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All contributions and correspondence should be addressed to:
The Managing Editor
Australian Defence Force Journal
R8-LG-002
Russell Offices
CANBERRA ACT 2600
(02) 6265 2682 or 6265 2999
Fax (02) 6265 6972

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© Commonwealth of Australia 1999
ISSN 1320-2545
Published by the Department of Defence
Canberra 1999
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The advantages of advertising in the Australian Defence Force Journal are far reaching.
Back to the Future

Dear Editor,

The article “Back to the Future” Australian Defence Force Journal No.138 Sept/Oct 1999 suggests the best idea I have heard to address the problem of surveillance of our northern coastline.

A cost-effective platform such as an airship capable of sustained patrols over a large area with its surveillance range enhanced by UAV’s complementing existing ADF and Coastwatch measures is exactly what is needed to combat the increasing assault on our shores by foreign and domestic criminal activity.

I hope somebody in the right place gets hold of the idea and seriously explores the possibilities.

J.D. Garland
CPL Reporter, Army Newspaper

Military Writers

Dear Editor,

I share Hugh Wellesley’s remarks (Letters to the Editor, ADFJ No.138), about the writing standards of some military authors. In the early 1990s when I had a responsibility for teaching Service Writing, I put selected Defence policy documents through the Flesch Readability checker in Microsoft Word. What was intended for all ranks, often scored below 35. (For those unfamiliar with Felsch, The Reader’s Digest scores 65, Time Magazine around 52, and the Harvard Law Review, 32.) One letter dealing with a change to the Group Rental Scheme, addressed to all commanders with the usual request for (the widest possible circulation), produced an incredible 26. This was not written by some academic jurist for a learned circulation but by senior staff officers who were not even degreed. Good military writing is a matter of professional importance and deserves a personal and corporate commitment no less than any other military undertaking. The United States Armed Forces dealt with poor written communication at the highest level. For example, in the US Army, the office of its Chief of Staff managed the programme to teach soldiers to write while the department responsible for leadership education at the Fort Leavenworth Command and Staff College also taught communications, that being no accident or convenience. We should remember two points: writing and organised warfare share a common origin; and as art and science, warfare owes as much to writing as do other cultural endeavours. Conversely, some of the most profound works of Western civilisation describe armed conflict or impart military understanding, and were written by soldiers.

John Steinbach
Wing Commander

Dear Editor,

I should also like to take this opportunity of congratulating you on producing a journal which provides source material on the theoretical as well as the operational aspects of combat which is invaluable and also quite incomparable, at least in these parts. Different readers will of course have different interests; but I was most impressed by two articles in your July/August 1999 issue in particular: “Deep Strike Capability” by Wing Commander Premchand Kainikara, and “Deterring Terrorism” by Senior Constable Joe Ilardi. The first has special relevance now that we are faced with a genuine prospect of needing deep strike capability as an essential of national defence; and the second brought out the fundamentals of the terrorism/freedom fighter issue.

Glen St.J. Barclay

Seasons Greetings from the Board of Management and Staff of the Australian Defence Force Journal
The Australian Service Nurses National Memorial

Photographer: C. Proudfoot
Army’s Fundamentals of Land Warfare: A Doctrine for “New Times”? 

By Dr Graeme Cheeseman, Australian Defence Force Academy

Issued in March 1999 the Australian Army's manual of Land War Doctrine 1 The Fundamentals of Land Warfare (LWD 1) sets out how the Army and its leaders think about, and plan to prepare for, conflict and war in the new millennium. In his preface to the document, the Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Frank Hickling, states that LWD1 is merely “a step in the Army's intellectual journey into the information age and should be treated very much as a ‘work in progress’: a dynamic document aimed at encouraging vigorous analysis and debate”. This article takes up the Chief of Army's challenge by examining whether LWD1 meets its doctrinal role and whether the story that is told represents a reasonable or even relevant appraisal of war and peace in the twenty-first century. It ends with some general thoughts about where Army (and the ADF) might profitably head in the future.

Doctrine or Dogma?

According to LWD1, doctrine serves two basic purposes. It provides, first, a conceptual framework for helping understand the nature of armed conflict and the potential use of military force(s) in national and international affairs. Second, doctrine enunciates a set of principles for guiding military planners and decision makers in developing the strategies, policies, force capabilities and actions needed to achieve or support specific tasks or objectives. Thus doctrine has both an educative and an informative role. It encourages practitioners to think about their professional discipline and its underlying historical, experiential and theoretical assumptions, and it assists them to apply these insights to specific circumstances or operational settings.1

While LWD1 claims to meet the educative and informative roles it sets for doctrine, in practice it achieves neither of these goals fully or satisfactorily. This is in part because it insists on restricting its considerations of Army's future operational milieu to war and its future role to fighting or preparing to fight wars. As such, LWD1 provides a highly selective and, as described shortly, inadequate conceptual framework for considering the roles of land forces and the land component of military power in the twenty-first century. Its focus on war also means it provides inadequate guidance for those Army planners and commanders who will be required to deal with non-conflictual situations or contribute to so-called “operations other than war”.

As a “keystone” document and one that is meant to provide an intellectual bridge between theory and experience on the one hand and practice on the other, we might also expect LWD1 either to contain, or provide references to, “state-of-the-art” or “state-of-the-discipline” summaries or overviews, as well as discussions of, or pointers to, the key issues and questions concerning contemporary historians, policy makers and theorists. Yet there is little in the document to indicate that its drafters have studied or are aware of these issues. More importantly, there is nothing to help those military planners who wish to read into or research a particular issue or topic in order to better understand or inform their policy or strategic advice.

Given the emphasis placed on combined and joint force operations, we might also expect LWD1 to at least mention Australia's existing air power and maritime doctrines and associated “keystone” texts. Yet, again, this is not done. Is this because they are not seen as relevant or are not needed to formulate or comment on how the land battle should proceed or be planned for? Indeed, is Army’s “hierarchy of doctrine” seen to be the last word on the subject of land warfare and all that is necessary for planning appropriate force structures or designing interesting and informative curricula for military education and training? Read from this perspective, LWD1 seems closer to dogma (or discourse) than doctrine. It prescribes how the Army and its officers are to view the world around us, declares that the doctrinal agenda should be limited to the issues of war-fighting and war-winning, and uses the authority of the Chief of Army to justify its contents and arguments.2 While better than some other military documents, LWD1 also relies more than it needs on jargon and cliches which serves merely to reinforces its sense of dogmatic insistence.
LWD1 places heavy emphasis on war, war-fighting and war-winning. According to the document, the Army “exists to fight and win battles”. It needs to be “structured for war and adapted for peace”. Winning the battle at the tactical level is the land forces’ “primary role”. In peacetime, the Army “trains to win” in times of war. Its doctrine is informed by “principles of war”. In order to win it needs to be able to “fight smart”. And so on. The wars and armed conflicts it has in mind, moreover, are of a particular kind. They involve “nations” or “nation-states” and their respective armed forces. They are fought against readily identifiable “enemies” and “adversaries” which threaten our own or our friend’s national “objectives”, “interests” or “identities”. They are “violent, dangerous and unpredictable”, involve a fundamental “clash of wills” between opponents, and are all about “prevailing” or “winning”. These notions reflect traditional, realist thinking. We may be moving from the industrial to a post-industrial or information age but warfare and armed conflict continue to be viewed from essentially Hobbsian and Clausewitzian perspectives, perspectives which are located firmly in the (early) modern or industrial era.

The emphasis given to war and traditional means of war-fighting can be criticised on a number of other grounds. First, it doesn’t reflect Australia’s contemporary experience. Army’s doctrine continues to be underpinned by principles of war even though Australia’s military forces have not been involved in a major war or armed conflict since 1975. During this time the ADF has been heavily engaged in a range of what are now being called “operations other than war”: peacekeeping, peace building and peace enforcement, disaster and humanitarian relief operations, counter-terrorism, and so on. By the Defence Department’s own admission, the ADF is more likely to be called on to conduct or participate in these kinds of operations in the future, either unilaterally or as part of UN or other multinational forces, than fight a traditional war.

Second, the emphasis given to war-fighting involves a very narrow, and selective, reading of what should constitute Army’s doctrinal domain. According to LWD1, military doctrine is defined as the “fundamental principles by which military forces...guide their actions in support of national objectives”, or more simply as “the preferred method for employment of land forces”. This definition makes no mention of war. It is a secular representation of the role of doctrine which can cover both peace and wartime conditions. Yet Army has chosen to focus its analysis on war and makes only passing references to peace. The document does talk about, in a chapter on “Conflict and War”, a future “spectrum of conflicts” (and associated military operations) which range from “emergency relief”, “peacekeeping” and “defence aid to the civil community” at the more peaceful end of the spectrum to tactical and strategic nuclear war at the “total war” end. It also classifies the land force operations contained within this spectrum into distinctive “warfighting” and “military support” operations where each category is said to have a different purpose or “focus of effort”:

In warfighting, the focus is defeating an adversary by the use or threat of force. In military support operations, the focus is overcoming a problematic environment, be it physical, social or political; the use of force may be required, but it is secondary to the objectives of the operation.

But this categorisation of possible future military roles is not followed through. Any distinctions between the two kinds of operations are summarily dismissed on the grounds that “from its warfighting capabilities the Army generally has been able to meet the requirements for military support operations”. There is no need, then, for the document to speculate on whether and how military support operations may differ doctrinally from warfighting ones, and LWD1 proceeds accordingly. Nor has the document attempted to discuss which of the identified conflicts or conflict types may be more prevalent in the future or to identify those factors that might inform such a judgement.

Yet, as described below, there is a growing body of academic and broader opinion, and some supporting evidence, that suggests, first, that the prospect of wars of the kind envisaged by LWD1 may be declining as we move from the industrial to the post-industrial age. Second, the kinds of military conflicts in which the ADF is likely to be involved may be different in significant respects to those that inform LWD1’s primary considerations. Third, the principles, approaches and values associated with warfighting and war-winning may not be relevant to, and may even serve to compound, the complex emergencies and other conflicts that increasingly characterise the post-industrial and post-Cold War world.
The Changing Scope and Nature of War

There is a growing consensus among national elites of at least developed states that war may be no longer a rational or effective means of pursuing political goals. The decline in the prospects of interstate war is said to be heightened by certain developments which distinguish the present era from earlier ones. These include the appearance of weapons of mass destruction, the end of the Cold War, increasing economic interdependence, the “triumph” of liberal capitalism, and the continuing spread of a modern, democratised and globalised culture. These developments hold out the prospect of slowly expanding “zones of peace” (or democratic economic communities) within which there would be no expectation of major war and no need for either state-based sovereignty defence forces or the maintenance of internal military balances of power. Military forces will still be required for a degree of internal reassurance, to protect those in the “zones of peace” against threats emerging from the surrounding “zones of turmoil”, and, occasionally, to intervene in these latter areas to safeguard peoples and resources, or to help protect or resurrect failed or failing states (this issue is discussed in more detail below).

The decline in the prospect of war between industrialised nations does not mean that armed conflict will disappear. Future crises and armed conflicts will certainly continue around the globe. But these conflicts, or “uncivil wars” as Donald Snow has called them, will differ from their predecessors in a number of important ways. They will occur in relatively remote regions on the periphery of the developed world. They will take place largely within society rather than between bordered states and will usually have little relevance much beyond the immediate vicinity of the site of the violence – unless they are taken up by the international media. They will often arise in the wake of the disintegration of existing states or the destruction or marginalisation of local economies. They will be more about the politics of identity than traditional concerns with realpolitik and so will make little sense from either traditional Clausewitzian or Cold War (counter) revolutionary perspectives. And they will be marked by a decline in earlier patron-client state relations and the emergence of a range of new external connections and actors including various diaspora communities, transnational commercial networks (both legally and illegally-based), foreign mercenaries, and NGOs.

These kinds of developments are raising questions about existing military structures and mindsets. Donald Snow suggests, for example, that the high-technology weapons and forces flowing from the “revolution in military affairs” may not be particularly relevant or appropriate for most of the conflicts likely to be faced by the United States and its allies in the future. Carl Builder of the RAND Corporation similarly argues that, in light of the systemic changes taking place in the world, the size of active forces required for war-fighting roles will almost certainly decrease, whereas missions and associated forces “involving the rapid projection of infrastructure (transport, communications, surveillance, rescue, medical, humanitarian assistance, civil emergency, and security) are likely to increase disproportionately”. Alvin and Heidi Toffler see an increasing need for special forces or special operations units to deal with these kinds of low-intensity conflicts as well as conduct such missions as “feeding villagers after a disaster”, clandestine raids for intelligence gathering, sabotage, hostage rescue, assassination and “anti-terrorist or anti-narco operations”. Army’s “keystone” planning document ignores these developments and their potential implications.

The answer to the perennial question security from who or what? is also being expanded beyond other states and quasi-states to include a range of “new” actors and sources of insecurity. These include terrorist organisations, drug-smuggling and other international criminal activities, competition for scarce resources, uncontrolled population movements, pandemics, and continuing environmental degradation. First World militaries and their advisers have begun to respond to some of these new agendas and concerns. In recent years, academic and the professional journals of the United States’ and other armed forces have contained articles on new forms of insecurity and the role of military forces in resource management and protection. Conferences have been run on such topics as “disaster relief”, “environmental security”, “defence and the environment”, and “new era security”. Existing military strategies and doctrines, including those in Australia, are beginning to be extended beyond traditional war-fighting concepts and techniques to encompass such things as peacekeeping, conflict resolution and “operations other than war”. Military forces are becoming involved more in monitoring the environment, either directly or in concert with other government or international agencies. And they are being encouraged to respond to humanitarian concerns or conflicts arising from environmental or other pressures. The Australian Army’s insistence on developing
organisation of such operations has increased. And the number of states that have been motivated, in theory if not in practice, by humanitarian considerations. The number of states and other actors participating in, sponsoring, or conducting UN-sponsored or sanctioned military interventions has also increased. And the meaning of peacekeeping itself is being expanded beyond earlier understandings to embrace so-called “second-generation” or “wider peacekeeping” activities which includes the option of peace enforcement. This trend has not been without its problems, dilemmas and controversies which could have significantly implications for military doctrine and practice.

The complexities surrounding the issue of humanitarian intervention have tended to predispose decision makers either to “do nothing” or the minimum necessary to avoid embarrassing failures and any potential political costs that might arise from their actions. Yet national decision makers are also under intense pressure from their publics and increasingly powerful social movements to “do something” to alleviate the misery and suffering that is paraded before them on a daily basis by CNN and other international media outlets. As demonstrated by the United States’ experience in Somalia, however, public support for a particular intervention can also quickly deteriorate in the face of mounting casualties or ongoing destruction and suffering. This growing popular aversion to war and battle casualties has led Western governments to try and limit the nature and scope of their military involvement – to rely more on the use of air power, for example, or to withdraw forces once certain limited objectives have been achieved – and to subject the interventions that do take place to increasingly restrictive operational guidelines and rules of engagement.

The view that military force(s) should be deployed only for short periods of time or to achieve only limited operational objectives ignores the complex and interconnected nature of the post-Cold War security environment. If it is to be involved at all in humanitarian operations, the military will in many cases need to be engaged for extended periods of time. Rather than stabilising the military situation and then withdrawing, military forces will need to become the “security guarantors” for the whole process of civil reconciliation and reconstruction in the affected areas, helping provide the time and space for a return to normalcy and “encouraging and maintaining an environment in which each phase of post-conflict restoration can continue”. This requires, in turn, a more holistic and longer-term planning perspective than is presently allowed by political and military leaders alike, one which recognises that military action is part of a much broader process, and accepts that other non-state actors and agencies have equally important roles to play in the management of complex emergencies and their aftermath.

This broader and more comprehensive role involves an expanding repertoire of tasks, functions, capabilities and skills. Whereas in the past, intervening forces would be primarily involved in supervising and monitoring cease-fire agreements, they may now be required, among other things, to provide humanitarian assistance of various kinds, manage the movement of refugees and displaced persons, help conduct elections, provide safe havens and protection for humanitarian workers, establish cantonment areas or demilitarized zones between warring parties, disarm military or paramilitary forces, clear mines and other leftovers from war, provide civil administration, maintain law and order, negotiate local cease-fires or the safe passage of aid, provide for noncombatant evacuation, contribute to the reconstruction and development of local economies, and assist in the re-establishment of civil society. As we have seen in the Balkans and elsewhere, many of these tasks will need to be conducted in the midst of ongoing armed conflicts, without the consent of some or all of the parties involved, within the glare of international media, and in the face of ongoing hostility abroad and indifference at home. None of these issues and their potential implications for how military forces should be prepared and used are addressed in any detail by LWD1.

The document also ignores some of the more important doctrinal differences, and associated debates, between the practices of peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Although conducted by more robust forces than previously, post-Cold War peacekeeping needs, in the view of some, to continue to proceed around the processes of negotiation, conflict resolution and consensus-building, and the forces involved should have either no or only a limited capacity for conducting offensive operations. Others argue that there will inevitably be some
overlap between traditional peacekeeping and “more ambitious” or enforcement operations (producing so-called “grey area” operations). In their view the experience in Bosnia and elsewhere shows that the military capacity of intervening forces needs to be extended beyond self-defence to include the ability, where needed, to compel compliance at least at the tactical and operational levels. Under this approach, the intervening forces would be relatively heavily armed and “actively impartial”. They would seek to “shape consent” not only by acting as traditional peacekeepers but also by

...pressuring the parties, intimidating them, if necessary, by subjecting them to exemplary pre-emptive self-defense or to a limited coercive campaign against carefully-selected military targets. Thus, military credibility is to peace enforcement what intrinsic military weakness is to peacekeeping. This means fielding a force ready for war or at least capable enough to deter a party that would resist by harming UN troops or other international personnel.19

Opponents of this view argue, in turn, that it will undermine the impartiality of the UN and further stretch its already limited resources, place military peacekeepers and civilian aid workers at risk, make it more difficult to negotiate local cease-fires or political settlements, inevitably force the UN or its representatives either to increase its offensive operations or, as the conflict worsens, to withdraw (thereby further reducing its credibility within the international community), dissuade member states from participating in peace operations, and give encouragement to the (flawed) notion that complex social and political problems can be solved quickly through military means.

