactive initiative, it is a macro level discussion forum described by Yahuda as
neither “a new security system to deal with China or indeed as a security system at all. It is principally a forum for what might at best be described as preventive diplomacy.”33 From the perspective of the Third World realists, the ARF is perhaps an expensive indulgence which has offered little in terms of tangible solutions in these destabilising times. A sub-regional security system evolved from the current bilateral relationships offers a better alternative to the ambitious aims of the ARF. A sub-regional system is capable of providing short and medium term security solutions to the region, something the ARF lacks. In the immediate short term, movement towards cooperative security based on the current network of bilateral relationships has the potential to bridge the gap between the current dysfunctional security arrangements in SE Asia and the inability of the ARF to address regional security problems.34

(b) Obstacles to establishing a sub-regional security system

While the ARF is in its infancy, the Five Power Defence Arrangement has reached retirement stage. The FPDA, between Malaysia, Singapore, Britain, Australia and New Zealand35 committed the external Commonwealth powers of Britain, Australia and New Zealand to provide for the defence of Malaya and later Singapore during the latter stages of the colonial era.36

The FPDA is an exclusive security arrangement between the more “developed” Southeast Asian nations based on their common colonial link to Great Britain, it does not represent the collective security interest of the wider South East Asian region. The FPDA offers enhanced military capabilities and an institution based dispute resolution mechanism to Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia only, discriminating between those states and other regional states because of their lack of “Commonwealth” origins.

These colonial origins are viewed with distaste throughout the region. The FPDA is seen particularly by Indonesia as an essentially anti-Indonesian forum, a legacy of Konfrontasi (Confrontation). The intra state dynamics of the FPDA is a dilemma in itself. Australia, on the grounds of maintaining the integrity of the FPDA, tolerates regular anti-Australian rhetoric from Malaysia while continuing to provide patronage to that country within the FPDA at the expense of disbanding the FPDA to develop closer multilateral ties with the remainder of South East Asia.

The FPDA is obsolete because it no longer provides the service it was initially designed for. Singapore and Malaysia have developed independent national defence forces and are long time participants in the Revolution of Military Affairs (RMA).37 Both have developed formidable defence capabilities. Compared with other nations in Southeast Asia they no longer require Commonwealth assistance for their rudimentary security needs. Additionally, British geostrategic interest has waned in Southeast Asia with the handover of Hong Kong to China. The participation of a British aircraft carrier in the (FPDA) Starfish exercise was viewed by many as a well timed warning to China in the leadup to the handover of Hong Kong, rather than evidence of ongoing commitment to the security of Southeast Asia. While the FPDA is still supported in principle by its member states, recent events have highlighted some major shortcomings, limiting its effectiveness and threatening FPDA credibility. A recent political dispute between Malaysia and Singapore spilled over into the FPDA causing the cancellation of the major FPDA exercise for 1998. Based on its history and its current state, the FPDA is incompatible with all the regional security partners, its ongoing existence is hampering the development of cooperative security in the region. This limits its effectiveness as a meaningful security mechanism. It is therefore incapable of serving the future regional interest in a meaningful way, and requires fundamental change to become an accepted regional security system.

While the FPDA was a legacy of western colonial ties, ASEAN was established in order to “preserve national identities and provide security from external interference in any form…”38 ASEAN was developed around a principle of collective bargaining which has traditionally avoided such issues as the development of regional institutions and conflict management.39 The norm of non-interference among the ASEAN nations has assisted in minimising conflict between the member states: conflict is avoided rather than managed. Prior to the economic crisis, ASEAN’s focus was largely centred on an ASEAN economic blueprint for fostering regional stability to maximise economic growth within the Southeast Asian region. Since the Asian economic crisis, ASEAN’s credibility as an economic organisation has been severely flawed, and its survival as a coherent organisation is now questionable. The ASEAN states remain loosely linked, relations between member states strained because of the failure of its economic master plan.

Attempts at multilateralism have previously failed in the region. In this context, the US has been accused of “cultural and historical myopia... the US has always seen East Asia not for what it is, but for what it can do for them”.40 This was confirmed when the US tried to mirror the NATO formula in Southeast
Asia. US arrogance over Southeast Asian culture was delivered in the form of a NATO clone – the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) which was a hastily launched anti-communist organisation of states, which provided little benefit in regional security terms – and quickly failed.

The SEATO experience suggests that a European strategic overlay was not suitable for use in Asia, pre- or post-Cold War. European cooperation has been successfully based on Cold War allegiances. Economic cooperation in Europe was a result of the close political association which developed during the Cold War years between the industrialised European nations. The same security overlay that was used successfully in maintaining NATO cannot be applied to the Southeast Asian region because a different set of circumstances exists. Much of Southeast Asia is still developing while Europe is fully industrialised. While Europe has successfully bridged the cultural divide and established a shift in regional culture, which has seen the triumph of regional interests over state passions, Asia has not. Friedberg describes the situation well: “the rich alphabet soup of international agencies that has helped to nurture peaceful relations among the European powers is, in Asia, a very thin gruel indeed.” Any new security system must be adapted to regional security circumstances and economic conditions.

Another problem for the establishment of a sub-regional security system is the lack of trust between the ASEAN states themselves. This has inhibited ASEAN’s movement into the security realm. Malaysia for example maintains a territorial dispute with every other ASEAN member. Concerns exist over competitive arms acquisitions between the ASEAN members and the contingency planning conducted by ASEAN member states over the other ASEAN states. While there appears to be a general interest in multilateralism with the advent of the ARF, the inherent suspicion between ASEAN member states remains. This inhibits movement in the direction of multilateral cooperation.

The evolution of a sub-regional security system has been hampered by the realist paradigm prevailing over liberalism among Southeast Asian security planners. Relative gain perspectives have inhibited transparency among ASEAN regional states. Singapore is happy to be a member of the FPDA, however it harbours major historical concerns over Malaysia and other neighbours to a lesser degree. Singapore maintains a “poisonous shrimp” defence strategy as her main defence mechanism. This strategy precludes the routine publishing of a Singaporean White Paper on Defence. Self-interest is particularly evident in the Malaysian strategy. Dr Mahathir, the Malaysian Prime Minister, strongly opposes a larger regional role for Australia, “constantly warning his ASEAN colleagues of the dangers associated with ASEAN members developing divergent responses to... security trends in the Asia Pacific”. Paradoxically, Malaysia discourages the development of multilateralism in Southeast Asia yet uses her Commonwealth ties to maintain self-help multilateral relations within the FPDA.

Self-interest and realist based security agendas are outdated. There is a distinct obligation to shed historical security baggage based on the need to build meaningful security relationships in the Southeast Asian region in the wake of the Asian economic crisis. Regional defence budgets will not support the infrastructure required for independent security regimes. Multilateralism should replace multilateral security regimes in the region to overcome the barriers which currently exist, based on the regional security requirement. Existing defence infrastructure can easily form a future SE Asian mechanism, while regionalism must be embraced to develop cohesion and continuity within the region.

\(\text{(c) The character of a sub-regional security system}\)

In the current economic climate where regional defence funding is tight for all countries and the developing economies must now endure great economic hardship, two problems emerge.

Firstly, the current economic pressure placed upon the ASEAN nations makes them increasingly vulnerable to internal and external security threats. Secondly, they are unable to maintain current defence spending levels and thus less able to provide for their own security. The remodeling of existing security structures can provide an economical alternative to adopting completely new security mechanisms in the future.

The basis of a solution is within our grasp. Shifting the security lens from the narrow focus of realism, and using a more lateral perspective of liberalism allows for the transformation of some existing regional structures and the cooperative engagement of other regional states. The FPDA has the potential for this type of major restructuring, from a narrow, inwardly focused alliance to a cooperative security system. This is a credible and economically viable security solution because it maximises the use of existing infrastructure. Bilateral defence exercises could be expanded utilising existing FPDA procedures.
It has already been demonstrated that the Austral-Asian cultural divide can be bridged in security terms. The Australia-Indonesia security treaty is evidence of this. The treaty was hailed throughout the region as evidence of Australia’s commitment to regional relationships. The treaty was the latest chapter in the preceding years of bilateral Indonesian – Australian defence cooperation, a legacy of the confidence and transparency which has been built up over years of mutual cooperation between these two neighbours. No two countries are more economically, socially and geographically, diverse yet a cooperative security spirit has resulted in closer defence cooperation and the resolution of territorial issues between the two neighbours.

Because of its fragmented nature, the South East Asian region has a very limited influence within the broader Asian region, yet based on the emerging security trends the need to provide credible defence and security for the region is increasing. There is currently no sub-regional defence mechanism available to address regional security concerns. That being the case, there is good scope for the development of an initial cooperative security arrangement between Australia, New Zealand and the ASEAN partners. The arrangement could be extended to China focusing specifically on the need for a cooperative security approach in the light of regional concerns; the recessive geoeconomic climate and the absence of credible security alternatives offered by the ARF. This activity could be expanded to include more nations in the future, in a true cooperative sense.

Despite its weaknesses, the existing Five Power Defence Arrangement charter provides a useful model on which a South East Asia Security System (SEAS) could be established. The charter consists of three basic principles:

1. A determination to work together for peace and stability;
2. Maintaining respect for the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of all member countries; and
3. Belief in the settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the UN charter.

The FPDA charter, like the Indonesia-Australia agreement on security is a simple document easily interpreted by all parties. Moreover it provides some basic principles for action on which the region could begin to build SEAS. A coordinated security policy, based on the principles of cooperative security and arranged loosely along the lines of the FPDA, offers an inexpensive and credible security alternative to the dysfunctional and ad hoc arrangements which currently exist. It could be expanded to include other regional states as they develop their defence capabilities as a practical precursor to the grandiose agenda of the ARF. While a disparity of capabilities exists in the region the idea is of participation based on the current infrastructure available. It doesn’t matter that the force is not a multifaceted Task Group to begin with, initially, “the importance is in the journey not in the destination”. The aim is to build confidence and military capability at a pace coincident with the capability of the participating regional defence forces across Army, Navy and Air Forces, gradually increasing in complexity. Annual bilateral exercises like the Kakadu, Kangaroo, Starfish, New Horizons and the Singaroo series could be easily reworked to accommodate the SEAS. A concurrent second track of multilateral activity could be used for an economic dialogue between states in an effort to maximise the use of regional expertise and infrastructure to resolve economic problems. Meanwhile, the main track would focus on interoperability at a security level. “Good times make for bad policy, bad times make for good policy”.

The current economic crisis may therefore provide a catalyst for a new era in security and economic relations in Southeast Asia.

Economic growth was, according to Des Ball, synonymous with modernisation of defence infrastructure which has left regional defence forces with compatible assets in Revolution of Military Affairs (RMA) terms. These capabilities could form the basis of regular multilateral exercise activity within the region. It is expected that over time these countries could begin to form a solid multilateral coalition based on the concept of cooperative security. They have already achieved bilateral interoperability, have all exercised in a structured way, within the web of bilateral alliances that proliferate throughout the Southeast Asian region. Based on the success of the bilateral activity already undertaken, some regional states are already equipped to move into a trilateral security phase. For example, this could see Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines exercising together in a structured way, similarly Australia, Malaysia and Indonesia would build a trilateral relationship until each nation had exercised with every other on a trilateral basis. Only when a satisfactory level of capability had been achieved among all participants would the security partners make the transition from trilateral activity to multilateralism.

A dialogue on economic reform and dialogue on territorial disputes could be simultaneously occurring at a track two level. There is scope for using the same
simple formula used by Australia and Indonesia to resolve the Timor Gap question to solve wider South East Asian regional issues like the Spratly Island dispute. Thus, there exists an opportunity to implement institutional reform in the countries of the region using the resource base and infrastructure already operating in the Southeast Asian region.

An analysis of the East Asian security system highlights the fact that there is simply no credible and active multilateralism within the region. ASEAN’s economic blueprint has not withstood pressure of market forces while the ASEAN Regional Forum, because of its grand scale and its relative immaturity has offered no tangible security solutions to the region’s emerging security problems post-Cold War. These problems can only be overcome by developing a cooperative regional spirit engendering norms of cooperation and using existing regional infrastructure to support these endeavours. The Five Power Defence Arrangement is not representative of the cooperative security interests of the region. However, its charter could provide the model for a new cooperative style multilateralism within the Southeast Asian region. A sub-regional security system in the form of SEAS offers an opportunity to progress cooperative security processes and begin a regional economic dialogue at a track two level. This brings to the region a credible problem solving mechanism engendering a true spirit of cooperative multilateralism advocating security with, rather than security against the adversary.

NOTES

1. B. Job, (1991) “Matters of Multilateralism: Implications for regional conflict management” in Regional Orders: Building security in a New World, eds David Lake and Patrick Morgan, University Press, Pennsylvania, p. 11. Multilateral is an adjective used to refer to instances of coordinating national policies or behaviours by groups of three or more states. They are distinguished from unilateral or bilateral actions, on the basis of the number of actors engaged.

2. M. Yahuda, (1996) “The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific,” Routledge, London, p.12. ASEAN formed in 1967 was designed to enhance the effective independence of its members, and thus perpetuated a norm of non-interference, this has inhibited movement into the security realm. ASEAN leaders avoided integration seeking instead to strengthen their hard won independence. Conversely, membership to the FPDA has been based on colonial ties. Neither forum is interoperable with the other based on these fundamental differences. Both entities are multilateral in nature and do not constitute true multilateralism, in the security sense.

3. B. Job, op. cit., p. 12. Multilateralism is a qualitative term which distinguishes the characteristics of the behaviour of states including the development of norms, collective identity and institutions which develop between states resulting in cooperation and conflict management over extended periods of time.

