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The Australian Defence Force Journal is published as the Journal of the Australian Profession of Arms. As such the Journal seeks to inform and promote discussion on important issues of national and international defence and security matters. The Journal aims to provide an avenue for members of the defence community to make a contribution to the debates on a range of issues including; strategy, tactics, logistics and related defence topics.

This edition of the Australian Defence Force Journal marks the start of a new phase in its production. The recent survey has given us a better understanding of reader’s expectations. But its capacity to publish is determined by the submission of suitable articles. Improving the overall quality of the Journal is my principal aim.

Readers will notice some immediate format and layout changes in this edition. Other developments will be introduced over the course of the year. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome.

M.F. Bonser, AO, CSC
Rear Admiral, RAN
Commander Australian Defence College
Chairman Australian Defence Force Journal
Coaching and Mentoring in the Australian Army Senior Leader Development Program

by Lieutenant Colonel L. Carroll

In April 2000 the Chief of Army’s Senior Advisory Group (CASAG) endorsed the recommendations of the Officer Professional Effectiveness Review—Army (Project OPERA). OPERA constituted the most extensive review of Australian Army officer employment in over 20 years and proposed a range of initiatives designed to achieve an ambitious Officer Professional Effectiveness (OPE) Vision for the 21st century. One of the proposed initiatives was the establishment of a discrete Senior Leader Development Program (SLDP) within Army; however limited resources curtailed its detailed investigation. This article is based on the first post-OPERA examination of the SLDP concept and focuses specifically on the potential role and use of coaching and mentoring within the mooted program.

The conceptual treatment of senior leader development in Defence has typically been grounded on progressive, sequential training and education, and often been limited to segments of the officer corps i.e. focusing on either junior or senior officers, but rarely on both (Australian Army 1978a and 1978b, Downes 1989, Commonwealth of Australia 1995, Smith 1998). Project OPERA’s proposed SLDP departed from this paradigm and foresaw an integrated system of management and development catering for officers between the ranks of Major to Major General (Australian Army 1999, 57). The OPERA team perceived that this program would cut across and challenge the thinking and culture associated with the present system of career management. It would not simply be ‘a course of training or education but (involve) the intensive and targeted management of an officer’s developmental experience’ (Australian Army 1999, 57).

Project OPERA’s consideration of the SLDP was, by its own admission, ‘an immature work in progress … limited to the principles that might support such a program’ (Australian Army 1999, 57). But the suggestion of potential in other than course based learning is key to this article in two respects. First, it marks the already mentioned departure from past and present conceptual treatment of senior leader development. Secondly, it shows the importance of conducting more detailed examination of alternatives such as coaching and mentoring. This latter point raises a notable anomaly because despite referring to coaching and mentoring, the OPERA team made no detailed statement of the role they could perform or how they should be used. Thus, their suggestion of considerable ‘research (still being) required to determine the way to build Army’s future strategic leaders’ (Australian Army 1999, P. 1) posits that coaching and mentoring have a place within the SLDP, but that this ‘place’ has yet to be properly defined.

The aim of this article is to examine the potential role of coaching and mentoring in senior and potential senior leader development in the Australian Army in support of Project OPERA and the OPE vision. It firstly defines some important terms and then outlines the SLDP concept...
before describing and contrasting coaching and mentoring theory. It situates this assessment within current Army doctrine and practice in order to discern key questions which are then analysed. The article concludes with a theory and recommendations on how coaching and mentoring could be applied in furthering the concept envisaged by Project OPERA.

Defining Parameters

For the purposes of this article, the following definitions are adopted:

- **Coaching.** A process used to encourage employees to accept responsibility for their performance, enable them to achieve and sustain superior performance, and to treat them as partners in working towards organisational goals. This is done by the performance of two distinct activities: coaching analysis (i.e. analysing performance), and coaching discussions (i.e. face-to-face communication) (Harris and DeSimone 1994, 267).

- **Mentoring.** A process by which an expert person facilitates learning through the arrangement of specific learning experiences. The mentor must actively involve the learner in thinking, acting and problem solving, guiding them into extending and constructing knowledge (Tovey 1999, 14).