Resolving these issues is no easy matter. Most of the arguments raised are sustainable in theory and can be supported by examples drawn from the field. While it may be possible to distinguish between peacekeeping and peace enforcement conceptually, it is much more difficult to do so in practice. Given the complex and changing nature of post-Cold War conflicts and crises, there will always be situations when peacekeepers will be required to act as enforcers and vice versa. That said, the two approaches continue to be based on different and potentially conflicting premises and values, they follow divergent operational strategies, have different (albeit overlapping) rules of engagement, and, more contentiously perhaps, require different force structures and processes of command and control. The use of peacekeepers or peace enforcers for the wrong reasons or in the wrong circumstances might have disastrous results not only for those directly involved but for the prospects of peace and security within the area of operations or even more generally. One possible outcome is that post-Cold War peacekeeping operations will continue to be conducted by traditional UN contingents of state-based forces provided under the UN’s Standby Arrangement System (SBAS).20 Peace enforcement operations will be largely subcontracted by the UN to those regional organisations, “coalitions of the willing” and even individual states which have both the capabilities and the political will to conduct what are wars or quasi-wars.21

Another issue of contention is whether forces developed and maintained for the defence of the state are the most appropriate for carrying out international peace operations. There is a general belief among national political and military leaders, including those in Australia, that state-based self-defence forces, equipped with battle-winning capabilities and trained for conventional war-fighting roles, can and should be used to conduct peacekeeping and humanitarian relief operations. Such forces can be dispatched overseas at relatively short notice, are administratively self-sufficient, and are able to deal with the kinds of threats that characterise post-Cold War “complex emergencies”. Proponents of this view add that while forces capable of defending the state against high-level military threats can be used in various peacekeeping roles, peacekeeping forces cannot be used to defend the state against any significant level of threat. To structure a state’s military forces for international peace operations risks the security of the state.

While there is some merit in these views, it needs to be kept in mind that they may be motivated as much by a desire on the part of national political and military elites to retain favoured or desired weapons systems as any rational assessment of what may be best for the tasks at hand.22 The assertion that conventional armies are the best for conducting non-conventional operations needs to recognise that forces deployed on peace operations still require a period of specialised training before they can be used effectively (and re-training when they are finished) and may need to be provided with additional equipments and capabilities (such as air and ground transport assets, medical facilities and civilian liaison teams). As Colin McInnes has argued in the British case, the policy encourages the maintenance of “balanced” forces – those capable of meeting every foreseen contingency – which can be both very costly and inefficient.23 The assertion that forces configured for peace operations cannot defend the state also
ignores the changing nature of in/security in an increasingly globalised world. As described earlier, for many countries today, including Australia, the principal threats to national security are largely non-military in nature and need to be dealt with using security forces and strategies (broadly defined) rather than traditional defence forces.

There is evidence, too, that traditional military structures, capabilities, procedures and mindsets are not always or entirely appropriate for contemporary peace and security operations and so need to be adjusted or changed in some areas. Michael Dziedzic argues, for example, that internationally sanctioned peace missions are usually required to establish a stable and secure domestic environment where “particular attention must be given to coaxing indigenous institutions of law and order into functioning in rough accordance with internationally acceptable standards”, and members of the mission will be called upon to conduct a variety of policing roles such as training and mentoring local police cadres, mediating domestic disputes, and maintaining public order. While such activities would normally be the responsibility of international civil police (CIVPOL) contingents, in at least the early stages of an intervention they will have to be carried out by military forces.

A problem here, Dziedzic continues, is that “[m]ilitary forces are reluctant to engage in confrontations with civilians because, with the exception of constabulary units, they are generally not trained in the measured use of force, control of riots, negotiating techniques, or de-escalation of conflict”. The answer, in his view, is to include more constabulary forces – such as the French gendarmerie, the Spanish Guardia and the Italian carabinerie – and civil affairs police specialists in the initial military contingents, and provide for continuing liaison and “mutually reinforcing operations” between military civil affairs and CIVPOL elements (the latter would include common communications and logistics, shared command posts, intermingling of personnel in the field, and so on).

A further problem is that many state-based military forces, in the West at least, are developed and maintained to fight wars at the highest end of the conflict spectrum. Their commanders are trained to command their forces under wartime conditions and so will inevitably approach peace operations in the same way. While success in peace and war can depend on similar processes and attributes – cohesive strategic planning, clear lines of command, integrated approaches to resource usage, and so on – the basic differences, described earlier, between the processes and objectives of war-fighting and peace-restoration/building are too great to be ignored or subsumed within a single force or operational doctrine. More fundamentally still, the basic value structures of state-based militaries often sit uncomfortably with those that should inspire international humanitarian operations. As Stephen Kinloch and others have argued, soldiers involved in humanitarian interventions may need to be to be more akin to members of volunteer and non-governmental organisations than to members of traditional military organisations, and be motivated more by humanitarian concerns and beliefs than by national myths or interests.

Warfighting, gender and discrimination

LWD1’s continuing emphasis on warfighting and war winning not only conflicts with how Australia’s armed forces are likely to be employed in the future, it may also reinforce an organisational culture which tends to equate militarised violence with manhood and statehood, and serves to foster or at least condone continuing, albeit declining, acts of discrimination against women service personnel. The open acknowledgement that the Army’s role in the next century will be about much more than fighting and winning wars will provide an opportunity to move Australia’s existing military culture away from its traditional masculinist and combat-centred roots to one more in keeping with a progressive, enlightened and post-industrial society.

The Principles of Which War?

Underpinning Army’s doctrine are ten “principles of war”. While many of these remain applicable to the “new wars” that are likely to dominate the coming security landscape, others, such as offensive action or concentration of force, may no longer be applicable or will need to be revised or replaced by other more relevant principles or considerations. Just as doctrine is expected to evolve in response to political, strategic and other systemic changes, so too must the principles on which doctrine is based.

One such consideration is the growing popular aversion to war and battle casualties. This is having a major impact on whether and under what conditions developed world military forces will be deployed in the future, and on the kinds of operational concepts, strategies and tactics that are able to be used on the ground. Fear of casualties has meant that contemporary war-fighting strategies are placing...
much greater emphasis than previously on “stand-off” weapons systems and associated air and maritime capabilities. As Edward Luttwak has argued, it might also force the United States (and its allies) to move towards a “post-Napoleonic and post-Clausewitzian concept of war” which borrows from eighteenth century experiences and norms. In addition to casualty avoidance, these would invoke greater use of various non-military instruments and policies – such as trade embargoes and armed blockades – and place much less emphasis on the dictates of tempo, momentum and concentration of force. In the twenty-first century, Luttwak concludes, political and military leaders require “not only a patient disposition, but also a modest one, so as to admit the desirability of partial results when to do more would be too costly in US lives, and to do nothing, too damaging to our self-respect and to world order”.  

In its chapter on “Modern Land Warfare”, the document states that the RMA and other developments will significantly influence both warfighting and military support operations, and proceeds to draw a number of conclusions about what Army will require to meet future challenges. The bulk of these conclusions relate to improving Army’s conventional warfighting role and its capacity to operate within an increasingly dynamic and technology-dominated “battlespace”. While such an approach may be reasonable in its own terms – the RMA is, after all, having a significant impact on the way modern warfare is able to be conducted – it assumes that nothing else will change. LWD1’s goal of being able to “fight and win the next war” can be achieved simply by making the most of continuing advances in technology or, in LWD1’s words, by “continuous improvement through modernisation”.  

The basic problem with this view is that the same forces that are contributing to the so-called revolution in military affairs are serving also to fundamentally alter the broader political, social, strategic, environmental and other contexts in which military force(s) will operate. We are, in short, on the threshold of a new era in international politics. Our sense of changing times is reflected in the momentous events that followed in the wake of the end of the Cold War. It is being heightened by suggestions that we have reached the “end of history” or the “end of geography”, and by the variety of terms being used to try and encapsulate the essence of the on-going transition: post-industrialism or post-Fordism, post-militarism, post-statism, post-capitalism, post-(Western) civilisation, post-internationalism, post-modernism, post-heroic warfare, and so on.  

While there is considerable debate and contention over just what this new era will end up looking like, there is broad agreement (at least among academic commentators) that we are entering truly “new times”. This sense of radical change and its potential implications for the future role of military force(s) is not captured by LWD1. 

**Conclusion: Some Thoughts on Army’s Place in the Coming Century**

_The Fundamentals of Land Warfare_ is as much an exercise in politics as an expression of doctrine, seeking to balance what is needed with what is possible, and to reconcile what is familiar and comfortable with what is not. The struggle to accommodate these different and often conflicting forces and perspectives is evident throughout the document. It begins with the Chief of Army’s own message: the Army “exists to provide land forces that are capable of fighting and winning battles”, yet the transformation from the industrial to a post-industrial age will require the Army to “contribute to both warfighting and military support operations”. It is reflected in the way the story of land warfare in the twenty-first century is presented and justified. And it underpins the various tensions, contradictions and disjunctures, described above, in the narrative itself.  

These problems notwithstanding, LWD1 is a bold document. As an intellectual exercise, it is important and well overdue. It recognises that changes are required and seeks to develop these both rationally and openly. It contains much that is interesting, informative and challenging. Yet, the glowing testimonials on its back cover notwithstanding, LWD1 does not fully come to terms with the revolutionary nature of our “new times” and its implications not only for the future role of military force(s) in international affairs but the future contexts in which the Australian Army will be required to operate. LWD1 is an important first step in the development of Army doctrine for the coming century but it needs further thought and work before it will fully satisfy either its purported roles or any reasonable test of applicability.  

Part of the problem, which is outside the purview of LWD1, is to decide what role(s) Army (and the ADF generally) should play in the coming millennium, and to reconcile what is expected of them with the resources that are likely to be available to meet these expectations. This problem of matching “ends” with “means” is being compounded at one level by: 1) continuing changes in Australia’s international circumstances which are requiring the
Army and the other services to do much more than simply defend our sovereign territory; 2) the unwillingness or inability of successive Australian governments to devote sufficient resources to the defence establishment to enable it to carry out its expanding roles and responsibilities; and 3) the escalating cost of providing and maintaining modern, professional military forces and capabilities. But other factors are also at play. These range from the ADF’s continuing preference for “state-of-the-art” weapons and support systems, through the failure of a succession of defence decision makers really to adjust Australia’s defence policies and prescriptions to our changing times – we have tended to “portray” the changes taking place around us in ways that ensure the continuation of existing forces and investments – to an introverted and conservative strategic and broader political culture which continues to favour, and exploit, traditional and militarised notions of security.

It seems reasonable to suggest that this basic dilemma is likely to continue to bedevil defence planners for some time to come. It is unlikely that there will (or should) be any increase in defence expenditure in the short to medium term. While the RMA may be increasing the reach and effectiveness of modern weapons systems, the absolute cost of staying at the forefront of technological change across the board remains prohibitively high. It is likely, too, that Australia’s military forces will continue to be called on, or be pressured by local or international opinion, to carry out an increasing number and range of “non-military” tasks and duties. Unless there are truly substantive changes in policy and approach, therefore, we are likely to see the continuing “hollowing out” of Australia’s existing military forces, continuing high resignation rates, continuing poor morale, continuing personnel shortages, continuing calls for yet more money to be spent on defence, and so on.

The fundamental changes taking place in the world around us provide an opportunity for Australia to revisit its existing defence and security policies and priorities in ways that may solve or at least ameliorate the ongoing dilemma of trying to manage more and more with the same or less. As we have seen, the end of the Cold War, increasing economic interdependence, the processes of globalisation and regionalisation, and the continuing move away from the Westphalian system of international order towards some form of geogovernance, are making major wars between industrialised (and industrialising) countries less likely especially within the slowly expanding “zones of peace” or democratic economic communities we can see emerging in Western Europe, the Americas and South-East Asia. Military and other conflicts will continue to occur, of course, but will be increasingly restricted to the periphery of the developed world, will take place largely within rather than between states, and will be motivated by concerns over injustice and various “politics of particularism”.

Within the developed world at least, the place of both the state and military power in international affairs will become much less relevant although they will continue to have a role. As we have already seen in the Persian Gulf and the Balkans, developed world military operations in the future are likely to be organised along multinational rather than national lines, and be conducted by, or on behalf of, the international community. The growing aversion, within democratic polities in particular, to war and battle casualties is likely to ensure that the warfighting dimensions of these multinational operations will be conducted largely by air and maritime forces using stand-off weapons systems (a change being facilitated by the RMA). Land forces will continue to be needed, but their warfighting roles will be much more circumscribed than in the past.

Again as we are seeing in Kosovo, this division of responsibilities will be reversed in the post-conflict phases of the “complex emergencies” and “uncivil wars” of the post-Cold War era. Once the fighting has stopped, land force elements of the international force will be required to be the “security guarantors” for the whole process of civil reconciliation and reconstruction in the affected areas, helping provide the time and space for a return to normalcy and encouraging and maintaining an environment in which each phase of post-conflict restoration can continue. This role will involve an expanding repertoire of tasks, functions, capabilities and skills. Military operations will need to be conducted in the midst of ongoing armed conflicts, within the glare of international media, and in the face of ongoing hostility abroad and indifference at home. They will require rather different forces to those organised and motivated for warfighting roles and the defence of the state against external military aggression. Land and other forces involved in peacekeeping and peacemaking will need to operate within much broader structures and processes in which a range of other non-military and non-state actors, agencies and interests have equally important roles to play. Although conducted by more robust forces than previously, post-Cold War peace operations will need to continue to proceed around the processes of
appropriately constituted regional organisations. The forces involved will continue to have only a limited capacity for conducting offensive operations. And the soldiers will need to be motivated more by cosmopolitan than communitarian concerns and values, to be more akin to members of volunteer and non-governmental organisations than members of traditional military organisations.

At the broadest policy level these developments provide an opportunity for Australia to shift away from its current emphasis on self-defence towards a posture which emphasises much more national, regional and, especially, international security. Under such an approach, self-defence would remain important but can be directed more towards dealing with existing and likely threats to our security – illegal immigration, drug running, poaching of fish stock, and so on – than to defeating major military attacks against Australia’s territory or interests. Both regional and international security planning would continue to focus on supporting future UN or other multinational operations. In view of the costs involved in maintaining a “balanced” high-technology force, however, it would make sense if Australia’s support of prospective multinational warfighting and peace enforcement operations was restricted to the provision of air and maritime forces and capabilities. Its land forces would be better utilised being prepared and maintained primarily for post-Cold War peacekeeping operations.

Such an approach would not only better suit the “new times” into which Australia is heading, it would be potentially easier to sustain within existing or even reduced resource levels, enable Australia’s defence establishment to remain at the forefront of technological change in areas that counted most, continue to contribute to Australia’s international standing, provide better guidance on how Australia’s defence forces are to be used in the future, and (hopefully) facilitate more rational and informed policy making. While it would help ameliorate Army’s current problem of having to prepare for a diverse range of conflict types and settings, such an approach would also see drastic changes to Australia’s existing land force structures and capabilities. The regular Army’s involvement in the defence of Australia would, for example, be severely constrained as would its capacity to fight alongside its allies in a major ground war. Apart from special forces and, perhaps, a battalion or brigade group configured for joint force combat operations, the Army would be largely structured and prepared for multinational peace operations which would be controlled directly by the UN or on its behalf by appropriately constituted regional organisations.

While these forces would still need to be able to protect themselves they would not require the types or numbers of heavy weapons needed for conventional warfighting roles, nor would they need to rely on tapping into either the RMA or traditional military alliance networks.

Such changes would be strongly resisted by many in the Army and its supporters who, like the authors of LWD1, are more comfortable with traditional ways of thinking about peace and security. In the face of such opposition, it will be tempting for decision makers to forego substantive changes to Australia’s existing policies and prescriptions and continue either to try to “manage with less” or press the government, through Parliamentary and other inquiries, to devote still more of the taxpayers’ money to the defence portfolio. This is a pity. The solution to the dilemmas facing Australia’s contemporary defence planners is, at least to this commentator, relatively clear. The real problem is how to convince those at the top of the defence establishment that it is time to implement it.

NOTES

1. These two purposes distinguish doctrine from policy and strategy. Doctrinal guidelines may inform the policy making process or the choice of a particular strategic option, but the doctrine itself is developed and exists independently of national security policies and defence strategies. Because of this, doctrine, at the philosophical and strategic level in particular, is said to be “authoritative” but not “prescriptive”. It is not a set of rules to be followed without question, but guidelines which require judgement, open-mindedness and flexibility in their application. Furthermore, because it is based on history and experience, doctrine is more enduring and broadly couched than either policy or strategy. While doctrine may be enduring, however, it is not immutable. As LWD1 states, “doctrine evolves in response to changes in political, strategic, economic, environmental, societal and technological circumstances”.

2. In a speech to the National Press Club in April 1999, the Chief of Army noted that there were “plenty of commentators around the edges of defence who are calling for a variety of reforms, ranging from the use of the ADF as a social engineering laboratory, through to reorganising us as peacekeepers”. There should be “no doubt”, he continued, that “our focus is – and must remain – the delivery of warfighting capabilities… To aim for anything less would be an insult to our people in uniform; and a betrayal of the nation”.


7. Snow, *Uncivil Wars*, p.7. While high-technology forces might be needed for defence against an attack by a major second tier power, such an eventuality is thought to be unlikely given, first, that most advanced second tier states are seeking to become part of the core, and second, the clear and growing technological ascendency of first tier forces and economies.


18. The document does state that land forces will have a prominent role in “military support operations” and “military responses short of war”, because “these operations typically require presence, compassion and cooperation with local communities”.