4. Regionalism is defined as the development of common geostrategic awareness moving toward constructive engagement among states within a certain geographical region.


7. P. Evans, (1995) “The prospects for multilateral security cooperation in the Asia/Pacific region, in Desmond Ball (ed), The transformation of Security in the Asia-Pacific Region, Frank Cass, London, 1995. Track two programs are defined as programs involving academics, journalists and politicians in addition to government officials attending in unofficial or private capacities. The meetings facilitate cross cultural awareness and a deepening of perspective outside the main security agendas. Both ASEAN and Australia have been key initiators of track two initiatives.


11. In security terms, Neorealists emphasize the structure of the international system and how this influences and constrains state behaviour.


20. ibid.


22. D. Ball op. cit., p.97. India has established a long-range maritime surveillance capability consisting of maritime patrol aircraft. She has already developed conventional and nuclear submarines and is establishing naval facilities in the Nicobar Islands close to the approaches to the Malacca Strait.


24. ibid.


27. D. Ball, op. cit., p. 99. Ball points out that it is an expanding security problem including Sea Lanes of Communication, fish stocks and other marine resources, piracy, smuggling and other environment issues (fires, oil spills and pollution) which all require protection.
29. ibid., p.2.
30. C. Layne (1997) “From Preponderance to Offshore Balancing: America’s Future Grand Strategy” International Security, Vol 22, No. 1, p.88. The fact is also that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout packages already adopted in several Southeast Asian countries constitute a mechanism for control of defence spending. While states are under an IMF package they are less likely to be spending large amounts on new military hardware.
31. ibid., p.4.
32. p.10.
33. ibid., Yahuda, p.274.
34. M. Yahuda, op. cit., p. 9. The ARF is made up of the ASEAN countries, the United States, Australia, Canada, European Union, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Laos, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Russia and Vietnam.
36. J. Malik, op. cit., p. 273. Present-day Malaysia twice came under threat, firstly from Chinese communist-backed guerrillas in the 1950s and then from Indonesia in the 1960s. The first Indonesian President, Sukarno, mounted a guerrilla campaign against Malaysia, claiming the states of Sabah and Sarawak were geographically a part of the Indonesian state. Malaysia retaliated with the assistance from the Commonwealth nations, under the Anglo-Malaya Defence Agreement. The precursor to this agreement was the Australia/New Zealand and Malayan Area agreement, dating back to 1948.
38. M. Yahuda, op. cit., p. 73.
41. SEATO was set up as an anti-communist treaty. It was unsuccessful because it did not include Indonesia, Burma and Ceylon. SEATO has been described here by Yahuda as a “broken reed”. Inferring it was weak and unsuitable because it was not adapted to regional conditions and was exclusive of some regional states.
44. A. Acharya, “Imagining a Security Community: Collective Identity and Conflict Resolution in Southeast Asia,” Toronto: York University, Canada.
48. Australia, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand all regularly conduct bilateral defence activity which could easily be extended to other regional nations provided they were considered to be worthy cooperative partners.

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Lieutenant Commander Heron graduated from the Indonesian Command and Staff College in 1995-96 and is now completing his Masters Degree in International Relations at the ANU while serving in Canberra.
Civilian Support to Military Operations Under International Humanitarian Law

By Stewart Fenwick, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

Introduction

Awareness of the requirements of international humanitarian law concerning the protection of civilians has been steadily growing in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and the Department of Defence. However, attention is turning increasingly to the question of the type of support civilians can provide to military operations. International humanitarian law is commonly examined for its relevance to the protection of civilians as victims of armed conflict but it is also of critical importance to an understanding of the possible limits to the role of civilians in providing support to military operations. The aim of this article is to examine the key rules of international humanitarian law pertaining to the separation of civilians and combatants in armed conflict, the commentary on those rules, and also the experiences of some countries with the issues facing Australian defence planners.1

This article will not examine the question of when and between what parties the relevant rules of international humanitarian law might apply.2 This is partly because it is arguable that those rules reflect already existing customary international law, and so are of more general application.3 It is also partly because the rules might come into play in quite different circumstances, for example in the context of planning for the defence of Australian territory from armed aggression, and also that of Australian military contributions to international military operations. These require separate detailed examination and the application of international humanitarian law to United Nations forces itself raises some interesting questions.4 The primary aim of this article is to introduce readers to the relevant rules and to the issues raised during their development and implementation, in the hope of demonstrating their application in a range of circumstances and the possible complexity they introduce to defence planning.

Background

The concept of civilian support to military operations no doubt has a history as long as that of warfare and at least as long as that of international humanitarian law. In a comprehensive study, Major Brian Brady (US JAG) examines practices going back to the time of the English Civil War and the process of assimilation adopted in the British Army, including the classification of civilians into camp followers, retainers-to-the-camp and sutlers.5 In a more contemporary (and possibly fictional) setting the movie Sink the Bismarck portrays civilian workers unintentionally embarking for conflict when the warship on which they are working puts to sea on an urgent mission. The story of the Australian businessman supplying catering services to the United Nations forces in Somalia received much publicity, and extensive support contracts have been let for support to forces in the former Yugoslavia.6

In Australia, the question appears to have been studied by the ADF quite extensively and is again under examination.7 The earlier studies involved examination of the use of civilian assets, the present study going further by intending to explore constraints on the deployment of civilian contractors in support of ADF operations. Although other aspects of defence policy and planning are beyond the scope of this article, the links between this subject and CSP (the Commercial Support Program) and MRU (Manpower Required in Uniform) should be noted. The then Vice Chief of the Defence Force announced in September 1995 the framework on which the ADF would determine the balance between military and civilian support functions, based directly upon legal advice concerning Australia’s obligations under international humanitarian law.8 The framework has also been promulgated in a Defence Instruction.9
Many will be familiar with the origins of international humanitarian law and its basic principles and rules. One key general principle for the regulation of the conduct of armed conflict is that of ‘distinction’, that civilians and non-combatants must be protected from conflict and not be the specific target of attack. Among the rules of international humanitarian law, Protocol 1 to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 has special significance as it clarifies and supplements the 1949 Conventions – particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which itself broke fresh ground by dealing with the protection of civilians in time of war. Protocol 1 developed out of international recognition that the separation of combatants and civilians was increasingly difficult, and that the concept of a distinction between a stable rear and a combat zone – in which belligerents would be in close proximity – was increasingly less relevant to modern armed conflict.

Protocol 1 was intended to balance the benefit of individual guarantees which are consistent with the dictates of humanity, whilst also bearing in mind the realities of national defence and security. Thus the relevant provisions operate both to protect civilians from attack and to delineate lawful contributions by civilians in support of hostilities. In this context, a distinction should be made between participation in a state’s war effort, and taking a direct part in hostilities – many national activities can contribute directly or indirectly to the conduct of hostilities. In the development of Protocol 1, consideration was in fact given to making a formal distinction between “military operations” (referring to armed conflict) and “military effort” or “war effort” (referring to activities not directly inflicting damage on an adversary). Some feared that this distinction would lead to a new category of person – neither civilian nor combatant – and it was not formalised.

As a result, it is necessary to consider a number of provisions of Protocol 1. Under Article 51 civilians are to enjoy general protection from the dangers arising from military operations “unless and for such time as they take a direct part in hostilities”. Article 50 defines civilians using a negative definition. It does this by excluding from the definition those persons referred to in Article 4 (1), (2), (3), and (6) of the Third Geneva Convention and Article 43 of Protocol 1 – i.e. members of armed forces. So, by inference, those persons specified in subparagraphs (4) and (5) of Article 4 could be said to have civilian status. The result is that those “who accompany the armed forces without actually being members thereof” such as civilian members of military aircraft crew, supply contractors and the crews of aircraft employed in the transportation of military personnel, materiel or supplies retain civilian status. Under Article 50, a presumption in favour of civilian status applies in cases of doubt.

Under Article 52 attacks may only be made on military objectives – those objects “which by their nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action and whose total or partial destruction, capture or neutralisation, in the circumstances ruling at the time, offers a definite military advantage”. Civilian objects (being all those objects that are not military objects) shall not be the object of attack. Again, in cases of doubt, a presumption applies in favour of civilian status.

Finally, under Article 58, parties shall “to the maximum extent feasible” endeavour to remove individual civilians and civilian objects under their control from the vicinity of military objectives, and take other necessary precautions to protect individual civilians and objects under their control against the dangers arising from military operations.

These provisions do not stand alone, but operate under the “basic rule” – Article 48 – that obliges parties to distinguish “at all times” between civilians and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives. In summary:
- civilians – including those accompanying the armed forces in particular roles – lose the protection of international humanitarian law whilst taking a direct part in hostilities;
- civilian objects lose protection when they make an effective contribution to military action, and when attack upon them offers a definite military advantage under the circumstances;
- endeavours must be made to the maximum extent feasible to remove civilians and civilian objects from the vicinity of military objectives; and
- other necessary precautions must be taken to the maximum extent feasible to protect them from the dangers of military operations.

Discussion

Loss of the protection of international humanitarian law by individual civilians may be thought an unlikely outcome of civilian support to
ADF operations, given that this can result only from taking "a direct part in hostilities". However, it is valuable to consider the difficulty of applying this rule because of the lack of clarity in the law.

The term hostilities is not defined in Protocol 1. It has been defined in terms of "hostile acts": "acts of war which by their nature or purpose are likely to cause actual harm to the personnel and equipment of the enemy armed forces". Theoretically, therefore, civilians might be able to engage in indirect acts with no loss of immunity. The term "hostile act" is employed in Article 41 (regarding members of armed forces hors de combat – i.e. those surrendering, wounded, sick or incapacitated) and in this context it has been defined as acts that show a person is "still participating in battle, or directly supporting battle action". This seems only to further confuse the distinction between those providing support and those taking part in military operations but the term is likely to be limited to those conducting acts intended to strike at the personnel or material of the enemy.

Examples of activities that could be considered to amount to direct participation in hostilities include the participation by technical advisers in maintenance support such as repair of sophisticated command and control or target acquisition equipment in the midst of battle. Hostile acts may also include, as a very minimum, preparation for combat – such as direct logistics support for units engaged directly in battle such as delivery of ammunition to a firing position – and return from combat. Civilians not posing an immediate threat to the adversary, for example workers in defence plants or those engaged in distribution and storage of military supplies in rear areas, could not be subject to deliberate individual attack.

Loss of protection by "objects" may, in contrast, arise more frequently and with greater ease because objects need only make an effective contribution to military action to become a military objective (subject to the qualifications concerning military advantage). Further, there is no reason to presume that the location of an object (i.e. in relation to an "area of operations") is relevant to the application of the rules.

Those things by their nature making an effective contribution have been described as comprising all objects directly used by the armed forces – weapons, equipment, transports, fortifications, depots, buildings occupied by armed forces, staff headquarters, communications centres and so on – and those objects with otherwise no military function, but which provide one by virtue of their location (such as a bridge). However, use by the armed forces is not the sole determinant of an object’s status under this provision. Objects with dual functions (such as the production of civilian goods) may also be legitimate targets if satisfying the test of military advantage. In cases of doubt, those objects which normally do not have any significant military purpose can be presumed to be civilian, but this might not include installations and means of transport and communication – objects which are of such a nature that their value to military operations is probable.

The question of extending the protection of international humanitarian law to civilians located at military objectives offers equally complex problems because of the element of discretion (to the maximum extent feasible) offered by the rules. Again, the location of objects in relation to military operations is not strictly a relevant consideration.

Article 58 is deliberately aimed at protection of a country’s own nationals. Evacuation need not be necessary if adequate shelter were provided. However, it has been said that where civilians are in the vicinity of a military objective and serving the armed forces in some capacity they “assume the risk of collateral injury from the effects of attack” against their places of work or transport. This is because their presence may not weigh as heavily in the mind of an adversary than that (merely) of civilians not linked in any way to military operations. The test of military advantage for attack against an object relies on the perceptions of the adversary in the circumstances prevailing at the time.

Responses to Protocol 1

On signing Protocol 1, Australia advised that it would study the interpretation of the provisions and their implications for the legitimate conduct of national defence and subsequently made declarations of understanding concerning Protocol 1 at the time of ratification. The declarations do not address the issues discussed in this article, dealing instead principally with the definition of military advantage in making decisions to launch attacks. In contrast, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (ratifying the Convention only recently) have registered their understanding of the extent to which measures need to be taken under Article 58 to remove civilians and civilians objects from military objectives and to protect them from the effects of military operations. The UK has declared that “feasible” in Article 58 “means that which is practically possible, taking into account all circumstances at the time including those relevant to the success of military operations”.

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Switzerland has made the reservation that “to the maximum extent feasible … will be applied subject to the requirements of the defence of the national territory”.

These implications of the key rules for national defence were clear to a number of states during negotiations for Protocol 1. The French, for example, understood correctly that the “basic rule” applied to both attackers and defenders. As a result, they abstained in the vote for adoption of Article 48 feeling the conduct of its national defence would be unduly constrained by this provision. Numerous objections were raised with respect to Article 58 because it was considered that the separation of civilians would be difficult and might restrict a nation’s ability to organise national defence in the most effective way. Indeed several experts considered that any move to include mandatory obligations to take precautions in national territory with respect to a party’s own nationals would be an infringement on sovereignty. They did not object to provisions phrased in terms of practicable or possible measures, but a number of delegations, including Canada, Italy and the United states, expressed the same understanding of the word “feasible” that appears in the declarations and reservations made by Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Ultimately, though, the requirement to take protective measures to the maximum extent feasible does not require states to do the impossible, in particular it does not require the taking of measures that might benefit an adversary.