- **Officer development.** The sum of learning acquired through formal and informal vocational training, academic and military education, workplace experiences, career management and tutelage.

- **Potential senior leader.** An officer ranked from Captain to Lieutenant Colonel in whom the potential for advancement to staff rank has been identified.

- **Senior leader.** An officer of staff rank i.e. Colonel and above.

The SLDP Concept

The idea of a discrete program to develop senior leaders is not new. As early as 1978 the Regular Officer Development Committee (RODC) identified that the development of Army’s senior leaders and staff officers was deficient, and recommended that ‘a senior officer development program be commenced as soon as possible’ (Australian Army 1978a, 4–28). However, over ten years later, Downes observed of the broader Australian Defence Force (ADF) approach that ‘without significant improvements in senior officer professional development programs, they (senior officers) will almost certainly be insufficiently prepared to cope effectively with the future challenges and responsibilities of senior officership’ (1989, 67). Downes went on to outline a range of options including education and preparatory experiences similar to those suggested by the RODC. Whilst changes occurred, that a further decade later Project OPERA
could be highlighting similar issues implies a pattern of incomplete, sporadic action over the preceding 20 years.

OPERA argued for a change in approach towards Army senior leader development in order to meet the needs of the OPE vision and to ‘ensure that the most talented and committed people find their way into senior decision making roles’ (Australian Army 1999, P. 1). This argument was based on the view that ‘false assumptions’ were undermining the approach to senior leader selection and that the two interdependent driving forces shaping army officer behaviour and attitudes (command and promotion) may not be ‘appropriate performance criteria’ for selection. (Australian Army 1999, P. 7).

This is an important argument because if selection (currently based largely on performance appraisal, which is in turn a substantive product of coaching) is in question, it infers a need for either better coaching or a changed selection process. OPERA’s concept entailed the careful identification and selection of potential strategic leaders and the meticulous development of these officers through a discrete program. This implies a hitherto understated role for coaching in identification and selection, and a place for mentoring in terms of development. The latter is particularly emphasised by one of the more important dimensions of the OPERA proposal; the clear articulation that the concept should span the officer corps, i.e. feeding from the junior into the more senior ranks in a much more deliberate fashion than is currently the case.

The suggested features to enable this included identification and selection, developmental experiences, training and education opportunities, and management of the transition between experiences and career phases. This concept is depicted in Figure 1 and is grounded in the view that ‘if the potential senior leader is to make it to the top with a broad range of skills and still have time to contribute significantly to the organisation, there is not much time for detours—they must move fast, develop quickly and have a variety of jobs’ (Australian Army 1999, P. 11).

Project OPERA’s focus on developmental experiences and the management of experience and career stage transitions is also important, because it accentuates the limited attention currently paid to these two factors. Coaching and mentoring might also support them, but whilst OPERA documents (Australian Army 1999; Australian Army 2000) make frequent references to them, the problem is that they contain no detailed assessment of what the two actually are, nor of what they entail. This is significant, because proposed SLDP ideas such as fast tracking and transitionary assistance as yet have no real substance in terms of how they might be conducted. A further unexplored dimension concerns how the time liability for learning might be ‘collapsed’ in order to enable ‘speed’. It is difficult to see sustained advantage in the proposed ideas without more options for accelerating the learning process, thus allowing those selected to ‘move fast, develop quickly and have a variety of jobs’. Gibson, Tesone and Buchalski for example, cite a mentoring relationship collapsing two years of work experience into six months (2000, 62). The traditional ‘training–education–experience’ based paradigm has therefore been ‘up gunned’ with the addition of OPERA’s promising new ideas, but these lack sufficiently detailed consideration of the threads that must run through them to cement
strategic leadership as a core competence within Army. Increased emphasis on coaching and mentoring could provide these critical threads because of their capacity to enhance individual performance and to impact on the nature and speed of learning.