19. Daniel, “Is There a Middle Option in Peace Support Operations?”, p.69. He adds the important point that peace enforcement differs from fully fledged enforcement operations in that military contingents involved in the former “cannot assume that theirs is a combat task intended to break all resistance once and for all. Rather the same personnel expected to demonstrate resolve and augment consent are also expected to do so with the lightest touch possible in the hope that the parties that will finally assent to the UN’s will. They have to avoid taking sides and still alleviate the sufferings of innocents being subjected to unspeakable cruelties. They may have to deal with leaders whom in other circumstances they might arrest as thugs or war criminals. Hence, it would not be surprising if those soldiers involved regarded the means as contradictory to the ends”.

20. Established in 1994, the SBAS is a confidential database of the military and other resources individual states are prepared to provide to the UN within specific timeframes for Security Council-authorized peace operations. As at March 1999, 81 member states had pledged a total of some 104,000 personnel including both individuals and formed military units. The bulk of the proposed resources comprises infantry personnel or forces. According to the UN “there continues to be a need for additional resources to complement manoeuvre units with the necessary logistics support” (“Progress Report of the Secretary-General on Standby Arrangements for Peacekeeping”, 30 March 1999, S/1999/361).


24. Michael J. Dziedzic, “Policing the New World Disorder: Addressing Gaps in Public Security during Peace Operations”, *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, vol. 9, no. 1, Spring 1998, pp.132-59, at p.136. Even when CIVPOL are present, they may well require continuing military support to deal with serious challenges to law and order, posed by criminal organisations or heavily armed gangs for example, or to implement certain provisions of any peace agreement (disarming factions, handling more violent forms of opposition to political reform, etc).


28. Edward Luttwak, “The Crisis of Classic Military Power and the Possible Remedy of “Post-Heroic” Intelligence-Based Warfare”, in Ryan Henry and Joseph S. Nye Jr (eds), The Information Revolution and International Security (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies press, 1998) pp.70-104, at p.89. More contentiously, he adds that it may also be reinforcing a view within the military itself that while military forces need to be accumulated and modernised, they should only be used under very carefully defined and controlled circumstances.


Dr Graeme Cheeseman lectures in politics and defence studies at the University College, Australian Defence Force Academy. He has served in the Australian Regular Army and the Department of Defence and writes widely on issues relating to Australian and regional defence and security. He is the author of Selling Mirages: The Politics of Arms Trading (1992) and The Search for Self-Reliance: Australian Defence Since Vietnam (1993) and co-editor of Discourses of Danger and Dread Frontiers: Australian Defence and Security Thinking After the Cold War (1996)
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A Short Introduction to Alternative Futures

Lieutenant Colonel Ian Wing, Aust Int

The Americans have need of the telephone, but we do not. We have plenty of messenger boys.
– Chief Engineer of the British Post Office, 1876

Preamble

Sir William Preece’s argument against the introduction of the telephone over one hundred years ago seems absurd today, but in 1876 he was a world leader in the field of communications. His words sound somewhat ridiculous because telephones are now omnipresent and he lacked the vision to foresee this change. The evidence is clear, or is it? Before we judge Preece too harshly we should remember that it is not possible to know everything or to predict the future with complete accuracy. It is also startling to consider that even in 1999 more than half of the world’s population have never used a telephone!

This example demonstrates how the study of the future contends with unexpected developments and counter-intuitive outcomes. Things are seldom as they seem. In response to this dilemma, futurists have developed a technique known as Alternative Futures (AF). This technique can lead to powerful insights into the mysteries of the future. These insights can leverage effective strategic planning – a key requirement for military success.

Introduction

The publication of “Australasian Defense 2048 – An Alternative Future” in the September/October 1998 edition of this journal resulted in a large response from readers who wanted to know more about the subject. The article was aimed at stimulating interest in AF by demonstrating how history is not preordained and how it can be shaped to create desirable outcomes. The article achieved its aim.

Despite the increasing acceptance of AF, many within the Australian Defence Organisation (ADO) are yet to fully understand what AF are and what they offer. For this reason, and at the urging of several enthusiastic supporters of the use of AF, this article is aimed at providing a short and easily read introduction. Those readers who can spare a few minutes to read this article will gain an understanding of the fundamental concepts that underlie AF and how they can be employed. It is not possible to provide a detailed explanation of all aspects of AF in this short article and some terms which may be unfamiliar to some readers are used. The article synthesises the work of several of the major writers on AF and concludes with a literature guide for those who seek a more complete understanding of AF and its terminology.

The development of AF was made possible by Herman Kahn, a leading nuclear warfare strategist. His work in the field of scenario planning while an analyst with the RAND Corporation in the 1950s used the approach of “thinking the unthinkable”. This provided the means for the creation of the multiple hypothetical and multifaceted descriptions of the future which are now essential to the study of AF.

At the same time, the writers of science fiction provided an impetus to the intellectual consideration of the future. This raised public interest in the notion that the future could be very different from the present. The early science fiction writings of Arthur C. Clarke, who first proposed the use of geostationary satellites, led to new directions in space and communications technology. The idea that the opportunities and threats of the future could be anticipated became widely accepted.

AF rose to prominence when they were used by Royal Dutch/Shell in the 1970s. Pierre Wack undertook strategic planning, facilitated by Stanford Research Institute (now known as SRI International). They coined the term “intuitive logics” to illustrate their unconventional futurist philosophy. The use of AF enabled Royal Dutch/Shell to understand the implications of a possible energy crisis. As a result of this work, they were the only multinational oil company which was prepared for the 1973 oil crisis. This success led to the adoption of AF by other multinational corporations.

Thinking about the future was not new and it has engaged philosophers since ancient times. What was new was that AF provided a systematic and intellectually rigorous method of structuring this
thinking. The demonstrated utility of AF within the corporate sector led to their adoption by the governments of the advanced nations. Today, AF are increasingly being incorporated into the strategic planning processes of forward-thinking organisations.

At the time of the publication of “Australasian Defense 2048”, the use of AF as a means of improving strategic planning was gaining acceptance within Australian government departments. The Office of Strategic Crime Assessments and the Australian Federal Police are committed to AF. The Australian Defence Organisation has also adopted AF in its strategic planning processes and they are employed within Australian Defence Headquarters and the single service headquarters.

The Underlying Philosophy

Individuals, societies and the international system are not set on a deterministic path to a single unitary future. In theory, an infinite number of possible futures exists, ranging from the continuation of the status quo (simply more of the same) to a universal cataclysmic change (such as an asteroid striking the Earth and ending life as we know it). In reality, the probable future lies somewhere between these two extremes. It will be created by the combined effect of a myriad of individual, societal and national decisions and their outcomes. From any given moment in time, a range of future trajectories is possible and one of these trajectories will become the future actuality.

The best way to understand this concept is to briefly review Chaos Theory, which I previously discussed in “Chaos Theory and Intelligence Analysis” in the November/December 1995 edition of this journal. Chaos Theory deals with the unstable nature of all natural systems. It demonstrates how every small change within a system acts, directly or indirectly, upon every actor and object associated with the system. The apparent randomness that results from this phenomenon can be shown to contain repeating patterns and the theory is valuable because it enables the search for “order within chaos”. Thus the future is inherently unstable, and capable of developing into a myriad of manifestations, but simultaneously inherently orderly, enabling forecasting and predictions to occur.

Bearing in mind these introductory paragraphs it is hardly surprising that some now believe that AF are a method of predicting or forecasting the future. This is a mistake. While the use of AF should be informed by a realistic analysis of trends, it should not be overly constrained by rational and traditional thinking.

Peter Schwartz, one of the principal architects of the study of AF, describes them as:

A tool for helping us to take a long view in a world of great uncertainty (Schwartz, 1991, p.3).

AF are not necessarily intended for use by intelligence analysts, although their greater use within the intelligence community is recommended. AF can offer insights to all involved in organisational strategic planning and these insights result from an intellectual process which is not bounded by conventional logic or expectations. The development of AF and the study of their implications is intended to broaden our understanding of what may be rather than what will be. As we improve our understanding of the range of future potentialities we can make decisions intended to shape the future and hedge against adverse outcomes which may result.

Having introduced the philosophy of AF, I will now briefly describe how they are developed and used.

A Method

AF are derived from intensive and rigorous processes. Some examples are John Tydeman’s four step method (Tydeman, 1987, pp.48-49) and Peter Schwartz’s eight step method (Schwartz, 1991, pp.226-233). This article will describe Ian Wilson’s six step method (Wilson, 1998, pp.83-94), and the steps are:

1. Identify and analyse the organisational issues that will provide the decision focus.
2. Specify the key decision factors.
3. Identify and analyse the key external factors.
4. Establish the scenario logics.
5. Select and elaborate the scenarios.
6. Interpret the scenarios for their decision implications.

The first step requires research into the most important issue faced by the organisation. This issue is known as the strategic decision focus and finding it may involve organisational surveys, interviews and literature reviews.

The second step is to identify future developments which would be crucially important to the strategic decision focus of the organisation. This process often requires the use of unstructured focus groups, known as brainstorming sessions, and structured consensus groups, using methods such as the Delphi Technique. During this phase it is imperative that senior
management be engaged in the process and assume “ownership” of its outcomes. It is also important that the analytical process is seasoned by input from informed personnel holding a balance of optimistic and pessimistic outlooks.

The third step (identify and analyse the key external factors), identifies those trends or currents, which will interact to form driving forces, and are likely to influence the future. The writings of Steven Metz, of the United States Army War College, provide a useful example of this process (Metz, 1997, pp.1–17). He has identified three overarching currents of change: the interconnectiveness of individuals and organisations; the compression of time; and demassification (using Alvin Toffler’s term for the fragmentation of enterprise in the information age). Metz describes eight trend categories which operate within these currents: technological, economic, political, social, demographic, ethical, psychological and military. Other useful trend categories are environmental and organisational.

The trends within each category are extrapolated in order to ascertain their level of relative uncertainty and the level of their impact. This enables risk assessment to be conducted and it informs the selection of the most important driving forces.

There are many methods of creating scenarios in the fourth step (establish the scenario logics). One method uses models and matrices enabling complex relationships to be more easily understood. Cross-impact analysis is conducted to explore the combined effects of driving forces. When the results are applied to the model or matrix, the plotting process can create an infinite number of possible futures. From these, three or four are selected for further examination. Experience generally indicates that three scenarios is the minimum number for a meaningful study and more than four will be difficult to manage and understand. Subjective judgement and intuition are required to make this step work and it is important that organisational preferences for desired outcomes do not derail the process at this point. The most important criteria for the selection of the scenarios is their relevance to the strategic decision focus of the organisation.

The development of scenarios is made possible by a relatively simple exercise. A focus group identifies two systemic driving forces which are considered

$$x \text{ axis } = \text{Driving Force } \# \text{ One}$$
$$y \text{ axis } = \text{Driving Force } \# \text{ Two}$$

![Figure 1. Two Dimensional Scenario Development](image-url)
likely to result in critical uncertainties for the strategic decision focus of the organisation. These are used to create the intersecting x and y axes of a four quadrant matrix, which is called the scenario space. The varying effect of the driving forces is plotted on the matrix, providing four basic scenarios. The scenarios do not need to be located at the midpoint between the two axes and can be plotted to emphasise a key juxtaposition of the two driving forces. This process is illustrated on page 19.

The development of more sophisticated AF can be achieved with the addition of further axes and by the creation of a three-dimensional scenario space. This enables coordinates to be plotted with reference to three or more driving forces, resulting in an unlimited and complicated choice of potential scenarios.

The fifth step (select and elaborate the scenarios) requires the choice of a few of the most exciting scenarios for greater development. Remember, scenarios are not intended to provide accurate predictions of the future. Instead, they should stimulate original and considered thinking within the strategic planning process. The scenarios are selected according to their relevance to the decision focus of the organisation and the value of the lessons which can be drawn from them. Once selected, the scenarios are given life with compelling narratives that draw on the driving forces which created them and also resonate with ideas drawn from other appropriate driving forces. Scenario writers need imagination and lateral thinking to create these future histories. The narratives are then given an evocative title, in the form of a newspaper headline or movie title, to capture the spirit of the scenario and provide all participants with a shorthand term of reference.

The futures that are selected should be:

• Plausible and credible. The scenario must contain an internal plot or “logic” which should be internally consistent. Despite this requirement it may be necessary for planners to “suspend their disbelief” if they are to get the best results.

• Challenging and stimulating. There is little point conducting an AF study if it serves to reinforce the predispositions of the planners involved.

• Useful and relevant. The scenarios must concern information which is related, directly or indirectly, to the activity of the organisation.

• Understandable and interesting.

It is important that the scenarios not constitute simply the “best case”, “worst case” and “likely case”. Those familiar with the military appreciation process should also avoid selection of scenarios according to “three courses” based on “three approaches”, or two scenarios which can be rapidly discounted leaving the scenario which was desired in the first place!

Good scenarios contain imaginative qualitative information (descriptive assessment) tempered by intellectually coherent quantitative information (empirical data). Too much of either will render the scenario either too “woolly” and “pie in the sky” or too “dry and boring”.

Once the scenarios are fully developed, the sixth step can commence (interpret the scenarios for their decision implications). All of the effort put into the previous five steps comes to fruition at this point. The scenarios are reviewed; interpreted; used to test organisational assumptions; provoke discussion; encourage new insights; and enable planners to examine policy responses and strategies. Important issues which can be raised by AF are:

• Whether the organisation is optimised for its future operating environment.

• How the organisation can avoid being a victim of “strategic surprise”.

• How the current strategies of the organisation will cope with the threats and opportunities of each scenario.

• Where and when the organisation can detect “branching points”, where the future actuality changes course, and “signposts”, which indicate that basic assumptions may require review. These signposts are similar to the “indicators” in the Indicators and Warnings process that will be familiar to many military readers.

• How this information may then be used to influence the future actuality. This can include “shaping actions” which are intended to create a favourable future, “hedging actions” which protect against less favourable futures and contingency plans for responses to unfavourable futures. Those readers who are familiar with Assumption-Based Planning, RAND’s formalised strategic planning system, will recognise this terminology.

The evocative titles of the scenarios often remain in the minds of people who have worked with them and they provide a shorthand method of discussing the future. When used in this manner, scenarios provide the catalyst for ongoing “strategic conversations”.

The creation of scenarios through the analysis and extrapolation of current driving forces is referred to as “future forward”. Another method which can provide further stimulating results and provide a useful cross-check of future forward results is referred to as “future backward”. In this method a possible future is envisioned and selected, with far less emphasis on...
current driving forces. The course of events which may lead to it is analysed by working backwards from the envisioned future to the present.

The future forward method emphasises deductive thinking and the use of logic, although intuition should not be discounted. Future backward scenario-development, on the other hand, emphasises inductive thinking, hunches, “wildcards” and “left field thinking”. The combination of the two methods can provide powerful strategic insights.

Some Problems

I have already pointed out that AF do not offer predictions or intelligence estimates. This is not a problem as long as all those involved in the use of AF understand their intended use. Several other problems may be encountered.

First, the scenarios may be ambiguous and this can confuse rather than inform. Those tasked with the elaboration of the scenarios must strive for clarity and be alert for the need for ongoing improvements.

Second, the development of scenarios may encourage self-altering or self-fulfilling prophecies which distort normal future trajectories. This tendency should be counteracted by sceptical analysis during steps one to five of the development of scenarios. This is because AF are intended to enable the study of the future not to alter it.

A third problem is posed by the underlying philosophy of AF that emphasises causal linkages and trend extrapolation. This philosophy could be undermined by a completely unexpected development such as a discovery or invention which has a major impact on all possible future trajectories. It is important that all involved in the use of AF understand this weakness and strive for the early identification of such discontinuities in the real world.

“Environmental scanning”, which uses multiple sources of information to observe and report on the entire strategic environment, offers the best means of detecting future unexpected developments.

A fourth problem is that the extrapolation of trends and the identification of driving forces, which are crucial to scenario-development, are themselves subject to several potential pitfalls:

- Over-reliance on historical examples – which may lead analysts to discount “wildcards” which do not fit the historical mould.
- Poor research which is likely to result in uninformed speculation.
- Over-reliance on statistics and modelling – which may distort analysis and limit the potential for intuitive perception.
- The failure to appreciate the influence of ethnic, cultural and institutional thought processes on the anticipated actions of others – who may in fact act in accordance with quite different thought processes.
- Undue influence over the process by dominant personalities or those in positions of authority.

All of these problems can be overcome, particularly if the AF are created using “lateral thinking”, made famous by Edward de Bono.

Think Out of the Box

In order to realise the full potential of AF it is imperative that we use lateral thinking to “think out of the box”. We must escape hidebound thinking and explore possible, and often unpalatable alternatives. By way of example, here are the fundamentals of some scenarios which could be thought-provoking within Australian strategic planning:

- **Chinese Anschluss.** China and Taiwan form a strategic alliance that causes Japan to accelerate its rearmament and encourages increased United States military deployments to North Asia.
- **Batik Breakdown.** Indonesia fragments into several smaller nations which each seek military support from the other ASEAN nations and Australia.
- **Strange Bedfellows.** Malaysia guarantees the security of Papua-New Guinea and Malaysian troops are deployed to Port Moresby.
- **Serious Fishing.** Foreign warships accompany foreign fishing fleets into the Southern Ocean with the capability to operate within the Australian Fishing Zone.

And here are the fundamentals of some scenarios which are more immediately relevant to the Australian Defence Force:

- **Australia’s Coastguard.** The Navy is directed to assume full responsibility for all Australian maritime border management, including surveillance, maritime law enforcement, immigration and fisheries patrols.
- **Proliferating Warriors.** The Army is tasked with doubling the size of its available combat forces within a 12 month period.
- **Aircrew Adieu.** The Air Force is directed to maintain its fleets of F-111 and F/A-18 until
Uninhabited Combat Aerial Vehicles and cruise missiles are purchased to replace them.

Some readers will be busy thinking of good reasons why these scenarios are unlikely – rather than trying to investigate their implications. It is relatively easy to assert that everything will follow the normal comfortable predictions that we have become used to. It is harder but more useful to think about other trajectories.