Whilst the requirements of Article 58 are not mandatory in their terms, it needs to be acknowledged that Protocol 1 does not give unfettered control to states in making national defence arrangements. Protocol 1 specifically requires parties to a conflict to have the means available to respect its provisions, and (as noted above) the “basic rule” is applicable in all circumstances – therefore it is not acceptable for a party to argue that it does not have the means of organising itself to comply with the provisions. Indeed, states have a duty to take appropriate measures in peacetime, such as considering the location of military objectives relative to the civilian population.

An international colloquium considered national defence issues in some detail. A Swedish humanitarian law report found lack of clarity in the rules relating to the classification of civilians carrying out duties for the armed forces. As a result, Sweden passed an ordinance specifically providing guidance for the implementation and application of the law in Sweden. It defines which personnel are to be considered combatants and also contains provisions addressing those civilians accompanying the armed forces. Sweden also employs the concept of an “industrial home guard” which is part of the army but consists of “ordinary workers serving their industry” who are considered combatants when defending their workplace.

The Netherlands also considered the difficulties facing civilians exposed to grave risk on account of their work, such as in tank repair shops or at military airfields, and has accorded them combatant status. It was felt that the risk here lay in the fact that an adversary may not be prepared to treat such civilians in the way that it might treat, for example, correspondents. This view was sustained by the drafting history of Protocol 1 which shows there is no authoritative definition of “direct participation in hostilities”. Similarly, Germany – at the time of the colloquium – was investigating the status of various groups of personnel in relation to the assistance provided, and proximity to, armed forces and military objectives.

Another way of demonstrating the influence of these rules is by way of example. Middle East Watch analysed adherence to international humanitarian law during the Gulf War. One incident researched by this human rights group was an attack upon Jordanian civilian oil tankers by Allied aircraft. The tankers were carrying oil to Jordan, and although the reasons for the attack remain unclear, the tankers were not making an effective contribution to Iraqi operations. Middle East Watch notes that the relevant US Department of the Air Force pamphlet provides a rationale for such attacks (although not justifying this particular attack), stating correctly that civilian trucks hauling oil, gas and other fuels may be subject to attack if satisfying the definition of military objective. It is interesting to reflect, however, on the presumption of civilian status required by Article 52.

Major Brady (referred to above) examines the position with respect to civilian contractors to US forces, based on the interaction of international law and US domestic law. He concludes that US Government practice has institutionalised the concept of assimilation with the result that contractors hold military status in the field and indeed may also be vested with veteran status. Major Brady notes the finding of the Desert Storm Assessment Team, Report to the Judge Advocate General of the Army that “civilian employee[s] accompanying the forces are, or course, legitimate targets of enemy attack” and also the related conclusion that neither the Government nor the contractors understood their rights and obligations in the field. He also explores the web of government regulations and provisions
relating to the engagement of contractors and concludes that contractor status remains an “enigma” under US Government contract provisions. His proposed solution is the development of contract notice provisions to put prospective contractors on notice as to government requirements and site conditions to eliminate surprises for contract personnel. He describes the solutions as preventive medicine to “address basic misunderstandings” about the status of contractors in the field.

**Conclusion**

This article has attempted to provide an introduction to the key rules of international humanitarian law concerning the protection of civilians which are relevant to contractor support. These provisions are becoming increasingly familiar to Australian defence policy makers and planners because of the emphasis being placed on contractor support for ADF operations. Whilst drafters of the rules were conscious of the issues pertaining to the planning and conduct of national defence, most attention has centred to date on protection of the civilian population from the effects of conflict. It is equally important to examine the rules for the implications they carry for contractor support.

The principal feature of the rules is that it is the type of function being carried out by individual civilians or civilian objects in the context of military operations, and not the location where that function is carried out which determines whether protection under international humanitarian law is retained. The rules, and the reaction to them by a number of countries, also raise fundamental questions about the extent to which it is feasible to plan to engage civilians in support roles, including at military installations. They suggest that careful consideration should be given to the compatibility of a policy that seeks civilian contract support for national defence and ADF operations with general rules of international humanitarian law that require a distinction to be made at all times between civilians and combatants.

On introducing the Bill on 22 August 1990 for the ratification of Protocol 1, then Attorney-General Duffy explained to Parliament that the “full ramifications of Australia’s becoming a Party [to Protocol 1] for the Australian Defence Force … have been exhaustively examined”. It is hoped that this article has shown some of the complexity in this area of international humanitarian law and that a range of responses have been adopted to the key rules. Australia needs to be in a position to implement appropriate policies to address the range of operational, commercial, contractual and legal issues that arise from the rules of international humanitarian law discussed here. Just as importantly, Australia should be prepared to make decisions which give effect to the principles of international humanitarian law underlying those rules.

**NOTES**


3. See Greenwood, p. 64; and, Stanislaw Nahlik, *A Brief Outline of International Humanitarian Law*, International Review of the Red Cross, July/August 1984, pp. 187-226. “They can be considered as reflecting the opinion held by the plenipotentiary representatives [vested with power to negotiate] of the overwhelming majority of the countries forming the international community today”, Nahlik, p. 194.


7. See for example *Australian Defence Magazine*, September 1996, pp. 14 and 16. The Department of Defence recently
advertised the commencement of a study to examine the question of the deployment of civilian contractors in support of ADF operations, see for example advertisement in the Australian Financial Review, 10 October 1998.


10. International humanitarian law regulates the conduct of hostilities in order to mitigate their severity, and has been described by ICRC as those rules “which, for humanitarian reasons, limit the rights of parties to a conflict to use the methods and means of warfare of their choice or protect persons and property that are, or may be affected by, conflict”. The modern origins of international humanitarian law trace back to the Age of Enlightenment when the principle was established that combat should not pose a threat to the civilian population or non-military objects. ICRC Commentary, xxix and xxvii. See also Timothy McCormack, From Solferino to Sarajevo: A Continuing Role for International Humanitarian Law, Vol. 21 Melbourne University Law Review 621.


15. ICRC 1973 draft of Protocol 1, quoted in New Rules, p. 318. McCormack, at p. 626-7, notes that changes in warfare have lead to a greater incidence of civilian casualties.


19. See discussion in New Rules, p. 293.

20. Correspondingly, civilians are not to be used to shield military objectives under Article 51(7).

21. Despite a recommendation to the drafting committee to this effect; New Rules, p. 302.


28. ibid.

29. ICRC Commentaries, p. 636.

30. ibid.


32. ICRC Commentary, p. 692.

33. New Rules, p. 373.

34. New Rules, p. 303. Bothe draws support for this proposition directly from the ICRC drafts of Protocol 1 which included explicit provisions concerning the assumption of risk by civilians within military objectives.

35. The declaration made upon signature on 7 December 1978 can be found at the ICRC website; Australia’s formal declarations in respect of Protocol 1 can be found at the ICRC website (note 12 above), or at Vol. 13 Australian Yearbook of International Law, (AYBIL), pp. 383-4.


41. ICRC Commentary, pp. 692-3.

42. New Rules, p. 43; ICRC Commentary, p. 600.

43. ICRC Commentary, p. 692.


45. National Implementation, p. 117.


47. ibid.


50. ibid.; and, see text accompanying note 21 on the question of definitions.


52. Needless Deaths, pp 213-224.

53. ibid.


55. Brady, p. 4.


57. Brady, p. 75.

58. Brady, p. 76.

59. AYBIL, p. 443.

Stewart Fenwick, B.A./LL.B. (Melbourne), LLM. (International Law) (ANU), is a legal adviser in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and a member of the International Humanitarian Law Committee of the Australian Red Cross, ACT Division (the views expressed in this article, however, are those of the author alone). He formerly held positions in the Department of Defence in Strategic Policy and Force Development Branches and prior to joining the Public Service was a solicitor in private practise in Melbourne.
After nine years of civil war costing thousands of lives, the people of Bougainville laid down their weapons and symbolically “broke the spears” at a moving ceremony in Bougainville’s capital, Arawa, on Thursday, 30 April 1998. On a hot and overcast day, a crowd of several thousand, including members from the unarmed multi-national Truce Monitoring Group drawn from Australia, New Zealand, Vanuatu and Fiji, assembled at midday to watch the leaders of the war ravaged province formally sign a cease-fire deal, which many consider to be Bougainville’s best chance for long-term peace, reconciliation and reconstruction.

The formal signing of the cease-fire agreement, which had only been finalised by the leaders, meeting in HMAS *Tobruk*, during the early hours of that morning, was a particularly poignant culmination to *Tobruk’s* recent involvement in Bougainville, which included three deployments to the war-torn island and a record breaking 73 continuous days at sea between January and March 1998 in support of truce monitoring operations ashore.

**The Bougainville Conflict**

Australian involvement in Bougainville stemmed from the crisis which began in 1989 when the Papua New Guinea (PNG) Government declared a State of Emergency on the island following the sabotage of the giant Panguna copper mine by local landowners demanding a greater share in the mine’s profits. Fuelled by a separatist zeal, the situation rapidly deteriorated into a conflict that engulfed the entire island with the PNG Government subsequently placing an embargo on all support including food and medical aid to the troubled island. The ensuing period was marked by armed conflict between the pro-independence Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) led by rebel leader Francis Ona, the PNG Army and a pro-PNG resistance militia, which resulted in many deaths (estimates range from 2000 to 20 000) as a result of intermittent skirmishes and the consequent breakdown of health and food supply infrastructure. The conflict has also kept the mine closed, wrecked the island’s infrastructure, sapped the PNG defence budget and has been a painful thorn in the side of successive PNG governments.

A number of previous initiatives to secure lasting peace on Bougainville, including an attempt in 1994, which also involved *Tobruk*, proved unsuccessful and ended in a stalemate. Frustrations boiled over when, after an 18-month cease-fire collapsed in 1996, then PNG Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan hired foreign mercenaries to destroy the BRA’s jungle bases. International outrage scuttled the plan and contributed to his defeat in last June’s PNG general election.

With new Prime Minister Bill Skate intent on peace, PNG last year tried again. BRA leader Sam Kauona and Joseph Kabui, vice-president of the Bougainville Interim Government (BIG), the BRA’s political wing, defied fiercely pro-independence Ona, who had largely been marginalised, by entering into talks with the PNG Government and the locally elected and PNG recognised Bougainville Transitional Government (BTG). Under New Zealand sponsorship, the rival parties were invited to participate in new negotiations at Burnham in New Zealand to end hostilities. This resulted in a declaration “to achieve a lasting peace” which was signed by the leaders of the various factions on 18 July 1997.

The Burnham Declaration led to further talks in October 1997 which resulted in the Burnham Truce being signed; the formation of a combined multi-national Truce Monitoring Group (TMG); and an agreement to continue talks aimed at securing lasting peace via a permanent cease-fire. The October 1997 truce was followed in January 1998 by the New Zealand brokered Lincoln Agreement, which paved the way for the negotiation of a permanent cease-fire deal and guaranteed the phased withdrawal of PNG troops, the transition to a Peace Monitoring Group (PMG), talks on the island’s political future and the election of a Bougainville Reconciliation Government (BRG).
The 200-member unarmed TMG, consisting, mainly of Australian and New Zealand military and civilian personnel, with a few personnel drawn from Vanuatu and Fiji, was established on Bougainville in November 1997, as part of Operation Belisi, to oversee the peace process following the Burnham talks. It was the largest multinational military deployment in the South Pacific since 1945, excluding exercises and disaster-relief operations. Their role was to monitor and report on the factions observance of the truce and to facilitate the return of the island to normality by providing a base level of confidence from which the people could move forward. Australia committed about 80 soldiers providing logistical support plus some civilians in the monitoring teams. TMG Headquarters was established at Arawa with the Logistic Support Team (LST) established at Loloho, and four 20-member Truce Monitoring Team (TMT) sites located at Buka, Arawa, Buin and Tonu. Following the arrival of the TMG, local peace groups emerged all over the island indicating a widespread desire by the population for peace.

Tobruk’s involvement in Operation Belisi and the current peace process commenced in mid-November 1997 while alongside in Guam on a short new entry officers’ training cruise, when notice was received that the ship was to participate in operations to provide logistic support to the TMG bound for Bougainville. As a result, the remainder of the training cruise was cancelled and the ship proceeded directly back to Sydney, the eight-day passage being used to good effect to plan for the imminent operation.

Increasingly, the Australian Defence Force has been involved in peacekeeping and aid to civil power operations where the amphibious and sea transport capabilities of Tobruk has been invaluable. Tobruk, as the primary amphibious unit in the ADF inventory, is an extremely important and valuable asset, particularly in joint operations, and there have been few contingencies in recent years where her unique capabilities have not been required. Operational planning continued in Sydney, while material preparations were completed in readiness for the operation. Tobruk, under the command of Commander G.A. Robinson, RAN, sailed from Sydney on Saturday, 29 November, heavily laden with approximately 1200 tonnes of cargo and 70 soldiers – mostly medical and engineering personnel – embarked. Much to the relief of the embarked force, the six-day passage to Bougainville was completed in good weather with Tobruk arriving off Anewa Bay, Bougainville, on the morning of Friday, 5 December. After rendezvousing with HMAS Success (Captain A.W. Flint, CSC, RAN) later that day, Tobruk proceeded alongside the former ore carrier berth at Loloho and immediately began discharging her vital cargo which was eagerly awaited ashore.

Tobruk’s cargo handling capabilities were fully utilised; the 70 tonne heavy-lift Velle derrick and both eight tonne Favco cranes assisted with the discharge of vehicles and stores onto the wharf, while the two embarked LCM 8 landing craft conducted stern door operations to off load vehicles and equipment stowed in the tank deck. Tobruk’s flexible cargo handling facilities and motivated ship’s company ensured that the unloading operation was completed within ten hours prior to getting underway the following morning for the return passage to Sydney, where she arrived on Thursday 11 December to prepare for her return to Bougainville in early January 1998.