Figure 1 – Project OPERA Principles for Strategic Leader Development and for the SLDP  
(Source: Devised from Australian Army 1999, 55–58 and Annex P)

Coaching

Perceptions on the role and contribution of coaching to individual development vary. Moorby (1991, 423) notes that it was written about significantly in the US earlier than elsewhere with Mahler (1967) being one of the first commentators, followed by Moorby (1973) and Singer (1974) in the UK. Zeus and Skiffington (2000, 4–5) believe coaching draws heavily on adult learning principles dating to the 1950s and 60s, but is still a ‘discipline … in its infancy’ with ‘competencies, tools and techniques’ which are still being formalised and developed. There is thus diversity in the way various authors define it. Harris and DeSimone (1994, 266–7) maintain ‘there is no single agreed upon definition’ and while some (Fournies 1978, Kinlaw 1989), ‘define it narrowly as a performance improvement technique’ (in which coaching effectiveness is essentially grounded in the ability to conduct a coaching discussion) others (Kirkpatrick 1982, Peters and Austin 1985, Evered and Selman 1990) take a broader perspective which draws similarities between organisational managers and sporting coaches. Thus, ‘some authors use the term coaching to describe both a broad approach to performance management and a specific technique to facilitate it’ (Harris and DeSimone 1994, 266).
The emergent picture of coaching is thus one of accurate performance analysis followed by effective interpersonal communication with the purpose of enhancing and developing skills, and an end-state of building both the individual and the organisation. Further, it is framed within a philosophy emphasising learning as key to the effectiveness of the effort expended. In this respect it presents similarly to some perspectives of mentoring.

Notably, Harris and DeSimone (1994, 267) delineate that ‘an employee’s direct supervisor or manager bears the responsibility for coaching. While other managers in the organisation can serve as mentors, teach a new skill, or help overcome a specific problem, coaching occurs within the context of an ongoing relationship between employee and supervisor’. This is because the supervisor is ‘uniquely equipped’ with information, opportunity and authority that is not available to someone outside the work unit. Smith (1992, 112) and Smith (1998, 292) support this employee–supervisor philosophy, the former contending that ‘... coaching is relatively performance oriented with a here-and-now emphasis ... It almost always involves an individual and that person’s organisational subordinate, and concentrates primarily on short-term immediate requirements’ driven largely by the supervisor. Less transactional in tone, DuBrin (1998, 259) suggests that coaching ‘is a way of enabling others to act, and to build on their strengths. To coach is to care enough about people to invest in building personal relationships with them’. Unlike Smith (1992), Tovey (2001, 296) does not see coaching as a purely short-term focused activity and believes that as a process, ‘coaching develops confidence, trust, and cooperation between staff and management and results in increased commitment and performance by all’. Tovey’s coaching process perspective is illustrated below and identifies: some of the skills required by the coach, the foci of the process, and the desired outcomes in the subordinate.

The perceived benefits accruing from effective coaching include higher motivation, increased personal development and confidence, and improved group performance. This happens because effective coaching ‘makes team members aware of one another’s skills and how these skills can contribute to attaining the groups goals’ (DuBrin 1998, 261). Rylatt (1994, 239) believes that improving coaching skills ‘provides organisations with the best opportunity to develop workplace learning or business potential’ and can have a daily transforming effect on productivity, morale and learning. Zeus and Skiffington (2000, 37) unequivocally describe the pressures of achieving and maintaining competitive advantage and navigating ‘through the constant changes and demands of the marketplace’ as contributing to the rising popularity of (business) coaching. Notions of a more demanding and complex operating environment are thoroughly consistent with the thrust of concerns identified by Project OPERA in relation to the capacity of the officer corps. Moreover, Zeus and Skiffington posit that globally, an increasing demand is rising for coaching support, resources and services; ‘... we are increasingly asked to provide master specialist coaches and conduct learning and development audits of companies and organisations ... Businesses of all types are recognising the need ... to enhance their coaching skills’ (2000, 38). This infers that a greater emphasis on the quality of Army’s
Coaching skills will become increasingly important to both the SLDP and also more broadly throughout the officer corps vis a vis the OPE vision.