Those who remain unconvinced might ponder this: If I had written this article ten years ago and described AF which included the collapse and partial fragmentation of the Soviet Union or a multi-national United Nations military operation against Iraq, many readers would have been highly sceptical. More recent examples of unexpected scenarios are the successful air campaign by NATO against Yugoslavia and the United Nations ballot on independence in East Timor. We must escape the notion that things don’t change very much. In reality, things do change and they frequently change very fast. Winners are those who can free themselves of obsolete paradigms and anticipate change.

Futurists are committed to the use of innovative methods such as AF to assist in understanding and influencing the future. Futurism is an intellectual practice grounded in the analysis of data but requiring the use of imagination and intuition. Successful futurists can escape the constrictive norms of the expected and enhance the strategic planning process through the consideration of the unexpected.

The decision-maker who is sensitised to the range of possible futures will be better prepared to shape events. He or she will gain the opportunity to reconstruct their “mental map” – the set of beliefs and expectations which underlie and inform all decisions.

AF are not intended to predict or forecast the future but if they are employed correctly they will improve strategic planning and the likelihood of military success. The ADO is ideally suited to AF because it strives to be a “learning organisation” and it deals with strategic uncertainty with measures such as strategic intelligence and strategic contingency planning. The stakes are very high because the failure to anticipate the future could fundamentally affect the future history of Australia.

There is a substantial body of literature on futurism and AF. The following list provides a sample of the early influential works, some contemporary works and several useful internet sources.


Lieutenant Colonel Ian Wing was the 1998 Chief of the Defence Force Scholarship Fellow at the Australian Defence Studies Centre. His tenure has been extended to enable him to complete his doctoral research into “Reconceptualising Australia’s Defence”. He is a graduate of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, and Command and Staff College, Queenscliff. He holds a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Political Science and a Master of Defence Studies, both awarded by the University of New South Wales. His current research areas are the future of conflict, the roles of post-modern armed forces, open source intelligence and futurism.

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In Australia the military is seeking to attract and retain a talented and motivated workforce.
By Lieutenant Sarah Chapman, RAN Reserve

This article discusses issues pertinent to an examination of the way in which the Australian Defence Force (ADF) can increase the operational effectiveness and length of service of its female members. Whilst these will be discussed in sequential fashion, it is not intended that this prohibit an holistic appreciation of the issues. It is suggested that increasing the operational effectiveness and length of service of female members of the ADF may be achieved by dispensing with the current exclusion of women from combat and the implementation of policy initiatives that will enable more flexible employment practices.

Women in Combat

To a nation already absorbing the culture shock of uniformed women being ordered into a potential war zone while able-bodied young men stayed home, the sight of military mothers voluntarily leaving babies as young as six weeks old unveiled a new and disquieting reality in the modern military.

Francke on the deployment of female US troops to the Gulf War, 1997: 130.

The issue of female members of the ADF serving in combat roles is a contentious and as yet unresolved issue. Some argue that lifting the ban on the employment of women in combat is aggressively pursued by precious few for reasons of self-aggrandisement and more rapid promotion (cf. Ripley, 1992). Others assert that such employment contravenes social mores (Dembert, 1995; Lind, 1992), sociobiological urges to protect women (Owens, 1992) and religious doctrine (Kirk, 1988).

Whilst the ADF is yet to make firm decisions on existing combat-exclusion policies, Becraft (1990) notes that Canada, Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway and Portugal all allow women to serve in combat roles.1 Arguably the lessons which may be learned from these nations are limited, given that they are a culturally diverse group and each nation is very different from our own. The contemporary culture of the Australian military is a mix of both the finest and the most dubious imperialist traditions from the United Kingdom and the superficially more progressive, yet equally restrictive, influences of the United States. We are yet to carve out a position for ourselves on the world stage in clearly defining our own stance on the inclusion of women in combat.

This section will address the most commonly cited reasons why the exclusion of women from combat duties should remain. Further sections of this article will examine other more piecemeal arguments related to this issue, which in themselves are impediments to increasing the operational effectiveness of female members of the military.

Perhaps the most rudimentary argument for the continued exclusion of women from combat duties is the patriarchal assumption that it is the role of government to preserve femininity and protect women from the horror of the battlefield. Ripley (1992), a retired United States Marine, comments that: “The issue of whether women belong in combat positions should not be argued from the standpoint of gender differences. It should not be argued from the standpoint of female rights and desires. Important as these issues are, they pale in the light of the need to protect femininity, motherhood, and what we have come to appreciate in Western culture as the graceful conduct of women.” (Ripley, 1992: 36). Given the reticence of our own politicians to endorse female participation in combat (see Mackay, 1999), it may reasonably be argued that this seemingly all-American view still holds considerable sway here in Australia.

One of the most frequently cited reasons for excluding women from combat is the presumably detrimental effect that this will have upon esprit de corps. Curiously, it is yet to be established that male soldiers, sailors and airmen have a monopoly on what countless historical anecdotes suggest to be a fundamental characteristic of group membership when such groups have a common goal or have formed under adverse circumstances. Despite this, a substantial number of authors have espoused the view that the employment of women in infantry, armour, combat engineering or submarines has a markedly adverse impact on unit performance (cf. Dembert,
Maubert (1993) asserts that mixed-gender combat units will suffer impaired cohesion, morale and discipline because male commanders are likely to be unduly influenced in their strategic and operational decision-making by their emotional attachment to female subordinates. In doing so, he chooses to ignore the reality of homosexual relationships between serving members and the intensely emotional “male bonding” which has been found to occur between men when under training or embarked upon a stressful deployment. Indeed, Maubert’s argument is ultimately self-defeating: The potential indecision arising from a commanding officer’s over-identification with his troops is precisely the reason why the captain of a modern day warship, irrespective of the gender breakdown of his or her crew, is not a member of the Officers’ Wardroom. This phenomenon is as likely to occur in all male military units as it is in those of both sexes.

Despite their popularity, neither the political responsibility nor esprit de corps argument fully acknowledges the desire of women to serve their country in combat, nor their potential ability to do so. These issues will be addressed later in this article.

Greater sophistication in weapons development and the concomitant evolution of modern warfare heightens the relevance of a discussion addressing the feasibility of women undertaking combat training. This may also raise questions about the relevance and suitability of existing training methods, however only a consideration of the feasibility of women undertaking combat training falls within the purview of this article.

Combat Training Standards

Serving in the military is a privilege, and during times of national emergency, an obligation – never a right.

Brennan, 1994: 53

One of the more outspoken contemporary critics of the employment of women in combat is Professor Martin van Creveld. Whilst few would argue with his description of combat as, “the toughest, most demanding, most terrible activity on earth” (van Creveld, 1993: 5), the tactics and weaponry characterising modern warfare somewhat qualify his assertion that, “(...)he demands that it makes in terms of physical strength, endurance, and sheer wear and tear are horrendous” (van Creveld, 1993: 5). Without wishing to detract from the brutality of a military campaign designed to enslave those pursuing a different philosophical or economic outcome, many contemporary researchers and commentators have noted the greater emphasis in modern warfare on technical skill than physical strength (cf. Watts, 1999).

Despite this, many still cite concerns over the inability of women to perform the physically demanding work traditionally associated with combat-related employment. Hay and Middlestead (1990) note that despite the existence of a Canadian Forces project designed to examine and facilitate the Combat Related Employment of Women (CREW), they are yet to witness a female member of the Canadian Forces successfully complete infantry training. In contrast, the Norwegian Navy has successfully employed its first female submarine commander. The comparison to be made when examining the success or otherwise of these nations in facilitating the employment of women in combat lies in the nature of the employment in which these women have been engaged. Whilst commanding a submarine requires a significant degree of physical stamina in resisting fatigue, it requires considerably less power and strength in lifting and carrying heavy
loads, a task still synonymous with infantry operations.

Gebicke (1993) has noted an innovative solution to the commonly occurring discrepancy between the physical strength of male and female members of the military. He found that troops deployed to the Persian Gulf during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm averted any such potential difficulties by capitalising on teamwork to move heavy objects and load and carry equipment. Obviously, the success of this approach is heavily dependent upon the context in which the work is undertaken; it seems more appropriate for a headquarters or base camp environment than during field operations or movement in enemy territory.

A second approach to facilitating the employment of women in combat and combat-related fields is the application of differential physical training requirements for men and women. Unfortunately, these are most often a source of frustration and disharmony, particularly when women are training for employment in male-dominated or previously exclusive male occupations. Brennan (1994: 52) writes, “What we lieutenants viewed at TBS (The Basic School)... was the fact that equal opportunity had taken precedence over the good of the Service. Politically inspired euphemisms attempted to justify the difference in standards to no avail. Separate standards for women were clearly viewed as double standards”.

Hay and Middlestead (1990) suggest that the failure of female trainees to negotiate the rigors of infantry training may be attributable to unsatisfactory recruiting and training standards. Specifically, they cite the use of separate fitness standards in basic training leading to stamina limitations amongst female trainees during subsequent infantry training and inaccurate and misleading information being conveyed to female applicants at recruitment centres. The combined effect of these discrepancies in the treatment of male and female applicants disadvantages the latter and hinders their ability to serve in combat positions.

Steel (1998), in reviewing the potential employment of women in the clearance diving branch, notes that members undertaking maritime tactical operations are working behind enemy lines and are susceptible to enemy attack. Employment of women in this capacity would therefore contravene the current ADF policy on women in combat. However, exceptional physical fitness notwithstanding, women could currently be employed in underwater battle damage repair and mine countermeasures roles. Given the widely promulgated views such as that contained in the previous paragraph, the differential employment of women in the clearance diving branch, that is their exclusion from maritime tactical operations, would likely engender resentment and hostility and compromise the operational flexibility of the branch. It seems the employment of female clearance divers must await the implementation of policy allowing women to be engaged in combat.

One of the significant difficulties in developing policy and guidelines for the employment of women in combat is in the application and embodiment of the equity principle. Whilst equity, the enabling of differential access to resources, training and assistance to facilitate the successful progression of minority or disadvantaged members, is enshrined in the civil and wider Defence community, the application of the equity principle to the employment of women in combat proves more difficult.

Brennan (1994: 53), in questioning whether the Marine Corps should “become a test bed for social experimentation at the expense of morale and training”, represents a more extreme expression of this conflict. He further comments that, “senior officers are military leaders, not managers of social programs. Our challenge should not be how far we can lower standards to acquiesce to misguided social pressure and still win a battle through technology and firepower” (Brennan, 1994: 53). Whilst negativistic and potentially misogynist, Brennan’s fundamental concern is very real. The military cannot afford to lower the selection and employment standards for combat operations in order to allow the employment of those who are not physically able to perform the task.

A more considered and harmonious suggestion to this dilemma is offered by Watts (1999), who notes that increasingly sophisticated military hardware requires operators with specialist educational qualifications and technical aptitude, which may create an alternate avenue for employment in combat. Division of labour in this regard would provide for the employment of those who are technically skilled and those with a greater ability to withstand the traditionally heavy labour of combat operations.

An efficient fighting force must ensure the adequate strength, stamina and psychological fitness of those members engaged in direct combat. Based on the preceding literature review, it seems the ADF may be best served by ensuring a more sophisticated system of selection and employment of members wishing to serve in combat. Those who do not meet the physical requirements necessary to be engaged in the first line of defence, but whose psychological
profile suggests they are suitable for employment in a combat role, may be gainfully employed in a capacity that draws upon their technical expertise. This will enable competency-based employment of all those seeking to work in combat operations, irrespective of gender.

Quinn (1998) comments that a group comprising an 85 per cent majority and a 15 per cent minority results in the definition and subsequent control of group culture by members of the dominant subgroup and the enforced regulation of the behaviour of all its members. In this context, the token member suffers from heightened attention from others, both within and outside the group and the differences between themselves and the dominant members are often exaggerated, leading to further exclusion. In addition, she notes that token group members are often stereotyped and rewarded for conforming to the stereotype, rather than for their contribution to group functioning and success.

Evidently tokenism, or perceived tokenism, is detrimental to the operational effectiveness and successful integration of women in the military. In accordance with Quinn's description of group dynamics, Smart (1998) has noted that female fast-jet pilots may be subject to the jealousy and envy of their male colleagues for capturing the imagination of the media and in detracting from the achievements of their classmates. Further, she adds that male instructors may experience increased pressure from senior management to pass these "trail blazing" women, who may not otherwise be suitable for employment in this profession (see also Smith, 1999). Similarly, Harrell and Miller (1997) found that members of the United States Defense Force expressed discontent with the distorted media focus on the achievements and deaths of military women, to the seeming exclusion of the achievements and more frequent deaths of their male counterparts. In addition, these men and women expressed dissatisfaction and frustration with the subsequent lack of attention to the abilities and contribution of all military personnel and the preferred focus on scandals than on "a job well done".

The ADF can learn a sobering lesson from its US counterpart. Senior management must more effectively control the media fascination with female members of the military, or risk disenfranchising more than half its population. The most immediate opportunity to achieve this aim is in deflecting attention away from the initial deployment of women aboard HMA Ships Collins and Farncomb and redirecting the attention of the nation on the ability of members of our submarine squadron to perform their duties aboard fully-functioning, Australian-made submarines.

Many women in the United States Defense Force report experiencing job dissatisfaction and considerable frustration as a result of the prevailing combat restrictions (Voge, 1996; Harrell & Miller, 1997). It is commonly held that the direst consequence of these restrictions is the debilitating effect this may have upon career progression. As noted by Brower (1996:13), "Without the proper credentials and experience, military women can never be full partners with their male counterparts. In truth, only a small percentage of those in combat positions are ever exposed to direct enemy fire, but it is nearly indispensable to have risked personal safety for those aiming at the top of the military positions".

Voge (1996), in conducting focus groups with male and female aircrew of the United States Army and Air Force, found that most participants asserted a preference for competency-based employment and merit-based progression, not the allocation of female quotas. "Frequent comments were made that since everyone in the military takes the same oath of service, everyone should be available for combat duty, especially since the military is now an all-volunteer force" (Voge, 1996: 17).

In recent years, both the United States and Australian defence forces have circumvented this difficulty by allowing women to train in a select number of combat roles. Subsequent to demonstrating proficiency and whilst awaiting a review of the legislation pertaining to their employment in combat, some of these women have been engaged in an instructional capacity. Whilst providing temporary relief for policy-makers, this approach ultimately proves unsatisfactory, as male trainees fail to identify with, or develop respect for, instructors who have no combat experience (cf. van Creveld, 1993).

Turning to the consideration of military employment and career management in more general terms, Voge (1996) found that a significant number of men and women also reported dissatisfaction with the disruption to their personal lives that was necessarily associated with their vocation. Air Force women in
particular asserted a preference for normal working hours and a more regular lifestyle.

Given the competing desires of women seeking employment in combat and those seeking a more stable lifestyle, balancing the needs and concerns of military members is a significant challenge. When coupled with lifting the restriction on women in combat, policy initiatives such as the FIMOTES Proposal and Harlequin Option (see Gilks, 1998), or adaptations thereof, may indeed be able to reconcile these differences. The FIMOTES Proposal aims to match training and education to occupational streams, whilst the Harlequin Option aims to provide tri-service respite postings to meet individuals’ life circumstances. The development and subsequent administration of a questionnaire to a random, stratified sample of ADF personnel later this year will ascertain the feasibility and acceptability of these and other such initiatives for addressing these concerns.

As mentioned previously, rapid developments in military technology have facilitated the employment of women in roles that previously required a level of physical strength most often associated with men. The ADF can little afford to hamper the career aspirations of those women whose abilities would, were it not for policy restrictions, otherwise enable them to fulfil their desire to serve Australia in a capacity that is either unpalatable or unattainable for the vast majority of Australians. This issue will be dealt with in more detail later in this article.

The preceding sections have broadly canvassed the issue of women in combat and the implications the existing restrictions have on career progression. This article will now address more specific concerns raised by those opposed to the more effective integration of women in the armed forces.

Pregnancy

Whilst it is widely acknowledged and largely undisputed that pregnancy limits the operational effectiveness of a female member of the military, prevailing attitudes about the degree to which pregnancy is correlated with absenteeism, lost productivity and lack of work-related commitment do not concur with many statistical findings. With respect to the latter, Voge (1996) found that 80 per cent of United States Army and Air Force enlisted aircrew reported having postponed motherhood whilst on operational duty. This finding is contrary to the oft-cited concern that the organisational, career or job commitment of female members is negatively influenced by their desire to bear children.

Recent data obtained from the United States Navy indicated that men had recorded a combined total of 386000 days’ leave for drug and alcohol rehabilitation during a single financial year. This figure was twice that of the number of days Navy women reported having taken leave for reasons relating to pregnancy (Francke, 1997). Further, a recent examination of personnel statistics held by the Marine Corps illustrated that whilst pregnancy-related attrition was less than three per cent, attrition for reasons of physical disability commonly fluctuates between 27 and 30 per cent (Schoby, 1994). Unfortunately, it seems figures such as these have done little to curb the hostility and resentment directed toward those women seeking maternity leave or leave relating to pregnancy.

The corrosive effect that such attitudes can have on morale has been extensively documented in the literature. For example, Schoby (1994: 54), notes that “Along with the perception that other Marines must work longer and harder in order to compensate for pregnant peers, many Marines also express a negative opinion towards a pregnant woman’s change in physical appearance and, in cases of unwed mothers, her possible promiscuity. Whether valid or not, when these speculations are left unchecked, they can destroy a unit rapidly”.

Current personnel management policies and practices do little to engender more positive attitudes towards the entitlements of pregnant members. A member accessing maternity leave most often creates a vacant position in her work section that results in an increased workload for her remaining colleagues. Anecdotal evidence and research findings alike suggest that this engenders considerable animosity within the workplace between those who remain. Francke (1997) notes that in the United States Defense Force pregnancy is considered a “temporary disability”, which does not then attract supplementary personnel. The net effect of these administrative procedures is detrimental to the integration and acceptance of women in many units: “While the Army’s team spirit rallied around male soldiers with temporary injuries like broken legs, there was no generosity of spirit extended to pregnant women. Morale problems are reported when the pregnant female soldier is not replaced, and male members must assume the redistributed workload” (Francke, 1997: 111). Unfortunately, the same administrative policy currently applies to maternity leave in the ADF.
A male senior sailor participating in a focus group held by the author questioned the fairness of a policy enabling women access to paid maternity leave early in their career whilst their male counterparts were required to work for ten years before being granted an equivalent period of paid leave. This exemplifies the view expressed by Miller (1997), who has argued that pregnancy is yet another impediment to greater acceptance that both male and female members of the military receive equal pay and promotion in accordance with their exposure to risk and/or level of responsibility.