Considerable work was undertaken during the three week period in Sydney, including the installation of two reverse osmosis plants to produce fresh water onboard. Additional communications facilities, including provision of INMARSAT B, were also fitted. Shortly before Christmas, Tobruk was advised that her participation in operations off Bougainville were likely to extend well beyond the end of January and that the ship should be stored for ninety day endurance. Final preparations for the deployment back to Bougainville were completed by new year’s eve, with equipment enhancements providing a greatly improved operational endurance.

Tobruk departed Fleet Base East on Friday, 2 January to commence passage back to Bougainville to provide logistic and communications support to the TMG ashore on the war-torn island. The passage north involved the turnover of command from Commander Robinson to Commander A.K. du Toit, RAN, at sunset on Saturday, 3 January while transiting north off the New South Wales coast. Commander Robinson was subsequently landed by
boat at Tweed Heads early the next morning and *Tobruk* shaped course for Bougainville to relieve *Success* on station in the Combined Force Area of Operations (CFAO).

Progress through the Coral Sea was hampered by Tropical Cyclone Katrina, which with almost every alteration of course made to avoid it, appeared to change direction towards *Tobruk*. After finally passing some 130 km to the east of the cyclone, *Tobruk* passed through the Bougainville Strait and entered the CFAO during the night of Wednesday, 7 January and rendezvoused with HMAS *Success* shortly after sunrise the following morning. After a three hour underway replenishment with *Success*, command team briefings and the transfer of two Sea King SK50A helicopters and associated personnel, *Tobruk* assumed responsibility as the Task Group Commander (CTG 627.9) from *Success*, which shaped course for Australia soon afterwards.

*Tobruk* commenced an intensive operational training programme the following day designed to integrate the embarked 817 Squadron Detachment into the ship and establish standard operating procedures in direct support of TMG operations ashore. The aircrew quickly familiarised themselves with flying operations from both the forward and after flight decks and *Tobruk* soon settled down to an operations tempo, with the ship proceeding to sea on most days within the CFAO to maintain a patrol sector to the east of Kieta in order to avoid any confrontation or perceived breach of the truce monitoring arrangements, with the ship going to anchor in Arawa Bay each night. Because tensions were still very evident on Bougainville during the truce period, the number of service personnel permitted on the island was strictly limited. As a result, members of *Tobruk*’s ship’s company were unable to proceed ashore for the duration of *Tobruk*’s deployment. One day a week, normally Sunday, was therefore spent at anchor in Arawa Bay for Ship’s Company rest and recreation.

The Australian contingent commander, Colonel S.K. Joske, visited *Tobruk* shortly after arriving to brief the ship’s company on the progress of the fragile peace on the island and a close relationship was soon established with Headquarters Truce Monitoring Group (HQ TMG) ashore. This close liaison was maintained throughout *Tobruk*’s involvement in Bougainville, and Colonel Joske and his relief, Colonel J.B. Wilkinson, who arrived during the first TMG rotation in mid February, regularly visited the ship for consultation and used the facilities on board to assist with planning future military involvement in the Bougainville peace process.

Ship’s Company postings and aircrew rotations commenced early in the deployment using scheduled fortnightly RAAF C-130 flights between RAAF Richmond and Aropa airfield. This greatly assisted in returning the ship to a more normal posting cycle, following the posting freeze introduced when *Tobruk*’s participation in the Operation was first ordered.

HMA Ships *Balikpapan* and *Brunei* brought much welcomed changes to the daily routine on two occasions during the deployment with their resupply of fresh, frozen, dry provisions and canteen supplies. In addition, *Tobruk* refuelled from HMNZS *Endeavour*, before the latter’s departure for New Zealand at the end of January, and HMNZS *Manawanui*, which regularly proceeded to Lae and Rabaul for fuel for the TMG, also provided *Tobruk* with fuel on two occasions, enabling operational endurance to be extended. *Tobruk* on the other hand, provided in theatre logistic support to the two LCM 8s which conducted essential TMG supply runs in Bougainvillean waters, conducted logistic resupply runs and medivac flights using her two embarked SK50 helicopters and transferred diesel and aviation fuel ashore as required.

The Ship’s Company responded remarkably well to the demands placed upon them and their families as the peace process ashore gained momentum. During the deployment, *Tobruk*’s entertainment committee worked tirelessly to provide entertainment and activities for the TMG members ashore and the ship’s company. With many days akin to “Groundhog Day”, activities to dispel the boredom included Australia Day celebrations, steel deck barbecues, big screen movie nights, a comedy night, celebrity heads auction, quiz and tombola nights, stern door swimming and regular screening of “Rat News”, the ship’s onboard television programme. Communication with families was maintained with the full range of communications facilities available. Sport and fitness sessions were a major focus with over 100 PT sessions conducted.

*Tobruk* remained in the Bougainville CFAO, in direct support of the TMG, until Tuesday, 10 March, before returning to Sydney for much needed maintenance and leave after spending 73 demanding days at sea since departing Fleet Base East (FBE) on 2 January. *Tobruk* was relieved on station on Tuesday, 10 January, by HMAS *Labuan* (Lieutenant R.D. Knights, RAN). The two ships rafted up while at anchor in Arawa Bay to effect the transfer of necessary stores and fuel and complete a command team briefing. Key personnel from the TMG visited the ship during the handover, ensuring that *Labuan*’s command was as fully prepared as possible prior to *Tobruk*’s departure. CTG 629.7 responsibilities were transferred during the Dogs and *Tobruk* commenced the five day passage to Sydney shortly afterwards.
With the assistance of the strong East Australian Current, *Tobruk* arrived back in Sydney on the afternoon of Sunday, 15 January, on an unseasonable grey and damp day and berthed at the Fleet Base in Woolloomooloo Bay. *Tobruk* was met by Maritime Commander Australia, Rear Admiral C.A. Richie, AM, RAN, and hundreds of friends and family members of the Ship’s Company. Shortly after berthing, Admiral Richie briefly addressed the Ships’ Company and recognised their achievement in keeping the ship operational throughout the deployment, before presenting Australian Service Medals and Bougainville clasps. The deployment of *Tobruk* to Bougainville was a demanding operation for the ship and her ship’s company. However, the challenges, and at times monotony of enduring 73 continuous days at sea were far outweighed by the operational focus and the desire to see peace breakout on the beautiful, but troubled island.

Following a brief respite in Sydney, during which time essential defects were rectified and some very welcome leave taken, *Tobruk* sailed for Bougainville on Wednesday, 15 April, for the third successive time in six months. On this deployment, *Tobruk* carried some 100 soldiers, three Iroquis helicopters from 171 Reconnaissance Squadron, and a number of vehicles, generators and plant equipment to support the transition from the New Zealand led TMG to the Australian-led PMG.

The six-day return passage to Bougainville was made in benign conditions, which was greatly appreciated by the embarked force, who had plenty to do with lessons including health and hygiene, local customs and culture, public relations and *Tok Pisin*, the language of the Bougainville people. *Tobruk* entered the CFAO on Monday 20 April, and berthed at Loloho Wharf in Anewa Bay at 0800 on Tuesday 21 April to commence discharging cargo. The majority of the embarked force, however, remained on board for the week, thereby relieving the pressure on the limited resources and facilities ashore during the major change-over of personnel.

In contrast to her previous deployments to Bougainville *Tobruk*’s ship’s company participated in many activities ashore during the period alongside, in particular a very moving ANZAC Day dawn service
at the war memorial at Kieta which had recently been reclaimed from the jungle. The service was a highlight and particularly significant with both Australians and New Zealanders serving together in theatre.

During this visit, Tobruk was the venue for a series of meetings to finalise the cease-fire agreement that was to be signed on Thursday 30 April. These meetings were rescheduled on several occasions, due mainly to difficulties in assembling the representatives of the various factions. After a number of preparatory meetings, the leaders of the warring factions arrived on board at 1000 on Wednesday, 29 April, and commenced a long and at times charged meeting that finally reached agreement during the early hours of the next morning – less than six hours before the formal cease-fire signing ceremony was due to be held in Arawa. With supporters of the various parties gathered on the jetty, the Commanding Officer of Tobruk was invited to the closing remarks of the meeting and witnessed the emotional atmosphere as the leaders agreed to strive for a peaceful conclusion to the crisis that has divided their potentially prosperous island. As a final gesture, the chairman presented Commander Du Toit with spears and a bow and arrows, symbolic and poignant gifts to demonstrate that the people of Bougainville were turning away from violence as a means of settling their differences.

After nearly six months involvement with operations in Bougainville, Tobruk finally sailed for Sydney at first light on Thursday, 30 April, shortly after the completion of the leaders’ talks onboard, her Ship’s Company buoyed by their involvement in the peace process and their proximity to the focus of activity during the final days before the signing of the cease-fire agreement.

Lessons Learnt

Tobruk’s participation in operations in Bougainville once again highlighted the importance of a deployable and sustainable off-shore ADF amphibious lift capability in support of regional contingencies and reinforced the continued versatility of Tobruk. There were two important lessons flowing from Tobruk’s involvement in Bougainville from the Navy’s point of view. Firstly, it again confirmed that the RAN is well equipped and organised to conduct operations offshore. The Gulf War and Somalia experiences, and now Bougainville, have proved invaluable and much was learnt. All three operations were particularly rewarding in that they showed that the Navy is capable of conducting operations offshore in support of Government direction. Secondly, Tobruk’s involvement in Bougainville again reinforced the need for an amphibious capability in the ADF. The logistics and sea transport roles, which are part of an amphibious capability, ensure that any Defence dollar spent in this area is a good investment. It also confirms that if we look at likely Defence scenarios which may confront the ADF over the ensuing years, there are few that would not require an amphibious capability as part of the solution.

Commander Du Toit is a graduate of the RAN Staff College and the Australian Joint Services Staff College and he also holds a Master of Defence Studies degree from the University of New South Wales.
His postings in the RAN prior to assuming command of HMAS Tobruk on 3 January 1998 have included Officer-in-Charge of the Mine Warfare School at HMAS Waterhen in Sydney, Deputy Commander Australian Mine Warfare Forces, Executive Officer of HMAS Tobruk, Director of Mine Warfare and Clearance Diving, Director of Minor Project Development and, more recently, Operations Director of the $1bn Minehunter Coastal Project which will see six new Huon class coastal minehunters enter RAN service between 1999 and 2002.
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We live in a society which values leadership but not leaders, where the protection of individualism takes precedence over the good of the group, and where the leadership vacuum is being filled with debate not action. The “hippie” culture of the sixties, the nothingness of the seventies, the financial and moral bankruptcy of business in the eighties, and the image politics of the nineties. Scratch the surface and you get more surface, we live in the Nike Just do it culture and are trying to make sense of it.

It is in this social context that the Army is rewriting its doctrine on leadership, and trying to determine the best way ahead for a military force in a society that is demonstrably ambivalent about the value of the group and leadership. Its ability to do this will be a reflection of the degree to which contemporary societal values and norms are understood. The Army cannot afford to price itself out of the leadership market through a failure to be relevant and responsive to society. There is a clear need to underpin the rationale for change in social, as well as psychological, analysis.

A suitable point for departure in gaining this understanding is to characterise the society in which we live and let this stimulate our thinking. The development of postmodern thought in the latter part of this century has provided a focus for debate on what is the modern social condition. It questions whether modernism ever liberated us from irrationality and ignorance and provides a philosophical framework for looking at the realities of society, without the claim to an absolute truth. It does not critique, but celebrates the uncertainty of the world.

If we accept postmodernism as an ideology then the implications for leadership in the Army may be unpalatable to some. This can be initially seen in the use of the word doctrine, which is an immediate trigger for scepticism as it indicates a claim to universal truth. The importance of understanding society through a postmodern perspective cannot be underscored by the military. A postmodern influence is evident in all major cultural forms, and holds a legitimate place as an academic discipline. Agreement with its many positions should not be the goal, but rather the integrity to fully consider the society in which we operate by challenging our current views.

This article will present a postmodern perspective on society and identify some key issues which the Army may need to address if it is to present a credible leadership model.

Any attempt to delineate the postmodern position will find difficulty, primarily because its very nature rejects the notion of a central theoretical explanation. The prominent figures in postmodern dialogue are divided in their views; and while characteristically not fundamentally postmodern, their work has come to define the current parameters for debate. There is a requirement to briefly consider the postmodern position of some of these people, but first a feel for the postmodern ethos must be established.

Postmodernism is an intellectual expression of what is contemporary culture, with it’s name coined to clearly separate itself from modernism. The postmodern intellectual outlook is most evident in its wide variety of cultural manifestations, for example the influence Andy Warhol had in art, Quentin Tarantino in the film industry, or the enormous success of rap music. Pop culture is not set below “high art” but placed alongside it. Warhol’s Campbell Soup Can is viewed alongside the Mona Lisa as respected art, just as The Texas Chainsaw Massacre is studied alongside Citizen Kane. The postmodern culture is essentially one of great pluralism and diversity. (Rosenau, 1992, p.119)

Shalizi claims there are four defining concepts in postmodern thought: Extreme Neophilia, which holds that the past is dead and new is good; Apocalyptic Ideology, telling us the world is ultimately doomed; Anti-Rationalism, declaring science, facts and
intellect are useless and soul destroying; and finally Explosive Technology which encompasses the cultural saturation of electronic media, computerisation and drugs into our societies. (1993, p.3) These four concepts certainly capture the essence of extreme postmodern thought, but the reality is that it is impossible to apply postmodernism without contradiction and this is clearly seen in the variety and amount of academic debate that exists. A quick overview of some prominent theorists in the postmodern debate will illustrate this.

Foucault is the most widely known influence on postmodernism and the central thrust of his work was to critique modernity. He faults modern forms of knowledge, rationality and subjectivity claiming they are shaped by shifting patterns of power in society, and that knowledge has created new forms of domination. (Best & Kellner, 1991, p.35) Foucault examined how we produce, gain and use knowledge, and how this is linked to power relations in society. While Foucault’s work has come to define much of the postmodern condition it is essentially a “critique of our historical era”. (Rabinow, 1984, p.42) He posited that the existence of the individual is a fiction created by the power and domination of modern institutions and rationality. Foucault rejects any single analytical framework for the human condition, and the thrust of his work is to “respect… differences”. (Foucault, 1973, p.xii)

Saul provides further critique and explores the relationship between language and power. He claims that language now has been separated into two parts, public and corporatist. “There is public language – enormous, rich, varied and more or less powerless. Then there is corporatist language, attached to power and action.” (Saul, 1997, p.48) He concluded that the creation of corporate dialects and the access to them has become a universal condition for our contemporary elites. The separating of dialects into these two domains has confounded the individual’s ability to “grasp reality”, as a common language for public communication is lost to the power of the corporate dialect. (p.51)

Derrida and his writing on deconstruction have provided a whole paradigm for argument in postmodern philosophy. He coined and critiqued the modern concept of logocentrism, which is the tendency to believe everything has a complete or full meaning. He claimed we should view structures as having no centre, so that they remain undefined, undetermined, not linear, not continuous, and that they will remain open to interpretation. (Derrida, 1978, pp.278-9) It is from this basic premise that those who followed Derrida claimed we must deconstruct modern philosophy and look to new ways of describing the postmodern condition.

Jean-Francois Lyotard’s key contribution to the postmodern debate is to critique what he has labelled “Grand Narratives”. These are the scientific, cultural, political, societal tendencies to uniform explanations and well-articulated truths. (Lyotard, 1987, pp.15-17) His theories came out of disillusionment with nineteenth and twentieth century thought, such as Marxism and socialism, to provide the explanations he needed for the human condition. The recent tendency for “sciences” such as chaos theory and complexity to tell competing stories, or for the medical profession to turn more and more toward alternate practices supports Lyotard’s model that the postmodern condition is one of competing narratives. The postmodern condition is best summed up in his own words as “the distinctly contemporary, incredulity toward metanarratives”. (1987, p.37)

Docker claims the supreme formal feature of postmodernism is “depthlessness” or “superficiality”. (1988, p.118) Popular culture now immerses people in “image addiction” where the image is the reality not a representation of a substantial body of ideas or point of reference. One of the significant impacts of postmodernism is the pivotal role of television in the dissemination of postmodern culture. The television has come to represent reality, for outside our personal sphere of influence we rely on television to reproduce reality. The media, through broadcast or printed images provides a context for how we view ourselves, others, and events.

A recurring subject in postmodern debate is the role of language and popular discourse. Further than this, two themes which are evident in most popular attempts to define postmodernism are the decentredness of existence and an acceptance of indeterminacy. (Childers & Hentzi, 1996, p.118) Postmodernism encourages us to look beyond the centre to the margins, the forgotten, the left out, and the uncommon.

Postmodernism rejects the notion of universal explanations and embraces a respect for difference. It is not overly concerned with rights and wrongs, and rejects the strong rationalism of modernism. Life is viewed as a story of intersecting narratives, with people the collectors of experiences. (Grenz. S.J., 1987, p.56)
the buzzword of the nineties, with companies spending large amounts of money on leadership training for their staff, and recruitment organisations now consider demonstrated leadership an essential quality. This has necessitated the delineation between management and leadership, as people search for some demonstrable leadership skills that can be furnished in the same manner as a qualification or experience.

The irony of this is the subtle move of leadership out of the social and into the individual context. Educational institutions now include subject matter, if not whole courses, on leadership, further objectifying and quantifying it. Leadership is increasingly defined as a set of skills to acquire and values to master, with the importance of placing them in a social context given a lower priority. “Just as there are principles that govern nature, so there are definite principles which are vital in leadership”. (Newman, 1994, p.12)

If it is accepted that a definition of leadership cannot ignore the social context, then it must be accepted that interpretations of what constitutes “good” leadership will change as society changes. The explosion of literature on leadership in the last decade has clearly signalled growing interest by society, albeit commercial, yet the thrust of it is still a quasi-psychological account of what are good leadership traits.

The disturbing extension of this is the tendency for leadership to be just a collage of trait-based images with little substance, leadership Milli Vanilli style.

Postmodernism and Leadership

If we accept the characterisation of postmodernism above, and how the social paradigm has been transformed, then there should be some important implications for how leadership is approached and practiced. Kelly claims leadership today has an emotional or spiritual dimension. (1997: p.2) People have moved toward leaders who make a distinct effort to connect with them. The success of modern leaders is more a function of the image they present than of any personal character traits or strong philosophical position. It may well be the ability of political, religious or corporate leaders to change their position that is the reason for their longevity, rather than the strength of a central philosophy or principle.

The ability of Bill Clinton to last two full terms in the White House, or the challenges the Catholic Church now face are powerful demonstrations of this. Politically, Clinton has managed to survive the Whitewater Affair, allegations of sexual misconduct, and his self-confessed adultery. The persistence of the American public to continue to support him is, arguably, grounded in his manufactured appeal to a majority of Americans. Conversely, the Catholic Church is struggling to remain relevant, its positions on women in the priesthood, marriage in the priesthood, contraception, and divorce marginalise it from society. The leadership in the Catholic Church must read the writing on the wall and become relevant to people in a postmodern society. Edelman sums up modern leadership succinctly, “leaders are…minor elements of a complex transaction”. (1998, p.34)

The tendency toward image based leadership has not only created leaders whose popularity is based in superficiality, but leadership and management practices which have an attractive veneer but lack substance. A good example of this is the notion of “empowerment” that has been used heavily in both the public and private sectors. The concept of giving people feel-good empowering experiences with little or no actual change in their lives is a subliminal keystone in successful political, government, corporate or religious organisations.

The burying of old practices in relabelled and nicely packaged management or leadership strategies is another symptom of the postmodern condition. The Total Quality Management approach to best practice is an example of what Ciulla calls “bogus empowerment”. She claims it is “therapeutic fiction” to treat employees as customers because it does not acknowledge the power relationship which exists. (1998, p.8) It is common to talk of participatory leadership in organisations, yet it is doubtful that this extends much past listening to employees’ ideas and when appropriate implementing them.

Warren Bennis problematises leadership in the postmodern experience. He claims we have created an “unconscious conspiracy” against leadership. (1989, p.143) Individuals are now more concerned about themselves and less about the community, they do not want to be led. The postmodern era has nurtured people who are focused more on their own vision and less on the community’s.

Army Leadership Model

The Australian Army is in the process of rewriting leadership doctrine that will provide a credible model to last well into the next century. It will replace doctrine written 25 years ago in a period where
significant numbers of the regular Army had operational experience, and the concept of preparing commanders for leadership in combat was a primary focus. This is most evident in the command model for education at the Royal Military College being one of an infantry platoon commander.

The challenge for the Army is to develop new doctrine which reflects the great technological and social changes occurring, but still enables the development of leaders able to meet the requirements of the combat model. This was clearly delineated by the Chief of Army at his 1997 Chief of Army Exercise. (Smith, 1998, p. 5) The degree to which the Army has analysed and reacted to both the social and technological change should be investigated. The technological benefits to capability are very high profile and relatively easy to detect, for example; an increased night-fighting capability, computerised battlefield command and control systems, or satellite communications. However, it is different for social change which is more insidious, has little direct effect on capability, and is further compounded by the tendency of a military to be a closed organisation.

The new leadership doctrine for the Army is being written in a series of three booklets titled; Foundations of Leadership, Team Leadership, and Organisational Leadership.

It draws on current US doctrine and leadership theories such as; Bass and Avolio’s full-range model (Bass, 1990), Adair’s functional model (Adair, 1983), and a re-worked leadership model built upon Parson’s Three Pillars Model (Parson, 1973). The first booklet focuses on establishing core leadership skills for use at a base level, and the subsequent booklets on developing higher level principles for leadership.

The new doctrine will establish a broader base for the construct of leadership skills, with greater scope for individuals to develop an approach to leadership based in experience and value systems. It is particularly mindful of contemporary theory and research, but resists the temptation to align too quickly with non-military models and provides specific focus on the relationship between leadership and command.

The gradual shift to include concepts of “management” in leadership doctrine and debate still remains an anathema to some commanders in a military environment, and 26 years free from major conflict in a rapidly changing social context has contributed to its inclusion. It may be the ability to manage not lead which can be the defining feature of a commander’s tenure, and survey results on leadership performance and evaluations of leadership by all ranks indicates that how the Army currently develops and assesses leadership requires attention. (Jans, 1998, p.5)

A key point of departure from previous leadership doctrine is the move away from presenting Army leadership as a manual which provides “how to lead” instructions, to a more conceptual framework which can move across ranks, appointments and individual traits. This is a clear move away from the more prescriptive tone of 1973 doctrine that did not include material on cultural or gender issues, and gives very simple views on complex issues. The degree to which the new doctrine can achieve a broad conceptual framework across all members of the Army may be the key variable to its success.

The team developing the doctrine is demonstrably cognisant of the need to develop a leadership culture that is based on societal norms and values, yet this must be developed in an environment where the very highest values and ethics are demanded. The nature of employment in the Defence Force places the full gamut of leadership skills under the ethical microscope, it is in this regard that the Army does not assume the “high moral ground” but demands it be taken.

A fundamental issue for the Army to consider is how to develop and maintain strong leadership doctrine that reflects the values and ethics of a society that is very fragmented. There must be a conscious avoidance of being seen to take the “high moral ground” religiously, but rather to demonstrate that leaders in the Army have the ability to be discrete in their actions and represent the very best values, and ethical and moral standards found in the community.

The introduction of TQM and Continuous Improvement cultures into the military workplace has had significant effects, and the Army’s adoption of these is indicative of how we have embraced a postmodern position. The language of each quickly entered the system and has become the corporatist language Saul rejects as destructive. There will be a tendency for the jargon and discourse surrounding this new doctrine to alienate and undermine it. The Army must embed the new leadership culture in practical, credible experience and avoid the jargonised, jingoistic, and image laden tendencies of leadership in popular culture.

The doctrine team places significant emphasis on the community’s recognition of Army expertise in leadership, and the maintenance of this is important to
the credibility of the military. If doctrine is seen as outdated, or poorly delivered in either the training or operational environments, or if society is presented with negative images of Army leadership then the challenge is harder. There must also be recognition that as the Army sets itself the highest standards in basic leadership areas it will on occasions fall short of achieving these, this is very obvious when something goes wrong and individuals and procedures are bared for public examination.

The Land Commander has highlighted the impact the media will have on future operations and battlefield leadership. (Smith, p.43) The pressures leaders will face under close scrutiny on the battlefield are compounded by the ability for the media to construct a reality for popular consumption. The false realities the media can create are evidenced in the reporting of military accidents, investigations and operations. The tendency to sensationalise and omit the context to comments or images is common place in journalism. Modern military leadership will need to prepare people to have a heightened sense of awareness of their social existence in order for them to know the correct things to say and way to act.

The challenge to train and prepare battlefield leaders will become harder as Australia distances itself from “war-like” operations. An Australian combat model is not one that is portrayed in the popular press with any sense of realism, and the battlefield commanders of the future are already chronologically well removed from any conflict in their upbringing. The Land Commander noted that battlefield leaders are unique in society in that “they can not be hired laterally… but must be grown.” (Smith, 1998, p.35) The Army needs to ensure these leaders are “grown” in an environment that remains relevant to society.

**Conclusion**

The prescriptive value postmodernism has for leadership is its focus on the contemporary. The practice of leadership has to reside in a social context, and postmodernism provides a current social context to consider. The challenge for a military organisation is to appreciate the great uncertainty in the world today, and understand that people do not want right and wrong but acceptable and unacceptable interpretations of their reality. The Army’s new leadership doctrine has identified the need to provide a functional model for broad consumption that responds not only to Army requirements, but also to larger societal expectations of its armed forces.

A postmodern perspective on society will not provide answers just many questions. It characterises the significant shifts in society over the last 30-40 years, and through this questions doctrine writers for the Army on the appropriateness of their work to the postmodern individual. How can the Army instill the desire for leadership skills and principles in people growing up in a society that increasingly does not value leadership?

It would be a mistake to dismiss the contribution of postmodern thought to any dialogue on leadership in the Army. To be guided by enormous amount of writing on leadership in the business / management community may leave doctrine full of complicated leadership models and jargon which pertain to an environment alien to the Army’s core business, the defence of Australia.

An appreciation of the postmodern experience should be mandatory for any organisation redefining its key operating principles. The development of credible leadership doctrine for the Australian Army requires consideration be given to current social theory. Postmodernism presents a perspective on society that cannot be ignored if academic rigour is to be applied to the development of leadership doctrine.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


The first “King-Hall Naval Conference” will be held in Canberra 22-24 July 1999 in the Telstra Theatre at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. It has the theme “History, Strategy and the rise of Australian Naval Power” and aims to examine maritime strategic issues at the turn of the century with particular reference to events leading to the creation of an independent Australian Navy.

The conference is being jointly sponsored by the Royal Australian Navy’s Maritime Studies Program and the School of History at the University College, Australian Defence Force Academy.