The ADF has recently examined the impact of pregnancy on operational effectiveness and the potential hazards to a foetus that may occur were females to be employed as clearance divers and submariners. Steel (1998: 12) comments, “To employ female RAN personnel in the clearance diving branch may expose the Commonwealth to possible liability actions if abnormalities in a female diver’s pregnancy can be linked to diving. Legal advice indicates that the signing of some form of indemnity or acknowledgement of risk, similar to the USN procedure, would have little effect upon the issue of liability – although it may assist in mitigating damages. Additionally, an indemnity form would not negate a claim made by the child against the Commonwealth in the future”. To date, there have been no definitive decisions made by senior ADF officials in relation to this issue.

Ultimately, personnel policies should be designed to facilitate the more gainful and efficient employment of women both during and following a pregnancy. These policies must perform the dual role of accommodating the small number of women who are pregnant at any one time and allowing more
flexible employment practices to facilitate the increasingly equal childcare contribution made by men.

**Market Forces and Social Expectation**

*There are three stages in the revelation of any truth: in the first, it is ridiculed; in the second, resisted; in the third, it is considered self-evident.*

Schopenhauer

The Government has long been subject to pressure from community groups who view an increase in employment opportunities for women in the military as a moral and social imperative. “The military, as a servant of society, must ‘reflect societal core values and culture or be labelled an anachronism’ … (and) divorce itself from society” (Watts, 1999: 14).

Research conducted in the United States has demonstrated that American citizens overwhelmingly support the participation of women in the military, but are opposed to their involvement in direct, hand-to-hand, ground combat (see Francke, 1997; Owens, 1992). Whilst there has been no large-scale opinion poll conducted in Australia which has examined this issue, it is feasible to suggest that results obtained here in Australia would concur with those obtained in the United States (see Smith, 1990).

Whilst debate on the morality and merit of employing women in combat roles continues, women have been joining the military in ever-increasing numbers. One of the more successful arguments for increased involvement of women has been both the observable decline in the number of young men seeking employment in the military and the increasing quality of the female candidates. Previous research conducted by the United States Defense Department has found that whilst the average female applicant may be physiologically less able than her male counterpart, she is likely to be better educated, receive higher scores on the requisite aptitude battery and less likely to become a disciplinary problem (Francke, 1997). Similar findings have been reported in Australia with respect to disciplinary action (cf. Academy Performance Indicators, 1998), however no such evidence exists to demonstrate the more able academic or test aptitude performance of female candidates for military service (Psychology Research Group, 1999).

In Australia, the military is seeking to attract and retain a talented and motivated workforce in an increasingly competitive marketplace. This necessitates the development and successful implementation of policies designed to foster a harmonious and efficient working environment, which harnesses the skills and fosters the personal and professional development of its members. Alteration of current ADF personnel policies relating to the employment of women may create more favourable perceptions of a fair and equitable management philosophy and a more desirable future workplace amongst high calibre men and women in Australian society. The Australian military must balance the needs and concerns of its members with those of the wider community if it is to remain vital, alive and relevant to the society it serves.

**Conclusion**

This article has addressed a number of factors discussed in the literature which pertain to the employment of women in a military context. The review has not been exhaustive, its parameters having been defined by a previous discussion paper outlining the views of current serving members of the ADF (Chapman, 1999).

It is intended that this article further inform the development of a quantitative attitudinal and sociodemographic questionnaire to be administered to a random, stratified sample of ADF personnel later this year. The questionnaire will canvass the feasibility of policy initiatives designed to increase the operational effectiveness and length of service of female members of the ADF. In so doing, it is important to note that a number of these initiatives are gender neutral in that they may prove equally beneficial to both men and women. The questionnaire will ask close-ended questions (providing a multi-choice response format) in addition to presenting a number of hypothetical scenarios describing conditions of service and flexible employment practices.

Whilst it may be argued that disproportionate coverage has been given to the employment of women in combat, this issue is considered the most fundamental of all reforms designed to enhance the integration and operational effectiveness of women in the ADF. To date, this issue has been debated in the safe confines of a parliament residing over a nation providing small-scale involvement in peacetime operations. During the Israeli War of Independence this nation state witnessed the sight of mutilated female corpses and suffered the knowledge that they had little influence over the ethics of their combatants. The Israeli experience represents a sobering lesson –
and one we here in Australia are yet, hopefully never, to learn.

NOTES


2. It is unclear whether Maubert feels that women too are folly to such weakness, but given his declaration that women are not psychologically, physically or emotionally equipped for combat, it seems unlikely he would advocate their exclusive employment in command positions.

3. Admittedly, it was not made explicit whether these women were externally or internally motivated (that is, were awaiting the completion of a return of service obligation or had postponed motherhood in order to more firmly establish themselves in their military career). It is assumed that had the decision been externally motivated Voge would not have presented this finding in the context of a discussion pertaining to career commitment.

4. It is yet to be established whether a reversal of the policy currently excluding women from combat would have this effect.

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Sarah Chapman works as a Research Psychologist in a civilian capacity, within the Directorate of Strategic Personnel Planning and Research. A reserve lieutenant (Psych) in the Royal Australian Navy, she examines issues affecting submarine personnel. Sarah is currently working on a project that pertains to ADF progress in integrating women into submarine service.
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What a difference a century makes
On 12 May 1999 the Chief of the Defence Force, Admiral Chris Barrie, RAN, opened the “Women in Uniform: Perceptions and Pathways” Conference. The Conference, organised by the School of History, University College, was held over two days at the Australian Defence Force Academy. It was the first Conference held in Australia to include International and Australian academic, civilian and uniform presentations on the past, present and future of women in defence force, police and fire service careers. In his opening address Admiral Barrie referred to the integration of personnel as an issue which represented a major cultural challenge for the Australian Defence Force and an important priority. The last 90 years has seen enormous change in Defence Force personnel policy and the alteration is no better exemplified than in the integration of women naval volunteers.

During World War I both the United Kingdom and the United States recruited women into defence force auxiliaries. In the United Kingdom 8,000 volunteers served in Army auxiliary positions, 24,000 with the RAF and 7,000 with the Women’s Royal Naval Service (WRNS).1 In the United States a similar utilisation of women volunteers occurred after the then Secretary of the Navy Joseph Daniels asked “Is there any law that says a yeoman must be a man?”2 By the end of the war 34,000 women served with the United States Navy, Marines, Coastguard and Army and Naval Nursing Corps in non-combat positions. In both the United States and the United Kingdom the Women’s Auxiliaries were disbanded following World War I and reformed in the first part of World War II. During 1917 the Soviet Union formed a women’s frontline battalion known as the “Battalion of Death”. The acceptance of women in combat positions in the Soviet forces expanded during World War II.3

In Australia during World War I, women’s defence auxiliaries were not formed. Of the Western allies Australia, proportionate to population, suffered the highest casualty rate, save only that of New Zealand. Of an Australian population of approximately 4,000,000, some 417,000 volunteers were mobilised to fight the enemies of Great Britain and 60,000 died. The sacrifice made by so many was committed to national legend, the legend was revered, the legend was sacred and the legend was masculine.

As yet another generation prepared to follow Great Britain into war large numbers of Australian women again mobilised themselves into self-funded, para-military organisations. Women members were ridiculed but they continued to drill and learn skills they believed would be in demand if and when their country chose to recognise their resolve and willingness to serve. Two of these organisations in particular, the Women’s Emergency Signal Corps (WESC) and the Women’s Emergency Naval Service (WNS), would provide an invaluable, trained nucleus for what would become the Women’s Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS).4

Australia declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939, within hours of Great Britain. As thousands of men were enlisted and convoys to another conflict in the Northern Hemisphere, the Australian Government continued to demonstrate a reluctance to admit women to the Defence Forces. By 1941 the demand for manpower had outstripped intake levels. The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) was increasingly troubled by a shortage of wireless operators. WESC signallers were skilled morse code instructors and eagerly offered their expertise. The Minister for the Navy in 1941 was the 78 year old William Morris Hughes. He would advise the Australian Prime Minister, “in my opinion the employment of females in the navy is undesirable”.5

As the Axis nations accelerated their conquest of Europe and the Japanese shadow lengthened in Asia, the Australian War Cabinet had little choice but to consent to the “final option”, the induction of women volunteers. The Australian Womens’ Auxiliaries were formed in 1941. In April the first women arrived at the Naval Wireless Transmitting Station, outside Canberra, still dressed in the bottle green uniforms of the WESC. Naval authorities were awkward and uneasy with their new charges and women personnel were accommodated in two self-contained houses on the perimeter of the base. The Commanding Officer was skeptical and insisted that the women be tested in his presence. A signaller was chosen and placed on the busiest channel. Warrant Officer Sid Willetts,

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From Exclusion to Submarines – The Integration of Australian Women Naval Volunteers

By Kathryn Spurling, Australian Defence Force Academy
RAN, observed “the operator on the other end must have wondered what had hit him because the lass made him sit up. The girl could certainly tickle a morse key”.6

The telegraphists took their places on the station watch bill. Telegraphist Jess Prain remembered, “I’ll never forget how frightened and tired we were, always so tired. Most of us were only eighteen or nineteen and yet we were sending and receiving vital signals from all over the world.” Jess Prain would be the telegraphist who on 16 December 1941 despatched to all Australian ships the message that Australia was at war with Japan. The war in the Pacific would force the change in naval policy long awaited by women.

Australia had traditionally focused its loyalty for and trust in British protection. With the crumbling of the Singapore defence strategy, the destruction of Australian naval ships in the Battle of Savo Island, the first of many Japanese bombing missions on the Australian mainland, and a submarine attack on the city of Sydney, those who administered the RAN were faced with the inescapable fact that the naval defence of the nation could no longer be met by an all male volunteer force. Members of the WNS were requested to assist the RAN as the survivors of Savo returned to Sydney. One remembered “We were there handing out razor blades, cap tallies etc… I recall with great delight one battered hero’s first words on first sighting us were, ‘Gawd bloody women’”. The sailor’s reaction was one being repeated in the highest echelons of the Royal Australian Navy, although perhaps not with such honest inflection.

When Pearl Harbor was bombed there were a mere 26 women volunteers employed by the Australian Navy. Not until 1 October 1942 were they actually enlisted in the Women’s Royal Australian Naval Service. It had taken the largest threat to face Australia before the male monopoly on naval service was broken. Official decree did not however rid career naval administrators of their innate resistance to women in their ranks and recruiting proceeded at an excruciatingly slow pace. Many would-be volunteers simply tired of waiting and enlisted in the Army or Air Force. One volunteer observed “Administration was totally unprepared for us”.9 For the first women volunteers accepted there were no uniforms, accommodation or wages.

The direct attack on Australia had a profound effect on its people. Australians referred to Britain as “the motherland”. But the parent had been unable to help the child in its time of need. The ideologies of Australians were challenged. And then there was another onslaught, one million American GI’s. These new protectors from the United States were popularly referred to as “over-paid, oversexed and over here”. Australian women had been disenfranchised from the Australian military legend and notions of “mateship” but here they were too, demanding a role in the defence of their country. Many women wishing to enlist faced family resistance. One volunteer recalled taunts that she “would be ruined”.10 Another delayed telling her parents until the day before she was to catch her train. Her father’s advice was “don’t get pregnant, you won’t be welcomed home, and please don’t marry an American”.11

The first WRANS Officer Training Course did not commence until January 1943 and the basic WRANS structure not established until the beginning of 1944. No sooner had these breaks from tradition been conceded by a reluctant administration but the WRANS found restrictions placed on expansion and diversification. By March 1944 there were an estimated 49,000 women serving with the Australian Defence Forces but the WRANS complement consisted of only 58 officers and 1,738 enlisted.

Despite the strong commitment of those who served, the Australian Naval Board stubbornly resisted WRANS expansion. When General Douglas MacArthur requested further WRANS personnel for Supreme Allied Fleet Headquarters in Brisbane, his request was rejected. To make up the shortage of personnel, members of the British, United States and New Zealand women naval auxiliaries were brought to Australia. Furthermore when MacArthur’s staff left for the Philippines, WRANS personnel were not permitted to leave Australia.

Senior RAN naval administrators treated women volunteers with great conservatism. Whereas women Air Force volunteers could choose to serve in 53 different occupations, women naval volunteers were restricted to 27. Trade training was closed to WRANS personnel. The WRANS was the last women’s auxiliary formed, the last to officially enlist volunteers and the last service to appoint officers. Throughout the war the WRANS was permitted to retain the smallest complement of the three women’s auxiliaries and serving members faced fewer opportunities for training, and transfer, than members of the other services. Unlike their Army and Air Force peers they were not permitted to serve overseas and only in forward positions on the Australian mainland two months before peace was declared.

VJ day marked Victory against Japan. For women in the Australian armed forces the victory was also a defeat. Even before many of the country’s servicemen had returned to Australian shores the women’s services were being demobilised. At the same time as
approval was given for the WAVES to be a permanent arm of the United States Navy and the WRNS assumed similar status with the Royal Navy, the last WRANS volunteer was discharged.

It would take Australia's commitment to the Korean War before this short-sighted attitude was reversed. Even then it would take enormous pressure from the Australian Government before the resistance of senior naval administrators was overcome. The reformation of the WRANS was announced on 18 July 1950 but the announcement was premature and inadequate planning ensured that the WRANS would not be an immediate reality. The very restrictive processes imposed on the WW II operation of the service were again implemented. Margaret Curtis-Otter was advisor on the re-establishment of the WRANS. Curtis-Otter had served with distinction during WW II. Although willing to resume her commissioned rank to oversee the service, she was a married woman and married women could not serve in the Australian Defence Forces or any permanent Government position. Curtis-Otter was amazed by the animosity of senior naval administrators towards women personnel. One opinion expressed was that women officers should not under any circumstances be permitted to exercise control over enlisted men. Curtis-Otter replied that "If the WRANS is to be part of the permanent service it seems reasonable that male ratings should be educated to acceptance". Too many members of the RAN viewed women as intruders who should never be allowed permanency in their navy. This sentiment prevailed despite an overwhelming willingness of women to serve. In the first two weeks of WRANS recruitment, 1,500 applications were received for the 250 billets available. The first enlisted WRANS were accepted for service in January 1951. The willing response continued but a year later the WRANS numbered only 304.

With the end of the Korean War Australian defence faced budgetary constraints. Because defence forces derived their sense of worth from combat-readiness, non-combat components were the first to go. The WRANS fared badly. To a degree acceptance of the WRANS was dependent on the position of women in Australian society. The 1950s and 1960s in Australia comprised an era when women were circumscribed publicly to the roles of wife and mother. It was also a period when the demarcation between male and female, real and imagined, had never been more emphasised. The dominant definition of "femininity" and the role of women was in no way compatible with the attributes traditionally seen as being necessary for a career, let alone one in the defence forces. Whilst it was generally accepted that able bodied young men would wish to defend their country there remained an unwillingness to permit the same commitment from able-bodied young women. Public disapproval of women in uniform, and the accompanying accusations of immorality and masculinity, were no longer tempered with the patriotic incentive of war.

The WRANS remained on the periphery of the Australian Navy. Members of the service were placed in unchallenging positions which best personified "feminine traits". Rather than challenge the social definition RAN administrators emphasised it. Whereas the women's component of the Army and Air Force was maintained at around five per cent, by 1956 the WRANS had been allowed to dwindle to fewer than 200 members. Official status for the WRANS came in 1959 but the Government legislation made little difference to the tiny token force. Male administrators declared the WRANS to be excessively expensive because of the small number of personnel involved, yet it was they who restricted the number of women volunteers accepted for service. Why? The official justification evolved around ship/shore rosters but this could not justify the depth of the neglect. Strategies and mechanisms which had evolved over centuries had created a naval culture which consciously excluded women. The WRANS barely survived the era.

As Australia entered the Vietnam War and pledged "All the way with LBJ" the opportunities of women naval volunteers gradually improved. At the end of 1969 the Australian Government permitted women public service members who married to remain permanent staff. The removal from the permanent public service of women on marriage had ceased in the United States and United Kingdom following the end of WWII. For the Australian Defence Forces this was a most significant alteration. Members of the Women's Auxiliaries could no longer be removed from the forces when they married. With the impetus generated by International Women's Year, equal pay was implemented in 1978 and the first women officer candidates joined the Royal Australian Naval College, Jervis Bay. Women Midshipmen and officers were permitted to carry swords on ceremonial occasions from 1981.

The following decade would see further landmark legislation. In 1984 the Sex Discrimination Act became law and forced change on the defence forces, the most significant being that serving women could no longer be discharged automatically for reason of pregnancy. On 7 June 1985 the WRANS regulations were repealed, the service disbanded in 1986 and the
WRANS and the RAN integrated. Some members of
the WRANS mourned the demise of their service and
were unable to accept the progression. They saw
themselves abandoned to an unsympathetic
organisation. The WRANS had been a safe harbour,
the challenges minimal, the boundaries understood.
Some had relished the separate sphere and had drawn
comfort from it. These individuals did not wish
change, they clung to the traditions of old and could
not embrace the new dimension.

There was some justification for concern. The
irony was that through the process of evolution, naval
women had begun drifting into combat-related duties
and the Act was a retrograde step because it included
a waiver on such assignments. Suddenly women
members found themselves faced with an even
playing field. But the playing field was not even. In
the RAN personnel were accorded deference and
promoted on their sea experience, yet women
volunteers had none, nor were they permitted to go to
sea. One young woman officer referred to hers as “the
lost generation”. Women recruits were inducted as
members of the WRANS but shortly into their
separate training they were informed this would
change. It was a tumultuous era. The trauma was
nonetheless necessary because the very separateness
of the WRANS was detrimental to the status of
serving women. The very female nature of WRANS
personnel nullified their existence in the scheme of
naval service. Unfortunately the RAN had been
captured underprepared and personnel were not
adequately forewarned and informed.