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Conference speakers include a wide range of experts from Australia and overseas, and include:

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- **Professor John McCarthy** – The creation of Australian Naval Strategy.
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- **Dr Peter Overlack** – “A Vigorous Offensive”: Core aspects of Australian Maritime Defence Concerns before 1914.
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Registration

Formal registration for the conference will open in May 1999. The cost of attendance is likely to be approximately $120.

Early indications of likely attendance, or requests to be included on conference information distribution lists, should be lodged with:

- **Mr Dave Griffin**
  King-Hall Naval Conference
  Naval History Directorate
  CP3-4-41
  Department of Defence
  CANBERRA ACT 2600
  Telephone: (02) 6266 2654
  Facsimile: (02) 6266 2782
  Email: navy.history@dao.defence.gov.au
Within the sweep of modern military history, Helmuth von Moltke may be viewed as both disciple and master, implementor and innovator. Gunther Rothenberg, writing that “Moltke may be considered the most incisive and important European military writer between the Napoleonic Era and the First World War”, readily ascribes to Moltke a vital role as the thinker who links Jena and the Marne, personifying “a mode of offensive warfare that adapted to the industrial age Napoleon’s precept to seek prompt decision by battle and in battle [to] seek to destroy the enemy”. In this context, Moltke’s discipleship abides in his schooling in Napoleonic methods and Clausewitzian doctrine, and his adaptation of them to the accelerating Industrial Revolution. His reputation as a master, however, lies squarely within his identification with the rise of “practical” strategy, evidenced in the opinion of some historians that “Moltke’s theoretical understanding conformed so closely with practical knowledge that his actual war decisions could be relied upon absolutely”. In this way, Moltke’s legacy as a “thinker” is best viewed in terms of his system of analysis and application rather than as an original, philosophical contribution. Moltke himself described strategy as “a system of ad hoc expedients”, such that

...more than knowledge, it is the application of knowledge to practical life, the development of an original idea in accordance with continually changing circumstances. It is the art of action under the pressure of the most difficult conditions.

This is nowhere more clearly illustrated than in the opinion of writers such as Hajo Holborn that Moltke’s great theoretical legacy to military thought lies in his casting of “the fundamentals of all strategy – time and space – [into] a new light”, and his use of time to conquer space.

For all the significance of this theoretical aspect of Moltke’s writings however, it is perhaps appropriate that he is generally studied in terms of his most significant practical contribution to military theory – that of “deep future” war planning. The legacy of Moltke’s “almost single-hand[ed] reshap[ing] of the GGS, creating the prototypical deep–future–oriented war planning bureaucracy” lies most visibly in World War I, a war whose pre–planning was measured not in weeks or months, but in decades. The almost inevitable outcome of this new system of deep–future war planning, as Martin van Creveld has observed, was the increasing mechanisation – both technological and philosophical – of war, such that “at the outbreak of war, it was only necessary to push a button in order to set the whole gigantic machine in motion”.

An appreciation of how this legacy of war planning evolved requires us to understand the influences that shaped it, and it is an examination of these influences which forms the aim of this article. In pursuit of this aim, I have adopted a categorisation approach in the hope that discrete descriptions of four inextricably intertwined influences – technology, theory, politico–military, and the rise of “mass” – may serve to demonstrate why the Moltkean model of war planning assumed the character it did. However, it would be beneficial at this point to first offer a brief biographical sketch of Moltke so that we may gain some understanding of the individual at the centre of this system.

Born in Mecklenberg in 1800, Moltke was the son of an officer who had served in the Prussian and Danish armies. He began service as a cadet in the Danish Army, achieving the rank of Second Lieutenant in 1819. Upon transfer to the Prussian Army in that same year, he became a cavalry squadron Second Lieutenant, passing the examination for acceptance into the War School shortly thereafter. He entered the War School in 1823, graduating in 1826 into what was to become the Great General Staff (GGS) Survey Section.
29 officers, with a further 21 employed in the Corps and Division level Troop General Staffs (TGS) – it was, and remained, an elite organisation. Moltke spent time in the Topographical and War Gaming (GGS “Annual Ride”) Sections, passing final muster for the GGS in 1833. Over this period he studied and wrote extensively on topics as diverse as The Military Drawing of the Land and the campaigns of Frederick the Great. He spent four years as a military adviser to the Ottoman Sultan, and developed a keen, and financial, interest in railroads, joining the board of the Berlin–Hamburg Railroad Company in 1841. By 1850, as Chief of Staff of Eight Corps, he had begun using Railroads for manoeuvre. Upon appointment as ADC to Prince Frederick William in 1855, he came into increasing contact with the Prince’s father, the future Emperor William I. On William I’s accession to the Regency in 1857, Moltke was appointed to the post of Chief of the GGS, and in that role took the Prussian Army to war in successful campaigns against Denmark (1864), Austria (1866) and France (1870–71).15 He retired in 1888 after almost 60 years of service. With this thumbnail sketch of Moltke’s career as background, it is now possible to turn to the first major influence upon his war planning system – technology.

**Technology**

John Kenneth Galbraith has defined technology as “the systematic use of organised knowledge applied to practical skills”.16 As historians such as Archer Jones observe, the impact of the Industrial Revolution upon European armies was so fundamental that it qualitatively changed the conduct of war,17 and Moltke, writes Rothenberg in the same vein, ...was at his best in recognising that the change brought about by vastly improved firepower, transportation, and communications, together with the ability of states to raise and maintain ever larger armies, required corresponding changes in strategy, tactics, command, and organisation.18

The impact of this nineteenth century “revolution in military affairs” is perhaps best observed in the influence of four important technical innovations upon Moltke’s system of war planning: Cartography; the development of breech loading weapons; the telegraph; and the railroad.

The nineteenth century revolution in mapmaking was “almost coincident with Moltke’s sixty-year general staff career”.19 Four of the six pre–1914 Chiefs of the GGS, including Moltke, had worked as military topographers and Moltke had published and lectured widely on the subject, some of his south German surveys remaining current today. But it was in the innovative use of these newly accurate, detailed maps that Moltke and the GGS found planning benefits. More than merely representations of the land, maps became tools of analysis, comparison, war gaming, planning and spatial/time appreciation in an age of increasing force size, speed and range of action. As Arden Bucholz has noted,

*Throughout the nineteenth century, as the size of armies and the range of weapons expanded, as the geographic space in which they fought grew, and as the time required for mobilisation shrank, spatial precision was the first requirement for estimating future war requirements. Improved geographic images gave the Prussian army significant advantages.*20

In a similar way, breech loading weapons offered Moltke another important tool. Despite early problems with this weapon, and the fact that it was outranged by good muzzle loaded weapons, the advantages it offered in higher rates of fire and in allowing infantry to lie prone to shoot and reload were fundamental.21 This technical innovation allowed infantry to take on a more skirmisher–type role,22 a factor which has significant links to Moltke’s promotion of initiative and devolved command in battle.

The revolution in communications which followed the development of the telegraph in the 1860’s allowed “almost instant communication between armies and between commanders and their headquarters”23 and facilitated new mobilisation procedures. Mobilisation orders, previously delivered by hand and post, could now be received within 24 hours, a 500 *per cent* improvement from the previous norm of 120 hours.24 Given the Molotkean strategic policy of concentrating the greatest possible force upon the enemy at the earliest opportunity in order to secure a swift and decisive victory, the impact of such exponential increases in speed of notification and the capacity of a commander to direct a mass, fast moving army over a greater geographical area, was significant. Moltke’s early endorsement of the military uses of railroads has often been seen as his most influential legacy. As van Creveld has observed,

*The second half of the nineteenth century was the great age of the railways, and no part of Moltke’s system of warfare has received so much attention and praise as the revolutionary use made of this novel means of transportation for military purposes.*25

Moltke however, was certainly not the first soldier to use railroads, and Creveld believes that the attention paid to this aspect of his system is
unwarranted, citing extensive detail on how the use of railroads for resupply actually hampered Moltke’s campaigns.\textsuperscript{26} This argument is amply backed by others such as Archer Jones, who admit that even during the Franco–Prussian War (1870–71), Moltke’s armies still lived by requisition and carried enough ammunition at unit level to see them through the campaign.\textsuperscript{27} Yet as well founded as these criticisms are with respect to supply, the aspect in which Moltke’s use of railroads can be said to have been most influential is their use in initial mobilisation in support of his “march separately, fight jointly” rapid force convergence strategy. Troops could be transported by rail six times faster than the legs of Napoleon’s armies would allow,\textsuperscript{28} and improvements in the planning of railroad mobilisation garnered a further 50 per cent reduction in time taken to move one Corps – from 55 days in 1850 to 29 days in 1859, and by 1870, the whole army in 20 days. The significance of this achievement is only truly appreciated however, when one considers the context of massive increases in army size and geographical spread within which it was accomplished:

\textit{Viewed cumulatively, the changes in Prussian war mobilisation during the seven years from 1864 to 1871 were gigantic: in terms of size, an increase in the order of 1,500 per cent; in terms of space, an increase of about 1,000 per cent; in terms of time, a reduction of about 400 per cent.}\textsuperscript{29}

Viewed thus, it is little wonder that Moltke has been described as the demigod who rode rails.

\begin{boxedquote}
\textbf{Theory}

Moltke, as a child “of the epoch of Kant and Hegel”, believed that “thought should lend wings to action”.\textsuperscript{30} Training and “the theoretical study of war that had been brought to perfection” in the Prussian War School\textsuperscript{31} gave the Prussian Army unrivalled superiority in Europe. “It was intangibles more than weapons and manpower systems”, declares Archer Jones, that gave Prussia military primacy – intangibles such as a uniformly educated staff schooled in operations analysis, military history, and science.\textsuperscript{32} Yet there are two major reasons why this emphasis on theory should not be mistaken for some Jominian search for universal guiding principles, the first being the continuing influence of Clausewitz on Moltke’s military thought. One level of this influence – Clausewitz’s prescriptions regarding the politico–military relationship – will be addressed later. Another level of influence is found in Moltke’s agreement with Clausewitz that the “friction” caused by the intangibles which operate outside the scope of reason – bravery, mistakes, malfunction, chance, exhaustion and fear – will always affect the flow of battle once combat is joined. The seemingly paradoxical, and yet totally rational result of this philosophical agreement with Clausewitz is seen in Moltke’s emphasis on detailed planning and training as the way to reduce the impact of chance and other intangibles upon war. Recognising that “war cannot be totally mastered by calculation”, he was nonetheless “eager to extend the control of reason over warfare as far as possible” via his planning and analysis process.\textsuperscript{33}

The second significant influence on Moltke’s approach which served to distinguish it from Jomini’s search for laws, was the intense practical focus of the Prussian military education system. Capped by the War School, this coherent, unified system percolated down through Artillery and Engineering School, nine War Schools for Officer Candidates, seven Cadet Schools, the Military Shooting School, the Teaching Infantry Battalion, the Riding School, the Artillery Shooting School, and the School for Doctors, Veterinarians and Officials.\textsuperscript{34} Within this system, militarily applicable sciences were taught side by side with military history, both being put to endless test and analysis through a complex system of war gaming and plan validation. Military history, for example, furthered the cause of good war planning and command not by illuminating rules or universal truths, but because it provided scenario based analysis. As Holborn has noted,

\textit{Moltke denied that strategy was a science and that general principles could be established from which plans of operations could be logically derived...Each situation called for a definition in terms of its own circumstances, and for a solution in which training and knowledge were combined with vision and courage. ...Historical study was...of the greatest usefulness in acquainting a future commander with the complexity of the circumstances under which military actions could take place.}\textsuperscript{35}

Similarly, a highly refined system of war gaming incorporating planning, historical analysis, and the fluidity of chance – use of an historically and mathematically derived set of casualty tables for example – rather than ossified dictums as to principles and laws of war, was also widely used as a training and plan validation tool.\textsuperscript{36} When viewed in terms of the rise of the mass army, it seems almost inevitable that this emphasis on analytical education and expansion led to a meritocratisation of the officer cadre, such that by 1895, 50 per cent of officers were from the middle class\textsuperscript{37} – an important socio–political development and an illuminating example of the changes which the need
for technological competence and education was having upon the Moltkean mass army.

**Politico-Military Influences**

Closely allied to Moltke’s understanding of the Clausewitzian theory of battle as the realm of friction tempered by planning, his system of war planning was also influenced at a theoretical level by Clausewitz’s definition of the military’s relationship to the state. In several instructions and essays, Moltke “followed Clausewitz closely” in his assertions that the object of war was to “implement the government’s policy by force” and to “achieve a satisfactory political result”. Yet is also arguable that Moltke, on the practical level, misunderstood this prescription. For Clausewitz, this assertion meant that there could be “no question of a purely military evaluation of a great strategic issue [with which Moltke agreed], nor of a purely military scheme to solve it [with which Moltke did not agree]”. As Peter Paret has noted, the true Clausewitzian would accept that, “if the political purpose demands it, the armed forces must be content with the partial mobilisation of resources, and with limited achievements; or, on the other hand, they must be ready to sacrifice themselves”. Moltke, whilst accepting that political direction set the aim of war, firmly believed that once joined, the conduct of the battle should be left entirely in the hands of the general – a point upon which he and Bismark frequently disagreed.