In 1986 the Australian Government opened the
Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) in
Canberra. This combined the Naval, Army and Air
Force Academies. The traditional colleges would be
retained to train direct entry officers but ADFA would
accept officer candidates at University level, who
would be fully integrated. Never had such an
opportunity been offered to women officer
candidates. There have been problems, highlighted in
the 1998 ADFA Sexual Harassment Report. The
Review Team found “the level of unacceptable sexual
behaviour” was high as was the tolerance of such
unacceptable behaviour amongst cadets and military
staff.14 As so often has happened the human
dimension was lost in decisions made on economic
and political grounds.

During this decade the pace of human rights
legislation has continued to force revision on the
Australian Defence Forces and their personnel. In
1990 combat-related duties were opened to women.
At this time 11.3 per cent of Australian Defence
Force personnel were women.15 As of June 1998 15.5
per cent of personnel were women.16 This places the
ADF as a leader in defence personnel integration. At
the end of 1997 14.4 per cent of United States Armed
Forces personnel were women compared to only 7.5
per cent of those serving in the Defence Forces of the
United Kingdom.17

The integration process has not been easy. The
Royal Navy had HMS Brilliant, the United States Navy
had Tailhook, the Australian Navy had HMAS Swan.
Faced with continued procrastinations from some senior naval officers to open more than token
sea billets to women personnel, the Chief of Naval
Staff, Vice Admiral Mike Hudson, RAN, issued the
instruction that women would be sent to sea in the
destroyer escort Swan. In 1992 several women
members of Swan’s crew were subjected to
c onsiderable harassment and discrimination. The
Naval Board of Enquiry found the Swan affair “a very
useful case study of the way in which female
personnel have been integrated onboard RAN
warships”, but failed to fully appreciate the human
carnage. It did acknowledge that the “Navy climate
condoned uncouth behaviour, the liberal use of
alcohol and a degree of misogyny”. It was also
admitted that the ship itself had been “inadequate and
inappropriately fitted” for mixed crews. The decision
to send more women to sea was correct but its
execution was a hasty improvisation. Swan personnel
were not properly prepared and there should have
been a closer scrutiny of those who would make up
the crew of this ship. A Senate Enquiry and
considerable embarrassment for the Navy resulted.18

Of the Swan affair one newspaper editorial
concluded that the “real proof of the Navy having
learned a lesson will be from a new attitude, and from
new scope for men and women to develop in the
service.”19 The Navy did learn from the lesson of
Swan and successive Chiefs of Navy have committed
their service to the implementation of positive policies
for the full integration of naval personnel. Of the
Australian Defence Force the RAN now leads the
way in its treatment of and opportunities offered to
serving women. Some statistical evidence of this is as
follows. At the end of 1998, 15.1 per cent of
personnel were women. 15.1 per cent of naval
personnel were women, 22 per cent of recruits under
training were women and 36 per cent of all
Midshipmen were women. In 1995, unlike the Army
and Air Force, the Navy dropped its quota on women
entries to the Defence Academy. Since then women
Midshipmen have made up around 40 per cent of the
naval student body. Women have held command on
land and at sea. Currently Lieutenant Commander
Jennifer Daetz is the Commanding Officer of the
survey ship HMAS Shepparton, Commander Sue
Jones is the Commanding Officer of the Communication Station at North West Cape. Commander Vicki McConachie will shortly assume command of HMAS Kuttabul in Sydney. In 1998 ten women sailors and one officer commenced Collins class submarine training and are currently serving at sea. Women volunteers are restricted from only one branch, “Clearance Divers”, the Australian equivalent to the United States SEALS. This is currently under review. The navies of the United Kingdom and the United States watch the service of Australian women submariners with great interest because unlike the RAN they have yet to adopt such a progressive stance. How the wheel has turned.

Problems do remain. Human nature being what it is, means the complete eradication of unacceptable behaviour is unlikely, indeed the naval lifestyle tends to exaggerate human failings. But this has been too often condoned under such anachronistic suggestions as “male bonding”. Policies such as “Good Working Relationships” (GWR) were implemented to educate personnel into greater acceptance and understanding. There will always be the need for the Navy to interpret and resolve fairly and continue to closely evaluate and educate its personnel. Perhaps the greatest threat to equal opportunities is not now from within but from without. Altered social values forced the RAN to change. The RAN may now need to resist social tension. In the current climate of political conservatism encouraged by recession and unemployment there is pressure to return to times past. Battles won appear now to have to be re-won. The obsession with the warrior ethic, muscles, civilian sensibilities, political proclivity and of course, sex, continue to undermine women’s equality in the defence forces. Australian Government policy continues to discriminate against servicewomen with the bar on women serving in direct combat.

On 5 May 1998 Midshipman Megan Pelly lost her life during a fire at sea onboard HMAS Westralia. A graduate of the Australian Defence Force Academy Megan embodied the spirit of a young person who believed it was her innate right and responsibility to commit herself to the defence of her country. She did not wish to be seen as a woman officer but as a professional naval officer. The non-combat rule did not protect Megan from the inherent dangers of a naval career, yet because she was not, and could not be a “combatant”, sadly in the minds of some her sacrifice is somehow diminished.

It could be suggested that specific immigration patterns, the uniqueness of the continent’s ecology, the particular historical period in which European settlement took place, combined to create an

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Force</th>
<th>Total Force Numbers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>7,418</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>15,700</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>213,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>198,139</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>1,447,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Military Women Personnel Strengths by Nation, 1998-99

Australian society which was male-dominated. This was no better exemplified than in the nation’s defence forces. But the demographics of the Australian population and an individual’s right to bear arms in defence of their country necessitate, indeed demand, the complete acceptance of volunteers regardless of their gender or sexual orientation. As Admiral Barrie, the Chief of Defence Force suggested on 12 May 1999, the integration of women represents a major cultural challenge for the Australian Defence Force and is an important priority.

NOTES


3. Lieutenant Valeria Khomyakova is believed to be the first woman pilot to shoot down an enemy aircraft, a German Junkers Ju-88, in 1942. Captain Katya Budanova flew in the Soviet 586 air group and was credited with 11 confirmed kills before she was shot down by a Messerschmitt in July 1943. Senior Lieutenant Liya Litvyak had 12 confirmed kills before her Yak-1 aircraft was shot down in August 1943. Litvyak had flown 168 missions and was 22 years of age when she died. The Soviet 588th Night Bomber Regiment flew more than 24,000 sorties and dropped 23,000 tons of bombs. Known by the Germans as the “Night Witches” the regiment was made up entirely of women air crews, mechanics and bomb loaders. Soviet women also served in tank corps and rifle battalions. The exemplary service of these women disputed some of the argument used in western societies against the service of women in front line corps. See also http://pratt.du/~rsilva/sowomen.htm and H. Rogan, H. Mixed Company, Beacon Press, Boston, 1982, p. 88.


5. Australian Archives, ACT, MP 151, Navy Office (IV), Correspondence Files, 1923-1950 series.


12. DWRANS Files; “Re-introduction of the Peacetime Service”, file no. 302/201/10.


15. ADF personnel numbered around 70,000. Women personnel numbered 1,879 in the RAN (12.1 per cent), 2,593 in the Army (8.5 per cent) and 3,194 in the RAAF (14.4 per cent).

16. ADF personnel number 47,756, as of 30 June 1998. Women personnel number, Navy 2,164 (15.2 per cent), Army 2,704 (18.0 per cent), Air Force 2,550 (16.0 per cent). The RAN has maintained a higher percentage of women officers than the RAAF.


Japan’s entry into the Second World War (WWII) is most often associated with its attack on United States forces in Hawaii on 7 December 1941. Yet some hours before that attack took place Australian forces had made contact with other elements of Japan’s military, the advance guard of its invasion force in the South-West Pacific theatre.

Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and Australian Army elements under British Commonwealth command played an active role in the early days of the Pacific War. As part of the Operation Matador, RAAF 1 Squadron Hudson’s tracked the Japanese invasion force bound for Thailand and the Malay peninsula in the days preceding Japan’s simultaneous attacks on targets across the Pacific. In a vain effort to stem the Japanese thrust, 1 Squadron Hudsons and hastily gathered Army units engaged the Japanese in the first hours of the conflict in the air and on the ground.

Since November that year the British commander of Commonwealth forces in the Far East, Air Chief Marshal Brooke-Popham, had received intelligence of an increasingly strong concentration of Japanese sea, land and air forces. To defend Malaya against the Japanese he had formed a plan known as Operation Matador. The plan relied on the Japanese firing the first shots after which Commonwealth forces could respond. Until the Japanese attacked, little could be done except to wait and prepare for the expected invasion. The only questions were where, when and in what numbers?

While the Japanese and British-led forces played a military version of cat and mouse, Thailand’s ruling powers were about to confront an unusual opportunity. A watershed moment in Thai history was about to break. Following the Japanese invasion of Thailand, lay not only the immediate fate of the European powers’ SouthEast Asian colonies, but for the Thais their greatest and most cherished possession was at risk, the survival of the Thai nation itself. The implications for Thailand were not only felt immediately, but in the longer term the Thais had to

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**A Footnote in History December 1941: The Japanese Invasion of Thailand**

_By Squadron Leader Kevin Smythe, RAAF_
Japanese troops take up position in the streets during the invasion of the Malayan Peninsula
consider just who might dominate their world at the conclusion of the war.

At 2240 hours, 7 December (US time) 1941, US State Department secretaries Hull, Stimpson and Knox had gathered in conference. According to Stimpson’s notes, Hull was sure that the Japanese were “planning some devilry” and all were wondering where they would strike. At 0200 hours 8 December (Thai time), a Japanese invasion force commenced an attack upon Kota Baru in Malaya and soon after began landing troops in southern Thailand.

The Japanese attacked Malaya and invaded Thailand on 8 December 1941, several hours ahead of the attacks on US installations in Hawaii. Attacks were also launched against several other parts of Thailand ranging from Aranyaprathet on the eastern border with Cambodia to Pattani in the far south close to the border with British Malaya. The RAAF fought decisive and courageous actions from their Kota Baru airfield in Malaya, while two reserve units supported a British-led column that advanced into Thailand. Australian naval involvement was limited during this period, with the notable exception of the role of the HMAS Vampire which had escorted the RN ships Repulse and Prince of Wales as they sailed north in search of the invasion fleet. Both capital ships were to founder in one of the most shocking incidents of the war when they came under sustained Japanese air attack.

On 9 December, Japanese aircraft armed with torpedoes left Saigon to attack the flotilla as it passed Kuantan on the Malayan east coast. RAAF Buffaloes from 453 Squadron, Sembawang, were sent to assist. On arriving, aircrew were only to see the Prince of Wales go under. In an astonishing act of chivalry the crews of the Buffaloes witnessed the Vampire, unmolested by the Japanese airmen, rescuing the hundreds of men in the water.

In retrospect, the story of Thailand’s role in the early part of the South-East Asian theatre of WWII was a by-play to more strategic concerns. To the Thais it was a time of high drama and high stakes. Their response to the Japanese invasion and subsequent coercion into the war was aimed little at the intentions of the main players, but moreover, based on a power struggle between elite Thai revolutionaries. Democratic forces had forced a constitution upon the King just nine years before when they staged a daring coup to oust Thailand’s Chakri ruler, King Prajadipok, Rama the Seventh. The principal player was the venerable General Phibul Songkram.

Phibul was a conservative soldier who had played an important part in the 1932 coup against King Prajadipok, the 7th Rama king. As the winds of change blew across Asia with Japanese authority increasingly in the ascendant, Phibul began to assert greater dominance in Thailand’s international relations. By 1938, he had become Prime Minister. One of Phibul’s first moves was to change the name of the nation from Siam to Thailand, notably placing the nation at the centre of the Thai peoples of the region. This move was to have ramifications when the Thais sought recovery of their Lao and Cambodian provinces from the French, and in 1942, Thai forces moved into the Shan state in British Burma and later the four northern Malayan states.

At the same time Phibul moved against the Chinese business class who had taken a strong hold on the economic structure of the nation. To some, his actions mirrored the German leader of the times, as he sought to control the economic activities of a powerful non-indigenous economic class and at the same time looked for territorial expansion to bring the wider group of Tai under his protection. Phibul was an autocrat and he admired the Japanese way of opposing the occidental powers resident in Asia.

To further strengthen his power-base Phibul encouraged Thai nationalism and invoked the memory of French and British encroachment upon and forceful possession of Thai territory to justify his policies. During the reign of Rama the 5th, colonial powers had forced the Siamese into unpopular territorial concessions. Neither Phibul nor patriotic Thais had forgotten these acts of European power.

Phibul was a wily power-broker and knew where to focus the nation’s attention. He had leaned on the Chinese for political reasons. The Chinese in Thailand were, at the outbreak of the war, a powerful economic force. Thai-Chinese relations during Phibul’s reign deteriorated with parallels being drawn between the Jews of Germany and the Chinese of Thailand. The Thai-Chinese had reacted unfavourably to the Japanese invasion of China in the 1930s and over Thailand’s role in supplying rice and commodities to Japan. Phibul put in place anti-Chinese laws to ensure greater indigenous Thai control over the economy. Twelve cultural mandates were instituted between 1939 and 1942 to reinforce Thai culture and “national awareness”.

\[\text{Thailand Under Phibul}\]
By 1940 the Axis pact between Germany, Italy and Japan had been signed. Under this agreement Japan would be allowed to pursue its need to develop the “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere”, “extending from Burma to the Gilbert and Ellis Islands in the east and Timor in the south.” Phibul was a shrewd politician and by early 1941 he had steered Thailand firmly into the Japanese orbit.

Political and Military Opportunism

Political changes in Europe had resulted in control of France’s Indo-chinese colonies passing to the Vichy Government. Phibul took advantage of France’s wartime plight and in 1940 Thailand went to war with French-Indochina in pursuit of the Cambodian and Laos territories, which it had lost to the French in the late 19th century. The Thais bore animosity toward the French from the 1893 loss of Laos and Cambodia, and saw in France’s weakened state a chance to act to restore Thai pride. In recovering lost territories, Phibul was to display his irredentist policies for the first, but not the last time.

Japan was able to mediate a settlement in this conflict between Thailand and France, with the result that Thailand regained its territories in Laos and Cambodia. A deterioration in relations with the West followed as Thailand moved seemingly closer to burgeoning Japanese hegemony. In response, the US cancelled orders of fighter planes and the British moved troops to the Thai borders with Malaya and Burma.

Phibul was now engaging in political and military brinkmanship. Despite Thailand’s apparent friendship with Japan, Phibul was clearly aware that Tokyo viewed the kingdom exclusively for Japanese use. On 7 December, 1941, the Japanese ambassador to Thailand sought the Thai Prime Minister to inform him that Japan had declared war on the US and now requested that Japanese troops have right of passage through Thailand. Phibul was, coincidentally, out of town touring the new Cambodian provinces and under Foreign Minister Direk Jayaynam, Thailand refused the Japanese request.

Japan, under the Axis pact agreements, had been able to move into military bases in Vietnam in the late 1940s to position troops in preparation for its move into the war. Japanese Minister of War, General Hideki Tojo had ensured that Indochina would serve Japan well when he ordered troops into the French colonies leaving the hapless Vichy Government with no option, but to accept occupation of its Asian colonies. From this action it drew an agreement with the French to utilise its bases from which Thailand, Malaya and Singapore, the Dutch East Indies, Pacific colonies and eventually Australia could be threatened. Western reaction resulted in trade embargoes and an ultimatum to withdraw from Indochina and mainland China, where Japanese troops had waged war since 1931. Japan defied the West’s terms, and opted for war.

Thailand was now enmeshed in developments moving beyond its control. For Phibul and his sympathisers this was a unique opportunity to move Thailand to the world stage and at the same time consolidate their own political agenda. Long an independent nation, the Thai Government’s first and foremost responsibility was to maintain its political independence and territorial integrity. Thailand’s borders were already subject to colonial pressure with its western and southern flanks under British colonial control and its eastern border now under Vichy control, though increasingly dominated militarily by the Japanese. Within the region lay even more European controlled colonies: Ceylon, Singapore, Hong Kong and the Dutch East Indies amongst them.

To the Thais, the traditional European menace was now compounded by the Japanese thrust. The Thais brooked favour with neither, the Japanese nor the Europeans, and to them it was, as it had been for centuries, a matter of survival against foreign aggressors. However, unlike the Europeans, the Japanese advance offered opportunities for gain. The Japanese had courted the Thais and saw the military benefits of a quick transit through Thailand, as had already been achieved in Vietnam. Phibul foresaw the chance to regain territories, and at the same time ensure his place in history as a great leader who had humbled the Western powers. He acted in response to the prevailing circumstances and set his plan in motion.

As 8 December approached, frantic diplomatic and military planning was underway in Tokyo, Bangkok and in the British Headquarters of Singapore and London. At this time Australia was involved in the European theatre and was poorly prepared for action in the Thai-Malay peninsula. Commonwealth troops, many of them reserves and irregulars, were thinly scattered in support roles across the Malayan peninsula. The majority of British and Allied combat troops were at this time committed to the European action.

By the beginning of 1941 Phibul firmly believed that totalitarianism was the ideological wave of the future. This belief coincided with Phibul’s burgeoning ambitions of total power. Attempts to have himself
crowned king and the renaming of the reclaimed Cambodian provinces to Songkram Province revealed Phibul’s true egotistic and autocratic nature. His military background, authoritarian style and ruthless elimination of competitors made him a natural ally of totalitarianism.15

Phibul also harboured anti-European feelings, having seen his country’s borders and dominance within the region reduced by successive political and military forays by the French and British. Thailand had been dispossessed of its Shan state provinces in Burma, its southern provinces now belonged to British Malaya and its eastern borders were re-drawn with France taking its Lao and Cambodian provinces. It had suffered continued territorial losses in maintaining its independence and of this Phibul was keenly aware.