On the level of “practical” politics, there were three further significant influences which helped shape Moltke’s system. The first of these is the expansion of Germany and the impact this had upon the nation’s geo–strategic outlook. Between 1740 and 1914, Prussia quadrupled its land area, transforming itself into the powerhouse of central Europe. The consequent lesson, “that arms and war were the sole source of German greatness”, was deeply imbibed by Germany’s political leadership. One ramification of this was an understanding that expansionist policy often invited foreign retribution, and that Germany was surrounded by states which it had offended. Arden Bucholz describes the German geo–strategic outlook of 1871 thus:

*To the southeast stood the Habsburgs, a world power since the fourteenth century. To the west was the Second French Republic, which harbored the traditions of Napoleonic imperialism. Both were recently defeated and therefore dangerous neighbours. Directly east were the Romanovs, whose armies in the previous century had sacked and burned Berlin. In this potentially lethal arena, fuelled by hyper–industrialisation, Social Darwinism, and a high–technology arms race, security was always a paramount concern.*

Moltke’s response to this ever alternating and evolving two front threat was fluid and practical, guided by assessments of relative strengths and the need for quick, decisive action. As Rothenberg recounts, Moltke’s successive war plans incorporated elements of rapid offensives and decisive victory against one foe, whilst holding in defence against the other, weakening its forces until the army, freed from one front by victory, could turn and fall upon it.

The second practical politico–military influence which shaped Moltkean war planning was the advent of what Arden Bucholz has called “the double lag” – the schizophrenia of a nation in which cultural nationalism and industrialisation eventuated before, in the absence of, and even in the face of opposition to, political nationalism and social modernisation. In this milieu of change, the long–standing relationship between Prussian political and military elites continued to be closely guarded and privileged. One outcome of this close identification and symbiosis was the increased power and role of the GGS and its Chief – a significant factor in the war planning system. Moltke himself was “conscious of the natural interrelationship of generalship and statesmanship”, and accepted the subordination of the military to the political. But his trade–off for this acquiescence was, as noted above, his demand that the GGS be able to conduct the purely military aspects of war “without interference from non–professional elements”. Although the raising of the CGGS to the position of King’s highest adviser on military affairs, and the emasculation of the War ministry into a logistical and administrative agency had occurred in 1821, it was the Moltkean system of war planning which truly reaped the benefits of this development.

Coincident with and dependant upon Prussian expansion was the third significant politico–military influence upon Moltke’s system – the rise of the “national” army. As the population and resource base of Germany expanded, so did the pool of manpower available under Prussian conscription laws. The “numbers” ramifications of this factor will be considered in the final section of this article, but it is important under the aegis of “political” influences to recognise the social impact this had upon Moltke’s system. Holborn has noted how “in Prussia, all groups of the population actually served”, so that “in this respect, the Prussian army was more clearly a citizens army than that of any other country.” This was reflective of a broader nationalising of war – military
activity took priority on private roads, railroads and telegraphs at mobilisation, the Post Office ran the field post, the Justice Ministry provided the Military Court system, the Spiritual Matters Ministry the chaplains, the civil bureaucracy the commissariat and pay officials, and private industry fed and munitioned the army. The non–military resources which Moltke could call upon at mobilisation thus factored increasingly into his war planning process, allowing him to further pursue his strategy of “mass”.

The Influence of “Mass”

In his first campaign as CGGS in 1864, Moltke was able to put 65,000 into the field against Denmark. Two years later, more than 280,000 were mobilised for war against Austria, and by 1870, upon declaration of war with France, Moltke directed a war–mobulised army of 800,000. In many ways the role of “mass” in late nineteenth century armies is as both stimulus and result – technology, politics, and education all combined to make it possible to field a mass army, and yet it was the desire to field such an army in pursuit of the decisive blow which forced or allowed the enlistment of these factors into military service. For the Moltkean war planning however, the influence of mass is readily identifiable in three central aspects of the system – the strategy of the “armed horde”, the role of the GGS, and the devolution of command.

For Moltke and his successors, the “armed horde” offered several strategic benefits. First, and in line with his assessment of Germany’s need to avoid a two–front war, it could be combined with technology allowing rapid mobilisation and a dispersed approach to the battlefield, to force a swift, decisive battle upon one enemy. Archer Jones, discussing the defeat of Marshal MacMahon during the Franco–Prussian War, noted how “greater Prussian numbers inflicted a very high level of casualties on their weaker opponent, in spite of the benefits that the defensive offered the French”. Second, numerically superior armies could be spread more widely in an attempt at envelopment – the “strategic turning movement”. Finally, Moltke believed that mass offered a form of insurance against offensive action by the enemy such that mass offered a form of insurance against operation plans which resulted. This centralisation of planning was also achieved through the uniform training offered by the Prussian military education system with the staff officer cadre being selected from the top echelon of each War School graduating class. The result was a group of officers who,...had received uniform training, so that all had the same doctrine and vocabulary. Serving on the staffs of army and corps commanders, these officers understood one another and gave their commanders consistent recommendations... Coordination and management improved because of harmony and communications between the staffs at different command levels.

A final influence which the rise of the mass army and the GGS had on Moltke’s system can be seen in the doctrine of “mission tactics”, a “command method stressing decentralised initiative within an overall strategic design”. The conformity of operational doctrine and comprehension of his overall intentions which the new GGS represented, meant that Moltke could allow Corps commanders to take the initiative and manage the detail on their individual fronts, their staff ensuring conformity and coherence with the central plan. Thus Moltke viewed the role of the GGS in war as direction rather that control, and this doctrine is in total conformity with Moltke’s vision of mass warfare for two significant reasons. First, the exponential increase in army size and geographical scale of operations, even with developments in communications, made it unrealistic and even counter–productive to attempt rigid control of its operations. “The commander–in–chief could no longer do everything himself”, observed Arden Bucholz, because “too many decisions were required at separate locations”. During the Franco–Prussian War, for example, Moltke took with him a central staff of only 15 officers, stating categorically that this was “sufficient” for an army of 800,000 on campaign. The second reason this doctrine enhanced Moltke’s system is found in its conformity with his acceptance of the role of “friction” and the intangibles in war – Moltke accepted that “not even the best plan of operations could anticipate the vicissitudes of war and individual tactical decisions that must be made on the spot”. Thus for Moltke’s system of war, “mission tactics” and the devolution of control became not only a practical necessity, but a theoretical imperative.
To paraphrase Peter Paret on Clausewitz, Moltke “regarded prescription as secondary to analysis”. In this respect, Moltke is probably best understood as an analyser and system-builder, rather than as a theorist in the Clausewitzian or Jominian mould. This practicality, as this article has attempted to display, is reflected in the way in which the Moltkean system of war planning was shaped by the technological, theoretical, political, and “mass” warfare influences of his day. In some ways the central elements of this system were actually antithetical to the influences which made them possible – emphasis on, for example, individual initiative (skirmishing infantry), devolved command (mission tactics), and a military meritocracy, were generally at odds with the way in which Prussia was ruled during the Second Reich. Similarly, Moltke’s aim of using technology and mass to win swift, decisive victories ultimately degenerated into the long, stagnant, unrivalled scale of killing that characterised World War I – a likelihood he himself recognised in his late life prediction that the next major war would “last for seven, or even 30 years” due to the resources at the disposal of modern states. Yet other aspects of his system have since become outdated, and the disposal of modern states.63 Yet other aspects of his system were actually antithetical to the influences of his day. In some ways the central elements of this system were actually antithetical to the influences which made them possible – emphasis on, for example, individual initiative (skirmishing infantry), devolved command (mission tactics), and a military meritocracy, were generally at odds with the way in which Prussia was ruled during the Second Reich. Similarly, Moltke’s aim of using technology and mass to win swift, decisive victories ultimately degenerated into the long, stagnant, unrivalled scale of killing that characterised World War I – a likelihood he himself recognised in his late life prediction that the next major war would “last for seven, or even 30 years” due to the resources at the disposal of modern states.63 Yet other aspects of his system have since become outdated, and the disposal of modern states.

NOTES

7. ibid, pp. 287, 294–5.
9. ibid, p. 16.
10. ibid, p. 2.
11. van Creveld, op. cit., p. 89.
18. Rothenberg, op. cit., p. 299. The American Civil war, and then Moltke’s own campaigns, lend some weight to these assertions both on a general level and in their application to Moltke specifically.
20. ibid, p. 28.
22. ibid, p. 401.
23. ibid, pp. 395–6.
25. van Creveld, op. cit., p. 82.
26. ibid, pp. 80–103.
27. Jones, op. cit., p. 408.
31. ibid, p. 281.
34. Holborn, op. cit., pp. 288–9; See also Bucholz, op. cit., p. 77.
36. ibid, p. 73.
37. Holborn, op. cit., pp. 288–9; See also Bucholz, op. cit., p. 77.
40. Evidenced, for example, in the conflict between them over the shelling of Paris during the Franco–Prussian War. This enmity extended as far back as the Austrian Campaign in 1866 when Bismark advised the Emperor William I to deny Moltke’s wish to pursue and destroy the defeated Austrian Army – Robert Massie, *Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War*, London: Jonathon Cape, 1992, p. 59.
43. Bucholz, op. cit., p. 10.
45. Bucholz, op. cit., p. 11.
47. ibid, p. 284, 305; Bucholz, op. cit., p. 4.
48. At age 20 for 3 years in the Army, 4 years in the Reserve, and 5 years in the Landwehr – Bucholz, op. cit., p. 48.
50. Bucholz, op. cit., p. 50.
51. ibid, pp. 43–7. Creveld, however, puts the strength of the Prussian Army against Denmark at only 43,000 – Creveld, op. cit., p. 79.
52. Jones, op. cit., p. 400.
53. ibid, p. 409.
54. ibid, p. 400.
57. Rothenberg, op. cit., p. 301.
58. ibid, p. 301.
60. ibid, p. 52.
63. Tuchman, op. cit., p. 38.
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Reviewed by Wing Commander John Steinbach

This is a collection of 17 essays on various facets of the application of maritime power in a mainly Australian setting since Federation, assembled by the editor, a well-known and respected writer on naval and strategic issues. What exactly maritime power entails is well illustrated in the Introduction: the point being that it is much broader than the war fighting that navies engage in, encompassing all activities concerning the furtherance of the national interest in the maritime environment. David Stevens delineates maritime operations as military (power projection and sea control), law and order at sea (enforcement of good order and likewise its maintenance) and politico-military, and each essay deals with one or more of these. The taxonomy goes one level deeper, e.g. for politico-military, as a tool of diplomacy, service-assisted evacuations, assistance to refugees, and civil aid projects. I mention these because of their increasing relevance. There are many more providing an exposition of what military forces do at sea not only at war but more significantly, in peace. The collection in fact deals mainly with events and thinking outside of the two World Wars. An understanding of this variety is useful when considering the question “For What Tasks Do We Need Military Forces?”

In the first essay, one of Britain’s foremost defence scholars, Professor Geoffrey Till, reviews the major maritime theorists whose ideas have had greatest impact: Mahan, Corbett, Mackinder and of course Gorshkov. This provides a foundation for much of what follows. Subsequent chapters are arranged in historical sequence. Hence we have an essay about Australia’s response to the growing presence of the German Navy in the Indian and Pacific Oceans up to 1914; then one on the naval debate between the Wars, centring on the declining role of the Royal Navy in the Pacific, the ascendancy of those of the United States and Japan after the Washington Conference, the Singapore “strategy” and Australian thinking on these matters. Other chapters deal with Australia’s involvement in naval intelligence and Imperial trade control, Australia’s intervention in New Caledonia in 1940, German raiders in the Pacific, “small wars”, the Cold War, peacekeeping, coastal patrols, Gulf War I (authored by Rear Admiral Ken Doolan, Operational Commander for Operation Damask), and most intriguingly, one covering the decline of the Admiralty’s influence on the RAN as the political realities of ANZUS membership became manifest, especially in respect of equipment sourcing. Two chapters have been written by “outsiders”: Mike Evans of the Directorate of Land Warfare who here advocates the development of the concept of operational manoeuvre from the sea which would see the employment of ground forces in amphibious operations in the region, while RAAF Historian Al Stephens reminds us of the decisiveness of maritime air interdiction. The final two chapters deal with maritime power in the ADF. Rear Admiral David Campbell writes of contemporary problems while Captain Jack McCaffrie does some crystal-ballling on the future shape of the RAN.

By way of a bonus, David Stevens has compiled in an appendix a list of notable Australian maritime operations. The first mention is that of the transportation of 500 sailors from NSW and Victorian naval brigades off to China in 1900-1901 as part of an international force dealing with the Boxer uprising. The last, Operation Belis, coincidently was also in support of a multinational force. This list therefore reinforces one of the major themes of the book, of maritime power representing a great deal more than the traditional concept of sea power.

This is certainly a book for the military historian and for anyone interested in current issues of Australian defence policy and strategy. However, I would add that it also serves as a comprehensive introduction to maritime operations not only for the general reader but especially for members of the ADF, APS and academics who for professional development reasons need to broaden their understanding of Australia’s maritime strategy.

KNOWING YOUR FRIENDS
Intelligence Inside Alliances from 1914 to the Cold War.

Reviewed by Wing Commander Carl Oatley

On receiving this book I was concerned that it may be one of a plethora of intelligence related books
that are now emerging as various embargoes are lifted. Perhaps I am becoming jaded by the trendiness of intelligence matters. But, on reflection, the book gives some very interesting historical insights into the alliances and coalitions of this century. How these relationships were managed clearly had a marked influence on the cause or prevention of conflict this century and the intelligence, or lack thereof, underpinning of these relationships is clearly a neglected area of study. It is also an extra difficult subject as the intelligence on alliance relationships is often the most secret or sensitive.

The book’s title is based on the assumption that the players involved were all friends at one time. Pointedly, the friends covered in this book make for some uneasy bedfellows: the French and the Americans, the Italians and the Germans, and the Russians and the Germans to name a few. After reading the ten essays in this book it is perhaps with some relief that Australia remains part of such a stable and enduring intelligence association with our “old Commonwealth” allies the US, UK, Canada and New Zealand. This association is in stark contrast to those depicted in the book as it has survived major and minor wars, peace and revolutions in trade and information. But, as Alexander says, I should not “genuflect before the altar of the UK-USA-Commonwealth multiple ‘special relationships’”!