On 11 March 1941, Japan signed an agreement with Thailand over two enclaves in Laos and much of north-western Cambodia.16 These areas had been annexed earlier by the French under the 1909 treaty and to the Thais were a welcome gesture of friendship in the face of European dominance. Thailand now controlled the entire west bank of the Mekong and much of Battambang province. The agreement indebted Thailand to Japan and drew the country deeper into the Japanese military fold.

Phibul, employing the traditional Thai ploy of playing off all sides against each other, now sought military equipment from both the US and Great Britain. By late 1941, neither country saw any benefit in assisting the seemingly Japanese-sympathetic Phibul Government. Whilst Phibul played politics, the National Assembly viewed the encroaching Japanese situation with far greater concern. In late 1941 a law was passed curtailing the number of Japanese “visitors” entering Thailand. This law effectively halted the invasion of Japanese military scouts collecting data on landing sites for Japanese troops.17

By December 1941 Bangkok was certain that Japan would enter the war. The Thai Government promptly decreed that it was the duty of all Thai citizens to resist, to the death, any invasion of Thai soil.18 This policy, to the outside world, seemed contradictory given Thailand’s close and profitable relations with Japan. To the Thais it was nothing of the sort. When prominent parliamentarian and later Prime Minister M.R. Seni Pramoj sought clarification of Thai policy from Phibul he was rebuked. Phibul pointed out that while some saw his policy as pro-Japanese and others saw it as pro-Western, it was in fact nothing of the sort. It was, he said, simply pro-Thai.19

By 7 December 1941, matters had taken a serious turn. At 2230hrs, the Japanese ambassador informed the Thai Foreign Minister, Direk Jayaynam, that Japan had declared war on the US and UK and their allies. Japan requested the right of passage through Thailand into Malaya and Burma. This request was summarily rejected by the Thai cabinet. Just three and a half hours later, on 8 December at 2 am, Japanese forces began landing in Thailand. The 5th Division, 25th Army, landed at Pattani, Songkla and on the island of Koh Samui in the Gulf of Thailand. The Guards’ Division, 25th Army, landed elements at Samut Prakan at the mouth of the Chao Praya River, south of Bangkok. From Cambodia, Japanese troops crossed the Thai border at Aranyaprathet.20

Strangely, Phibul was not in Bangkok at the time of the Japanese invasion. He had gone to the province of Battambang, ostensibly to inspect military units. In his absence the Thai cabinet, lacked the authority to act against the Japanese. Deputy Prime Minister, General Adun Adundcharat presided over the Thai cabinet, but was not empowered to make decisions to adequately defend Thailand. While the Thais procrastinated, a second wave of troops landed in the south at Chumphon and Prachuap Kiri Khan along the Kra Isthmus. Local Thai units resisted fiercely, notably in Songkla and Pattani, but by the next day Japanese forces had secured footholds in Songkla, Pattani, Koh Samui and Haadyai and had effectively surrounded Bangkok.21

Phibul immediately returned to Bangkok to assess the situation. News of Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor, the Philippines and Hong Kong had by now reached Bangkok. Pleas to the US and Great Britain had produced no support. It was clear that the US and Great Britain would not assist and that Thailand was isolated and on its own. Phibul assessed the only feasible option as being to accede to Japanese demands and on 8 December at noon Phibul ordered all Thai forces to cease fighting. His action undoubtedly saved thousands of lives and averted a national catastrophe of proportions not experienced by the kingdom since the fall of Ayuthaya to the Burmese in 1767.

This view of Phibul’s decision-making intentions is not shared by all historians of the era. Phibul’s actions may cast him with some as a patriot, but in doing so, it should equally be argued that his actions strengthened his role as a virtual dictator, now with Japanese support. This view was given added strength when Phibul declared war on the US, Great Britain and all their allies on 25 January 1942.22
JAPANESE INVASION ROUTES
INTO THAILAND,
December 7 - 8 1941

LEGEND
- Route
- Railroad
- Road
- Railway Station
- Bridge
Plans for the assault of Malaya had been underway since 1940. The Japanese 25th Army was assigned to the task and planning became the responsibility of Lieutenant Colonel Masanobu Tsuji. Operational command was assigned to Lieutenant General Tomoyuki Yamashita. Yamashita had long been in command, but had little combat experience. However, unlike his British counterpart, Lieutenant General A.E. Percival, he learned fast.

The Japanese initially planned that four Divisions could conquer Malaya. But Yamashita, working on intelligence information, had lesser respect for the British forces, reckoning only three divisions would be needed. He based his assessment on the fighting capacity of the Commonwealth forces under Percival and the knowledge that, whilst numerically superior, Percival’s forces were poorly trained, had little experience in jungle warfare and in many cases had little familiarity with their commanders, many of the experienced officers having been transferred to European assignments.

Yamashita invaded with the 5th and 18th Divisions, plus the Imperial Guards and the 3rd Tank Group (180 tanks). His forces totalled 40,000 soldiers supported by 530 aircraft of the 3rd Army air group and the Imperial Japanese Navy. Their assault upon southern Thailand, the Malay Peninsula and eventually the British fortress of Singapore, was one of the war’s most stunning victories.

Japanese training and planning for the invasion had been meticulous. Preparations were conducted in secret beginning around 11 February 1941 with amphibious assaults staged in Japan on Kyushu and Hainan islands. Intelligence was well prepared and accurate. The Japanese had left little to chance.

British intelligence was not to blame for military ineptitude. British commanders were well aware of the Japanese plans and that extreme danger lay to the north. Ironically, staff college exercises across the region often used Singapore as a model for strategic planning purposes and any number of officers and strategists knew that its vulnerability lay to the north. GOC Malaya 1936, Major General Dobie had, in fact, predicted a strategy of invasion via Kota Baru, Songkla and Pattani. To Britian’s ultimate loss, his advice went unheeded and it was via this route that the Japanese struck late in 1941.

The British Commander-in-Chief, Far East in 1941 was Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham. Brooke-Popham was not idle in addressing the problems that lay before him. He devised a defence strategy, known as Operation Matador to ensure the protection of Malaya and Singapore. The plan involved an advance into Thailand to counter the likelihood of attacks on the Thai port towns of Songkla and Pattani. Both ports were accessed by paved roads running directly across the rugged mountains to the west and provided the only suitable transport links capable of supporting a large invasion force moving towards Singapore. However, Brooke-Popham’s plan had a strategic flaw. Thailand’s neutrality would prevent British forces from entering that country to enforce the plan. While the plan would prove to be far-sighted and logical, its enforcement was impractical due to a policy dilemma which prevented the British entering neutral Thailand. Brooke-Popham was unable to convince London of the advantage of such an action, should it be necessary and the plan was never fully activated.

Brooke-Popham needed at least 60 hours advance notice should invasion forces leave their Indo-chinese bases, time during which his forces could enter Thailand and establish defensive positions to counter the Japanese at Songkla and Pattani. Ironically, in the end he was politically, rather than militarily, outmanoeuvred. British adherence to political convention and Thai neutrality, had forestalled vital defensive initiatives. It was a convention that the Japanese had no intention of honouring.

As the invasion hour approached a game of cat and mouse broke out involving the British, the Thais, the Japanese and Americans. The Americans had for some time, been able to break Japanese codes generated by the “Purple” machine and had clear knowledge of Japanese intentions. In partnership with British analysts, who had broken the German enigma codes, the Allies now had access to Japanese plans. Brooke-Popham knew of the invasion plans and of Thai internal power struggles amongst pro-British and pro-Japanese elements in the Thai cabinet. Pro-Japanese elements under Phibul were looking for an excuse to provoke a British invasion, which they would interpret Operation Matador to be, should it be activated, establishing a case of just cause if military assistance from the Japanese was to be sought.

In early December, Brooke-Popham got a break. The British Prime Minister, Churchill, agreed to his plan. Churchill, however, expressed doubt over the quality of British, Indian, Australian and New Zealand troops on the ground in Malaya and Singapore, though together they comprised 30 battalions. In addition, two battalions of Malay troops and Indian state forces were available. The
Australians made up several infantry battalions and support units. The force comprised 87,000 men, but was made up of many volunteers and untrained conscripts. The Japanese, on the other hand, were battle hardened from their lengthy Chinese campaigns.

Amazingly, the British Command did not operate a jungle warfare training school, nor had any intention of building one. Consequently, the ground forces of Brooke-Popham’s command were poorly equipped for jungle warfare. Sensing the vulnerability of Brooke-Popham’s troops, Churchill invoked a plan of his own. British hopes for a stout defence of Singapore and the peninsula were put in place on 2 December 1941 when Churchill’s Z Force elements HMS Repulse, HMS Prince of Wales and four destroyers arrived in Singapore. In an act to prove ultimately fateful the task force carrier, HMS Indomitable, was stranded in the West Indies after running aground. Its absence was to deny the Task Force Air, vital air protection and in the end it was air power that was to sink both Repulse and Prince of Wales. So great was the shock of the loss of two of the Royal navy’s finest ships Churchill was moved to comment; “In all the war I never received a more direct shock”.28

While the US forces’ fate in Hawaii was yet to be realised, the Japanese struck Thailand and northern Malaya at three points around 2 am on Monday, 8 December 1941. Conditions were stormy, with seas high. The RAF Station at Kota Baru near the Malay-
Thai border was hit first in a devastating display of air power backed by seaborne landings. Kota Baru was defended by the 3rd Indian Corps who met the Japanese in blinding monsoon rain. Despite fierce resistance and difficult landing conditions the Japanese quickly establish a beachhead. The RAAF, for its part, flew continuous sorties against the Japanese troopships, sinking one and damaging two others. Japanese casualties of 900 dead and wounded were the heaviest single engagement casualties of the entire campaign. For Hudsons were unable to contend with superior Japanese air power and forced to withdraw.30

**Commonwealth and Australian Forces in Thailand: The Kroh Column**

Krohcol was ordered to advance into Thailand and secure a point known as “The Ledge”, a piece of high ground 50 km inside the Thai border. However, by the time the column formed and moved out the Japanese were well on their way down the Pattani-Kroh road. The column was a depleted force compared to that originally planned. It comprised the 3/16 Punjabis and an Australian motor transport unit, the 2/3 Reserve Motor Transport Company. It was later reinforced by the 5/14 Punjabis and was supported by the 2/3 Motor Ambulance Convoy. Krohcol crossed into Thailand at 1330 hours, 8 December 1941 with the Punjabis being transported by the 2/3 Reserve Motor Transport Company to the “33.5 km peg to Betong” and immediately met resistance from, ironically, Thai border police who viewed the column as an invading force. However, after negotiations, the Thais yielded and the column entered Thailand. Matador was underway, but by now the Japanese were well ashore and on their way down the Kroh and Songkla roads.

The column never reached “The Ledge”. The Japanese arrived first with their 42nd Infantry Regiment. Krohcol clashed with the Japanese on Wednesday 10 December and after sustaining heavy casualties was forced to withdraw. Just three days later the dispirited and defeated column retreated across the Malayan border.

Australian forces had been involved in the Japanese invasion of Thailand in the air and on the ground. RAAF aircraft from Kota Baru and a collection of transport corps soldiers and ambulance company personnel had found themselves at the front line as the Japanese commenced their thrust upon Thailand and down the Malay peninsula. Their actions were to prove futile, though the RAAF did inflict heavy losses on the Japanese Navy as they landed troops in southern Thailand. HMAS Vampire was seemingly the recipient of an act of military chivalry, when Japanese Navy aircraft torpedo bombers which sunk the British ships, left the Vampire unscathed to assist in the rescue of sailors.

Buffaloes of 453 Squadron RAAF from Sembawang, Singapore were at the scene only to see the Prince of Wales go down. Their records indicate that they observed survivors rescued by the Vampire, unmolested by the enemy.31

The Japanese had attacked Thailand at nine locations on 8 December 1941. Aside from the landings in the south and the attack on northern Malayan airfields, the Japanese Imperial Guards advanced on Bangkok from Aranyaprathet. By noon on the 9th, they had encamped a few kilometres from Bangkok. The days after the 8th were a confused and hectic period for the Thais. On 8 December, Prime Minister Phibul ordered Thai forces to cease resistance. Fighting, however, continued and Japanese hopes of fostering a spirit of co-prosperity with the Thais had taken a serious blow. Nevertheless, Thailand had reached agreement with Japan. It was a masterly piece of political compromise and, in historically consistent Thai style, a face-saving
outcome as the Thais confronted overwhelming odds and emerged almost unscathed. The Thai-Japanese agreement had four main clauses: Japanese combat troops could transit through Thailand; Japanese troops would not disarm Thai troops; Japanese forces would not remain in Bangkok; and through the agreement no political or military alliance was implied.\textsuperscript{33}

Despite the existence and form of the agreement, Thailand once again did a volte face. On 21 December, 1941, Thailand signed a treaty of alliance with Japan. Finally, on 25 January 1942 Thailand declared war on the US, the UK and their allies.\textsuperscript{34} The agreement with Japan was by no means a popular decision. Phibul had expelled anti-Japanese members of his cabinet, but in Washington his ambassador to the US, Seni Pramoj, refused to present the US Government with the Thai declaration of war. This declaration effectively spawned the Free Thai (Seri Thai) movement a disparate group of overseas based Thai citizens who fought vigorously to protect their homeland. Prominent liberal Pridi Panomyung led this movement from inside Thailand. After the war, Pridi was to become prime minister while Phibul went into hiding before returning to power in 1948.

The Japanese invasion of southern Thailand ensured that Australian military forces would be the first to not only record military actions against the Japanese in WWII, but also that their first actions inside the long independent Thai Kingdom would be recorded in Australian military history. Whilst Australian forces’ engagements with the invading Japanese were, at this stage of the war, fleeting and futile, this footnote in history is linked to a more unusual aspect of the war in the Pacific theatre.

The circumstances prevailing at the time of Thailand’s entry into WWII presented Thailand’s leaders with choices that would determine the future of the nation. Thailand did not seek participation in the war but was compelled to react following the Japanese invasion of the kingdom on 8 December, 1941. The invasion forced the political heavyweights of the era to decide on the immediate good for the nation, which meant capitulation and cooperation with Japanese forces.
In strategic terms Thailand’s role in acting as the staging point for the Japanese invasion of British Malaya and Singapore cannot be overlooked. The Japanese assault on Thailand provided the springboard for successful attacks on Malaya, Singapore, the Dutch East Indies, Papua and New Guinea, Pacific islands and eventually Australia.

Though the British were aware of the Japanese invasion plan for Thailand, Thai political intransigence and British political inaction ensured that Operation Matador could not be enforced. Had Matador been implemented the British may have forestalled the invasion and avoided the loss of both British Malaya and Singapore. Australia’s military role in Thailand’s balancing act was small and operationally minor. Like the Commonwealth forces with whom it fought, the Australian forces inability to provide serious defensive capabilities was an example of the misassessment by planning staff of the capability required to halt rampaging Japanese forces. Nevertheless, Australia was able to be there at the outset and its role in Thai military history marks the only significant action in the two country’s mutual military histories.

Australia’s role in Operation Matador and eventually in Thailand was as a part of a British-led Commonwealth force and, disregarding the clash with Thai border police at Kroh, Australia did not engage the Thais as an enemy force. Australian forces in action in Thailand during this phase of the Second World War were engaged in defensive confrontations, though ones with implications for the years that lay ahead as Japanese forces came eventually to threaten Australia itself.

While, to their own peril, the British ignored the Japanese build-up, the Thais used the situation to reclaim lost territory. Phibul gambled and used his nation to judiciously seek greater personal power. In the end, he was unable to bring neither glory, nor prosperity to his people.

Phibul himself had covered his bets. His cleverly worded alliance with the Japanese ensured that Thailand did not clash with the Allies, although the foray into Burmese territory, in the Shan states, approached confrontation with the British. Similarly the gains in Indochina, with the Vichy colonialism were shrewdly calculated. Phibul saw himself as a patriot and claimed that his actions were in fact directed to Thailand’s long-term survival.

The Japanese invasion of Thailand had drawn an unwilling Thailand into the war. Quite amazingly, at the conclusion of the war and after reparations had been sought from Axis allies the Thai nation was able to emerged intact, free and able to resume its pre-1941 status as an independent nation. Ironically, the nation was able to resume its sovereign status under the title bestowed upon it by the discredited Phibul: Thailand, the Land of the Free.

NOTES

5. L. Wigmore, ibid., p.144.
6. Chinese merchants in Siam were sensitive to Thailand’s trade with the Japanese who had waged war in China during the 1930s. Their conquest of Nanking and other atrocities had caused tension between the Thai Government and the Chinese community.
7. ibid., pp. 253-255.
10. ibid., p.256.
11. ibid.
13. ibid., p.9.
15. ibid., p.256.
16. ibid.
17. ibid.
19. ibid., p.10.
20. ibid., p.11.
21. ibid., p.18.
22. The declaration of war is a fascinating study of Thai realpolitik and is worthy of a separate assessment. Whilst the declaration was passed to and accepted by the British, the US never received nor accepted the declaration as universally popular. This view was as much to do with the Seri Thai (Free Thai movement) as it was with US post-WWII foreign policy and respective colonial movements in the post-War period.
24. ibid.
25. ibid., pp.11-12.
26. ibid., p.12.
27. ibid., pp.10-13.
28. ibid., p.13.
29. ibid., p.32.
30. ibid., p.32.
31. ibid., p.22.
33. Noted in Unit Intelligence Summary 8 Dec 41.
35. J. Haseman, op.cit. p.15.
36. ibid., p.18.

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Squadron Leader Kevin Smythe graduated from Officer Training School in 1981 and was posted for duty as an Education Officer. Squadron Leader Smythe has experienced a succession of postings where he gained expertise in regional affairs, particularly Thailand and Indonesia. An attachment to Thailand in 1986 developed Squadron Leader Smythe’s interest in Thai language, culture and military history. After attending the RAAF School of Languages in 1987 as a student and subsequently as a staff member, Squadron Leader Smythe was posted to the Indonesian Air Force Command and Staff College in 1990. A Thai, Indonesian and Pacific languages linguist, Squadron Leader Smythe holds masters degrees in English and Arts (International Relations). He is currently studying for his MBA at Monash Mt Eliza Business School.