Many of the alliances dealt with by the contributors were fleeting and expedient. In the first half of the century they were also deeply reliant on personalities and perceptions rather than commonalities. Keiger looks at how, in particular, the post-World War I Franco-British relationship revolved around personalities such as Lloyd George and Poincare and traditional Franco-British perceptions of mutual disdain. Sullivan’s article on the Italo-German relationship in the prelude to the Second World War describes how the relationship was manipulated by the views of major players such as Goring, Ciano and various special envoys. Even Mussolini, who had an obsession with facts and statistics, let the reporting of observers and go-betweens influence his policy on the Germans. These were not relationships that were gradually nurtured by any systematic information-gathering that drove policy decisions. The broad intelligence bureaucracies so familiar to us were in their infancy and allied relationships would often turn on the personal impressions of an emissary or attache.

In contrast, the contributions covering the latter half of the century hint at what is to come. The bureaucratic intelligence regimes gained a momentum of their own and did contribute to the policy and the maintenance of the security of the state. In the case of the Soviets, Popplewell states that it was clear that: “There can be no doubt that an imperial intelligence system centred on KGB Centre at Moscow made a significant contribution to the stability of the Soviet Bloc.”

The contrast in the style of alliances before and after the Second World War is one of the striking features of this compilation. Alexander’s introductory words on the issue of “spying on friends” is also worthy of study as it outlines the conceptual and methodological problems surrounding the topic. The information revolution is blurring the traditional conceptual models of intelligence gathering but Alexander and his contributors have unearthed some interesting and recent historical examples that are already part of a different era.


Apart from Lieutenant General Bernard Freyberg VC, who commanded the 2nd NZEF throughout WWII, Howard Kippenberger was perhaps the best known New Zealand soldier of WWII.

Lieutenant Colonel Glyn Harper, Director of the New Zealand Army Military Studies Institute at Waiouru, has written a splendid account of the life and work of Brigadier, later Major-General Kippenberger – “KIP”, as he was always known to the troops.

A school cadet in his youth, Kip volunteered for active service in 1915, when he was still under-age for compulsory registration.

Howard Kippenberger’s first taste of action was during the battle of the Somme in September 1916. The 1st New Zealand Division suffered grievously in these battles. Kip records in his diary that he felt a deep sense of personal loss, stating that at roll call on the morning of 5 October 1916 “Of 13 Company, 1st Canterbury Regiment 1st NZEF (mine) 38 left out of 230, of 16 Platoon (mine) 5 out of 47”. The Canterbury Regiment had suffered a casualty rate of more than 80 per cent.

Following WWI, Kippenberger qualified as a solicitor in Christchurch, took an active part in the local government and was a cricketer of some ability. He made an intense study of military history and tactics during the interwar period, as well as being active in the Territorial Army. The neglect of New Zealand’s armed forces and defences in the 1920s and
1930s was a national scandal (very similar to the position in New Zealand today) but in spite of all the discouragement Kip and other dedicated people soldiered on, fitting themselves for senior command from 1939 onwards.

On 5 January 1940 Kippenberger sailed for the War with the first Echelon of the 2nd NZEF in the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and as Commanding Officer of 20 Battalion, the Initial Infantry Battalion raised in New Zealand’s South Island.

Throughout the war, Kippenberger held senior fighting appointments in the 2nd NZEF and saw action on all fronts, including El Alamein, Greece and Crete, throughout North Africa and into the Italian Campaign until March 1944, when he lost both feet in a land mine explosion at Monte Cassino in Italy. (Note – When the AIF was brought home to defend Australia and fight so valiantly in PNG, the New Zealand Division remained in North Africa, saw out those campaigns and went on to distinguish itself in the Italian Campaign right up until V.E. Day).

After the War and in spite of his horrendous injuries, Howard Kippenberger remained active.

He championed the cause of the Maori people when they appeared likely to be excluded from the All Black Rugby Union football tour of South Africa and headed the War Histories Branch where histories were produced that were second to none in the world.

Howard Kippenberger died in 1957. His own book, Infantry Brigadier, remains a classic but Colonel Harper has made a fine job of writing about a great New Zealand military commander.

WE WERE THE FIRST, by Alexander “Sandy” McNab, of 242pp, many photos and maps, published by AMHP 13 Veronica Place LOFTUS NSW 2232. $45 including postage from publisher.

Reviewed by Flight Lieutenant (Retd) H.S. Brennan RFD JP

This book is a very complete Unit history of the formation and service, of No 1 Independent Company AIF, the original “Commando Style” Unit which was formed at Wilsons Promontory, Victoria, in May 1941, serving in the area of the Solomon Islands, Bougainville, Tulagi and Kavieng all to the North of New Guinea.

The author, “Sandy” McNab was a private with No. 1 I.C. and has put together an extremely accurate history of his Unit’s service from training to disbandment at the end of April 1943. One thing that amazes me is that members of the Unit must have kept diaries of their training and war service, something which we as members of 1st Armoured Division AIF were not allowed to do, nor to take photos of Service life when in the field; however, the amount of photos and information given in this book makes for very interesting reading and McNab’s narrative not only covers Service life but also gives accounts of cooperation between members of I I.C. and civilian staff including Coast Watchers, plantation managers, religious ministers and friendly natives although those from Bougainville were generally not as cooperative as New Guinea natives.

When one remembers that an independent company consisted at that time of under 300 men, the area covered by 1 I.C. extended from Villa in the New Hebrides south east of New Guinea to Admilitary Island north of New Guinea (according to map given in book) meant that patrols by soldiers consisted of from three to six men generally. Also remembering that radio and other means of communication at that time were very basic, all credit must be given for the job done by those involved.

One point worth mentioning at this stage was the effect malaria had on our troops serving in the tropical zone. The only remedy at that time was quinine which was in short supply, so many of the troops suffered as a result. It was not until 1943–44 that Aterbrin tablets were on general issue to all servicemen going north and had to be taken as an oral type of vaccine against malaria, the fringe benefit being that if you were fair skinned your skin turned yellow.

“Sandy” McNab has put together a very interesting narrative which is set out in stages consisting of five initial stages, 14 chapters the last three of which refer to POWs, the sinking of the Japanese liner Montevideo Maru containing among other POWs the entire “C” Company N.C.Os and O.Rs who were on their way to Japan when sunk by a United States submarine off the coast of Luzon. The officers and others were taken to Japan and most survived the war. There is also an Epilogue and Awards, eight Appendices and four sections covering bibliography, rolls and Index.

For those interested in commando-style warfare this book is the best I have read and I wholeheartedly endorse the structure of the story and the information given by the author.


Reviewed by A. Zoiti-Licastro

“Day by day the worn and white-faced ghosts of men...wiped the shattered flesh of comrades from
their faces. The finest soldiers of two great nations came together in that charnel house; were slaughtered in thousands; riddled by bullets; rent; mangled, twisted and tortured by shells; suffered thirst, hunger, the heat of striving in battle at noon, the horror of dreadful nights. The frigid misery and the weariness of soul at daybreak; the torments of hell under fire; wounds; the loss of brothers and comrades; the frightful sounds and sights of death and agony; the nausea, the unutterable suffering of mind and soul and body that comes from the frequent tension of waiting to attack, and from nervous strain, long and unrelieved; the noise, the wailing, the silences – till life was hell.” (p64)

Patsy Adam-Smith who wrote The Anzacs called this book “The Australian equivalent of All Quiet On The Western Front”. Downing’s diary of life at the Front, just 189 pages long, is graphic, relentlessly brutal and a misery to read. This First World War was a non-stop barrage of violence and carnage. He begins with numbers: 56 men left from 1000 after five minutes, many corpses hung inert, two Germans help one wounded Australian and are killed by mistake, thousands of old telephone wires in the trenches tripping men, coils of barbed wire tearing flesh, men falling twice every five yards, hundreds of square miles of mud, many mules shot. The reader is bombarded with as many words as the soldiers were subject to attack. There is no let-up, but at first only the numbers register. The next strong impression is of mud. An entire chapter is devoted to mud.

The border between France and Belgium near the North Sea, where the Australians fought, might as well have been called the Western Mud Front. Soldiers routinely walked through mud up to their thighs, or worse their waist, the dugouts would fill with water and turn to slush, barbed wire would be hidden by the mud and tear into men. “In that dark winter the armies thought mud, ate mud…how we envied the airmen!” (p21). Men bringing rations would lose their way and be “hopelessly bogged” (p22). Mules would be used to rescue men from the bogs and then the mules themselves would have to be rescued, or shot. Germany was not the only enemy, there was also the mud and trench feet.

Trench foot meant the ball of the foot would swell then turn black as the chill spread eventually resulting in the loss of the foot. Men that could not walk had to crawl. “We were often bogged and helpless” (p20). When they were pulled out of the mud, their boots had to be cut off their foot. There is no slow beginning to this book and no getting away from the conditions the men were fighting under. The severe winter at least prevented the corpses from rotting thus providing the soldiers with shellhole water to drink.

Downing throws you into the death and fighting as it happens. He is being shot at from three sides, his wounded mate is on the ground not letting anyone touch him, screaming until he dies. Downing thinks they have been forgotten by God and Australia. There is a brief respite from fighting and Downing watches from the frontline as men climb over the top and move freely over the whole landscape and then there is fighting again; Australians fighting with empty rifles and bayonets as the enemy, wise to their situation, “poured torrents of lead into the trenches” (p61) where the wounded survivors had refuged. Once captured, some of these men were deliberately placed in trenches and bombed, the rest were taken prisoner.

“Bullecourt”, says Downing, “represents for Australians a greater sum of sorrow and of honour than any other place in the world” (p63). Downing describes the death, the injuries, the hysteria and the savage fight for life that took place over those five weeks. At one stage the Germans are laying dead at the edge of the Australian trench. Bodies are rotting in shellholes, all over the ground in their thousands. In some trenches bomb fights went on incessantly for hours every day. With no time to bury the dead, men fought and fell beside the shattered bodies and limbs of their mates which were buried in the earth and flung up again.

Downing describes the young eyes of the men in the brigades that went into the line, in battalions of six hundred, and of how they came out half-mad not a week later. Counter-battery fire was first used at Bullecourt and the Australian artillery suffered for it. In the silence between the shelling, Downing hears men dying in agony; screaming, wailing, groaning, offering last minute instructions and babbling in delirium with or without eyeballs, scalps and arms as he fires his rifle until the iron has burnt his hands. Bombed and fired on from three sides, men were buried alive and he heard their voices calling to be dug out, when they were he says they were invariably dead.

In between the general butchering of war, he takes time out to describe an episode where 15 wounded men who could go no further were left in two trenches. When the N.C.O. came back for them he found them naked and in indistinguishable pieces. No wonder that when there was time to think, Downing says, “all were hysterical in varying degrees” (p84). Buried alive or blown to fragments, food for the rats, light-headed for want of sleep, a tale of four men who
charged forty and beat them; even the reader has to put the book down and take a breather.

By page 148 when a Hollywood scene happens before Hollywood was even there, the reader is ready for a break. With men dying fast, Downing is told not to go over, he looks behind him and “there was the 1st Division, in artillery formation, dotted over the ridge a mile behind. The waves in their regular patterns stretched backwards for thousands of yards, and sideways for miles. No one who has not seen a full division advancing “in depth” down the slopes of the hills can know the majesty of the sight. On they came. They passed over us. It was twenty minutes before the last went through”.

Downing reminds us as the book ends, with the surrender of the Germans, that most of the battles were fought by hungry, sleepless, wounded men under severe mental strain.

A GALLANT LIFE: THE STORY OF AN OLD SOLDIER, by Brian Lloyd
Histec Publications, Melbourne, 1998, 269pp
Reviewed by Flying Officer John Ward, RAAF

Brian Lloyd, in honouring the memory of his father Ben, has produced a fascinating account of life in rural Victoria in the early to mid 1900s. He has also given us an insight into how the miners and farmers from these rural areas became part of the ANZAC legend at Gallipoli and later, the trenches of northern France.

The book is written in the first person from the perspective of Ben Lloyd and in places where the author has used literary licence he has gone to great lengths to ensure the story’s historic accuracy.

Ben Lloyd was born in the north of Victoria in Myrtleford; a once thriving gold mining area that is now the gateway to the snowfields of Mt. Hotham and Falls Creek. His life prior to World War I revolved around the gold mining industry, which is described in great detail by the author.

Ben enlisted in the AIF at the outbreak of war in 1914, and was given the rank of Sergeant in the artillery by virtue of the engineering skills he acquired in the mines of the Ovens Valley. He trained in Melbourne and Egypt and landed at Anzac Cove on the morning of 23 April 1915. The description that follows is both tragic and heroic. The author intricately explores the logistical nightmare that faced the Anzacs in placing their artillery on the beaches at Gallipoli and the day to day routine of maintaining heavy guns in such extreme conditions.

Ben was part of the Anzac withdrawal from Gallipoli in December 1915 and by June 1916 he was in France as part of the Allied Forces’ 4th Division. In reading the descriptions of the Western Front one wonders how anyone survived the horrors of it all. Ben did indeed survive the war and finished his service in 1918 as a WO1 with a DCM and bar.

The book continues with Ben’s assimilation back into civilian life and into the mining profession.

For readers of military history the book contains detailed appendices on the workings of the 18 pounder field gun and the names and service details of all soldiers who served from the Ovens Valley area. There are also over 50 black and white photographs that add an extra dimension to this well written biography that covers some of the great defining moments in Australian history.