### RAAF heritage awards

Written records, drawings, paintings and photographs have formed an integral part of Royal Australian Air Force and national histories. To enhance the existing records of its activities and to foster and encourage interest in its heritage, the RAAF has established the Annual Heritage Awards.

There are three Awards (Art, Literature and Photography). The prizes for each category are as follows:

- **Art**
  - 1st $3,500
  - 2nd $1,500

- **Literature**
  - 1st $5,000
  - (no secondary prize)

- **Photography**
  - 1st $1,500
  - 2nd $500

### Applications for entry

Applications for entry in the Heritage Awards must be made on the official Entry Form. Entry form and brochure are available from the Air Power Studies Centre on request.

Entries should be submitted in accordance with the details on the Entry Form.

Reviewed by Bill Crompton

Steve Eather’s book is a fitting tribute to the Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight Vietnam and 135th Assault Helicopter Company. The book is extremely easy to read thanks to the almost conversational style, and the mix of detailed information and many anecdotes from those actually involved in the various operations and incidents, makes the reader feel they are actually there with the participants.

Those interested in high level analysis of the war or the vexed questions of the wisdom of Australia’s involvement in Vietnam will be disappointed as the background to the war is only covered in sufficient detail to set the scene. This is a book about men who volunteered to serve their country and got on with the job that the Government called upon them to do.

There are lessons in this book that appear to be enduring and should be remembered by decision makers in the current climate particularly when downsizing and civilianisation are the order of the day. In particular, the critical role of non-aircrew members of the flight as combatants should be remembered. Without uniformed maintenance personnel, cooks and stewards etc. to act as door gunners, operations could have been severely constrained by personnel shortages. Is this flexibility being lost as a result of contracting out many of these support functions? Another important lesson is the different perspectives and imperatives that drive those at the front, as opposed to those supporting and controlling the war fighters from secure areas thousands of kilometres away. The dangers and problems inherent in using the procedures and doctrine of forces many times larger than our own, who are prepared to operate in massed formations and to absorb casualties in both men and equipment, are also addressed in some detail. There are also interesting insights into the ability of any force or nation to surge or sustain high operational tempos.

Get The Bloody Job Done is an enjoyable and informative read and is recommended for anyone with an interest in military aviation, the Vietnam War or merely in search of a good book.


Reviewed by Alister Pope

I rarely read fiction as there are more than enough real-life issues, stories and incidents to fill in my available reading time. However, occasionally a book such as this, with a plausible fictional plot, but using actual organisations and situations comes along which is worth reading. This is such a book.

If Chris Ryan’s description of the British SAS’s recce’s, planning techniques, equipment, training and outlook sound authentic, it is because they are. Chris spent ten years in 22 SASR and made history in the Gulf War of 1991 as the only member of the ill-fated and poorly planned Bravo Two Zero patrol operating behind Iraqi lines to evade capture or death. His factual book on that experience “The One That Got Away” became a best seller and was perhaps the catalyst that fired his desire to become an adventure writer.

The Kremlin Device is well written and the descriptions and details of training and behaviour are obviously drawn from experience. This gives the book a very authentic feel to it that makes it easy and enjoyable to read. Having read the biographical version I found it strange that the author gives his characters less heroic traits in fiction than in the real life story. These SAS men have more weaknesses and are less derring-do than the real life troopers who took part in the Bravo Two Zero patrol. The human foibles of the fictional soldiers detract slightly from the story line and slow the pace of what is after all escapist adventure. Some further padding involving small descriptions of unrelated incidents can also be distracting. For instance, there is a bemusing account of an incident involving an incompetent mugger. This lone, young Muscovite follows three obviously fit and alert strangers along a riverbank apparently seeking an opportunity to rob them at knifepoint. This is unlikely enough, but the poor fellow has chosen to prey on three SAS soldiers. He loses the contest, but is treated with minimum acceptable violence, according to the law and the rules of war. Well, it is fiction.

Despite these distractions, which appear to simply be added as padding (you can just hear the publisher demanding 200,000 words – and not one less!) the
Kremlin Device is a relaxing read. The story is declared early and there is no mystery, hidden twists or subterfuge in it. I must admit that I constantly tried to work out which of the Russians would turn out to be the double-crozer. I was disappointed, as Chris is not into complex Le Carre type plots. His skill is in describing the plain mechanics of special forces operations at Team and Squadron level. That is what he does well, and that is what makes this book readable for any soldier killing time waiting for a patrol to start, or the transport to turn up. And, while being entertained something might be learned too, so it is worth some space in the backpack.


Reviewed by Flight Lieutenant H.S.Brennan RFD

This book could almost be called the personal diary of Staff Sergeant Ray Wyatt as he has transcribed, I would say, very accurately the life and times of his experiences from the period directly before the 1939-45 war to the cessation of hostilities. Ray Wyatt does not conceal his respect for the Australian Army during the period he was assigned to duty in Australia and the islands. Each chapter carries a map of Australia as background for chapter title and a much smaller map as breaks between sections in each chapter.

The early part of the book takes us through the latter part of the Great Depression on his family farm where conditions were anything but good to his enlistment in the US Army where he trained as a Signaler and was given convoy duty in the States before shipping out to Australia in mid 1942 via New Zealand. After a period in Melbourne his Signals Unit travelled to Darwin via Brisbane and Central Queensland which would have been an experience for the US servicemen as at that time transport was very basic. On arrival in Darwin the troops found a devastated city as a result of the Japanese air raids and our failure to provide sufficient troops and aircraft to counter the Japanese onslaught, however the US servicemen stationed in the Darwin area seem to have been pretty lucky as they managed to travel round the area and meet up with all sorts including Aborigines who apparently amazed the troops with their lifestyle. One point which Ray Wyatt makes mention of is the possible fate of Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan who both perished supposedly at sea during their programmed round the world flight in mid 1937, the unofficial Australian feeling was the same as the US, the Japanese got them and spirited them away because of what nowadays would be infringement of air space. Ray also makes mention of the midget Japanese submarine which was captured and on display at Garden Island, Sydney, strangely enough I was on leave in Sydney after completing a Driver Operators wireless course at about the same time.

After completing R&R in Melbourne and Sydney, Ray was transferred to New Guinea, being stationed at Finschhafen in control of communications and where he found a very considerable alteration to climate after Darwin, instead of dust and heat he received tropical weather where it rained and was also very hot.

From descriptions given by Ray the joint Services did not receive the same volume of air raids as was the case in Darwin, also the time had come when the Allies were on the offensive and were giving instead of receiving plus jungle warfare is totally different to open or desert warfare. During his tour of duty Ray found time to mix with the Native population where possible and learn some of their customs and beliefs. Because of his almost three years of overseas Service his health was suffering and he was posted for discharge back in the USA. During his time as a radio cryptographer he broke the Japanese code, copies of which are in the book as are 78 black and white photos, several maps plus an official publication on what to do as a POW, copies of which I have never seen. To anyone buying the book I would advise “read the outer back cover first” as it summarises the Service life and return to civilian life of Staff Sergeant Roy A Wyatt very well. An account of wartime experiences extremely well put.


Reviewed by Garth Pratten, Consultant Historian, Army Doctrine Centre.

In his introduction to To Sandakan, Christopher Dawson writes, “Charlie Johnstone was a good bloke”. Throughout the book, this is indeed what he comes across as, an ordinary decent man thrown by the fortunes, or perhaps more aptly, the misfortunes of war, into three years of harsh captivity as a prisoner of the Japanese.

The title is a misnomer; To Sandakan is not the original diaries of Charlie Johnstone, an Australian serving with the RAF who was taken prisoner by the Japanese in 1942, but a retrospective narrative that has been composed from these, much of which were
kept ingeniously concealed from his captors inside spliced playing cards. In reality, Johnstone only spent five months of his time as a POW in the camp at Sandakan and moved on long before the horrific marches of which we are all aware. Moved from Sandakan in August 1943, Charlie Johnstone spent most of his time as a POW in equally wretched conditions at Kuching. It appears that the title has been chosen more as a marketing ploy than as an appropriate reflection of the contents of the work. To Sandakan would have been more aptly titled To Kuching.

Johnstone’s story is one told without pretentiousness. His prose is uncomplicated and in some places a little repetitive, but this plain simplicity is part of To Sandakan’s attraction. Charlie tells of the desperate and ultimately fruitless airborne defence mounted in the face of the unremitting Japanese assault against Singapore and Java. He then goes on to detail the four-year struggle for survival in the face of Japanese inhumanity. It is a story which is both disturbing and uplifting and even amidst the descriptions of the misery of the Japanese camps, there is room for subtle humour.

The engaging simplicity of Charlie Johnstone’s story is disturbed by the continual presence of Christopher Dawson. From the introduction onwards, Dawson’s journalistic background is evident, he highlights the sensational and he makes a habit of adding as it does to a steadily growing body of Australian POW literature, including Peter Henning’s The Doomed Battalion, Patsy Adam-Smith’s Prisoners of War, the Weary Dunlop books, Russell Braddon’s classic The Naked Island and Betty Jeffrey’s White Coolies, and considering the latent suspicion of the Japanese, that much of Australia still harbours as a result of the Second World War, one of the main premises of Dawson’s prologue, that the POWs of the Japanese are Australia’s forgotten heroes is a little hard to sustain.

After setting the scene for Charlie Johnstone’s story with his introduction and prologue, Dawson persists in interrupting the narrative with short paragraphs providing additional information. The need for these paragraphs is questionable; the original narrative is quite capable of standing on its own merits. Often Dawson is merely retelling Charlie’s story, but without any of the original simple understatement. Dawson’s superfluous interruptions become downright annoying.

It should be acknowledged that Dawson’s contributions are at times interesting and an informative complement to Charlie’s story, but if they had to be included it would have been far better to have placed them in footnotes, endnotes, or in a consolidated introduction or conclusion to each chapter. Any form that did not interrupt the narrative flow of the book would have made for a better read all round.

Complemented by a large format, clear and comprehensive maps, and a number of photographs, To Sandakan serves to remind us of the courage, resourcefulness and determination of ordinary blokes like Charlie Johnstone who found themselves in very extraordinary circumstances. Charlie’s last sentences epitomise the style and content of his story: “Of course, I will never forget this episode in my life and even now, so many years after, I sometimes dream I am still in a Jap prisoner of war camp and will never get out. It is a terrifying experience.” It is just a shame that Christopher Dawson did not see it fit to let Charlie have the last word and had to “rabbit” on for another two pages.

PRISON CAMP SPIES by Howard Greville, $20.00 p&p from AMHP, 13 Veronica Place Loftus 2232, soft cover, 127pp, well illustrated

Reviewed by Flight Lieutenant H.S. Brennan RFD

This book is an account of POW life for the British Army and the ANZACS following the fall of Greece to the German and Italian Armies early in the 1939–45 war, which was a shambles according to Howard Greville’s account of the German assault on Greece, the combined forces of British and ANZAC being severely outnumbered in the air war and ground assaults. From the commencement of the story the British or rather English style of understanding events leads one to believe that there was little fighting with disastrous results to the Allies as Howard writes in a very laid back style however his description of the Allies surrender is done with respect to the forces concerned.

One detail which I picked up early in the story was the fact that Germany was one nation who signed the Geneva Convention which contained sections on the treatment of POW’s but that Japan and Russia were not signatories which would be one good reason for the extremely harsh treatment of our Australian POW’s of the Japanese. Howard’s description of early treatment of prisoners of the Germans and Italians was reasonable except for food supplies which were only very marginal except for those POW’s who were assigned heavy work in the areas where they were compelled to work on railway line replacement or heavy farm work.
Throughout the story, AIF, New Zealand and Allied troops are mentioned in the sense of “mates” with the English however French POW’s were not on similar terms. The feeling one gets from the general terms of the story is that provided one behaved oneself the German guards were not all that severe on the prisoners, however, should one or more attempt to escape and be caught again it would mean periods of solitary confinement and removal to a large compound. Howard Greville moved through several small camps but as he tried to escape was confined to Stalag XV111 A situated in Austria. During his time as a POW he worked on the railways, logging camps and farms. In some ways it is a pity that he did not expand on his account of prison life as one gets the feeling that he has glossed over numerous adventures and account of mixing with the civilian population of the areas in Austria where he was confined, however mention is made of at least two accounts of close alliances with Austrian females as apparently the POW’s were allowed to fraternise with civilians and also people in camp although such doings were frowned upon by guards and camp administrators. Another point which I thought should be given more prominence in the story was his role in the collecting and passing on of any important information on troop movements and matters of interest to the Allies. On his return to England the government department for this type of material apparently did not give much in the way of value for his efforts.

Throughout the book are numerous photographs and maps, all black and white, an Index of people, a General Index, a Bibliography and Glossary and Acknowledgements.

Taken overall the book is an interesting story of POW life and provides the reader with an insight into what went on without being sensational. At the price well worth buying.


Reviewed by Wing Commander John Steinbach

On the tenth anniversary of Pearl Harbor, Australia agreed to accept defence of the Middle East as its first military priority. To David Lowe, that was counter-intuitive, subverting textbook orthodoxy and motivated him to want to know “the bigger story.” This book is the result of that quest, a complex history of Menzies defining Australia’s Cold War; how the Prime Minister’s seemingly simple anti-communism created a complex of convoluted foreign and defence policies, often unmatched, from Coalition efforts to have an international yet always token presence, and so to be seen shoulder to shoulder with our allies. Anti-communism was to be the means through which Australia’s international position would be given expression. Domestically, it came down to efforts at eliminating communists regarded as fifth columnists, while preparing the nation to accept the prospect of World War III breaking out in the early 1950s. These were linked by the imperative for national development: Menzies saw defence preparations as leading the post-war expansion of Australia’s economy directed by a national security state. The centrepiece of that was a National Security Resources Board (NSRB) set up to manage war preparations through the optimal allocation of finance and materiel to essential industries. However, the NSRB was almost moribund by June 1952. Despite much hullabaloo at its inception, it failed so much so that when Menzies went to Washington in February 1954 he had to practically beg Eisenhower for equipment for the Australian Divisions that were supposed to defend Malaya. When asked at a 1957 Senate Estimates hearing about the effectiveness of Menzies’ war preparations, Sir Frederick Shedden would shock his listeners, admitting that it had all been rather ineffectual and wasteful.

Lowe, like Andrew Moore in The Right Road? sees Menzies’ anti-communism and his concerns about a third world war as genuine and not some ploy to win elections. Of course given the narrow margins in electoral support between the ALP and the Coalition, where literally every vote counted, it is always easy to assume otherwise. The threat that Menzies saw was all-encompassing: there was no tenet of Australian faith; no material basis to Australian living which Communists could not get at. Yet as Lowe writes, “the threat which the Cold war purportedly posed for Australians came home more strongly with Menzies’ accession”, and that his dominance in Cabinet grew in direct escalation of international tension. The messenger and not the message figured. Chifley firmly rejected the idea of Australia having three years to prepare for war and the ALP never accepted Menzies’ sense of urgency even if it acknowledged international tension. In hindsight, it was right.

The Australian version of the security state was to be built on consensus yet at no time did more than just over half of the Australian electorate believe that. Efforts to mobilise public opinion even though the largely conservative Australian press backed Menzies, would be limited by his inability to compromise: by nature and training he was strongly
adversative and the organising principle of his party was, after all, anti-socialist. If Labor eschewed national service, Menzies became its champion; when Labor decided to recognise the PRC, his mind was made up; when the Federal Executive voted against sending troops to Malaya, Menzies’ wavering on that point ended and he dispatched a battalion in 1955, not as the vanguard of a force to combat an attack from the north as per the Harding Plan (the creation of SEATO had made that redundant and the US no longer supported the idea), but to fight the Terrorists which by then were, even according to the Official Historian, a spent force. However, the urge for involvement overseas was strong. Once the Coalition had adopted “forward” defence, an overseas destination and an anti-communist cause had to be found, Labor having proposed that Australia should be defended along her northern shores from what Menzies contemptuously referred to as Martello-like towers.

Menzies and the “Great World Struggle” offers great insights not only into Menzies’ pervasive anti-communism but also how his earlier experiences shaped his decisions. The book is scholarly and makes extensive use of the primary sources Lowe used to write his Cambridge doctoral thesis. It is richly and thoroughly documented. He shows us how Menzies successfully married the Communist threat to traditional and popular Australian fears: of Asians, of coloureds and of isolation which curiously also echoed the conservatives’ mobilisation of anxieties based on the threat of modernity to established values such as the family, the Christian religion and individuality. Lowe even hints that Menzies may have wanted to play the part of a wartime leader, an opportunity denied him in 1940; this time around he would be stymied by constitutional impediments. As Lowe noted, Menzies was so frustrated when the High Court in 1951 decided Australia was technically not at war even though Australian forces were active in Korea, that he tried to get the definition of war changed to include its “cold” form by seeking statements from overseas statesmen with similar views. What does come out of this book is a sense that much of what Menzies was up to was primarily ideologically inspired, that he identified the national interest as his own and that if Menzies was not there, things may have worked out differently. Menzies failed to see that ideology had no exclusive hold on policy making.

Staff Colleges and universities frequently use almost mechanistic models with a rational path to show how foreign policies are developed. These rarely admit personality into that process because it is still regarded as improper. How does the psychological outlook of a leader caught up in his own rhetoric or even “big-noting”, a term not then in fashion, figure? Lowe has shown that the basis of much of Australian foreign policy making in the early “fifties was driven by domestic circumstances as much as external factors, more precisely, by Menzies’ own predilections. And that’s why Australians were earmarked for the Middle East. It was fortunate for Australia that the threats Menzies enunciated to induce fear into the nation to get consensus, were after all, largely imaginary or irrelevant.
The Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial Appeal

This Memorial will be built in the Botanical Gardens, Wendouree Parade, Ballarat.

Boer War
1st World War
2nd World War
Korean War

When you go home tell them of us and say we gave our tomorrows for your today.
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34,537 Ex-P.O.W. Names will be engraved into the Granite Wall

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