Coaching analysis and discussion may take one of several forms. Harris and DeSimone (1994, 271–4) describe processes for both. Rylatt (1994, 240) believes that the discussion function in particular, ‘is not about being a professional counsellor, a miracle worker or making guarantees’ but rather, ‘being supportive, available and empathic … acting as a mirror and a sounding board’. Notwithstanding this view however, mastery of certain skills irrefutably underwrites effective coaching. In particular, interpersonal and communications skills stand out markedly. Harris and DeSimone highlight the value of ‘microtraining’ in the sorts of face-to-face communication skills shown in Figure 3.

Whilst they may appear simple, the difficulty of acquiring these and other skills may account for a well documented reluctance to coach. Rylatt (1994, 239) claims that in many cases the coaching role is ‘entirely ignored’ due to concentration on operational tasks and a failure to reward or train staff properly for its conduct. It is also probably compounded by the wide range of other requirements, guidelines or criteria collectively indicated in the literature as necessary for effective coaching. Examples of these are tabulated in Figure 4. Consideration of these factors is extremely important because doing so induces an appreciation of the liabilities involved and in turn, of the importance of organisations encouraging and rewarding coaching. This tends to validate Zeus and Skiffington’s earlier comments about demand, competitive advantage and developmental implications, and further highlights the importance of key skills in enabling high quality coaching to occur.
It thus emerges clearly that coaching is not a passive action. It is dynamic, testing and difficult. Managers reportedly have a tough time trying to do it (in part) because many of them have a narrow, reactive or negative view of their role in managing performance. This can derive from assumptions including that employees know what they are supposed to do and how to do it and can limit discussion of performance issues to when a problem has already emerged rather than employing a strategy of more deliberate developmental ‘pre-emption’. Resistance or reluctance towards coaching can occur (overtly or covertly) for various reasons including personality variables, unwillingness to accept scope for improvement, mistrust of the organisation, fear of failure, or drifting (Harris and DeSimone 1994, 264–5). In sum, effective coaching is premised on overcoming these and the other challenges outlined above. It is an active role requiring the knowledge, desire and ability to accurately identify developmental needs and the communications skills to engage with subordinates to action those needs. It need not and ideally should not be limited to a short-term horizon and should be continuously in practice throughout the supervisor–employee fabric of organisations because of the impact it can have on individuals and the teams they belong to. In short, as Rylatt suggests, coaching ‘is an essential requirement of people management and should be deemed necessary in all work places’ (1994, 242).

**Mentoring**

Moorby (1991, 422) describes the term ‘mentor’ as having a dictionary definition of ‘experienced and trusted adviser’ and a tradition founded on Homer’s *Odyssey*, wherein Odysseus (departing for the Trojan War) appointed Mentor as an adviser to his son, Telemachus. Moorby suggests the term ‘reappeared’ in management literature in the 1970s, mainly in the US, though was

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic attending skills</td>
<td>Used to help involve the employee in the discussion and including: a slight but comfortable forward lean of the torso, eye contact, a warm but natural voice, using minimal encouragers, and staying on the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Providing clear and concrete data, nonjudgmental attitude, using timely present tense statements, and providing feedback on correctable items over which the employee has some control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrasing</td>
<td>This is a concise (in your own words) statement of what has just been said. It helps clarify the issue, lets the employee know you understand what has been said and encourages them to continue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection of feeling</td>
<td>This reinforces the employee for expressing feelings and encourages open communication, in turn helping to establish rapport. Reflection of feelings has a structure: employees name; stem (e.g. ‘It sounds like you feel…’); label for the emotion; and final stem to confirm understanding (e.g. ‘Have I got that right?’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open and closed questions</td>
<td>These support the purpose of interaction. Open questions encourage exchange and the sharing of ideas. Closed questions invite a brief response that can clarify specific points and speed the discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing</td>
<td>This helps identify five potential areas of organisational difficulty (person, problem, context, other and self) and ways to deal with each.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 – ‘Microtraining’ Skills in Face-to-Face Communication
(Source: Adapted from Harris and DeSimone 1994, 280)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Success Criteria or Requirements</strong></th>
<th><strong>Rylatt (1994)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Harris and DeSimone (1994)</strong></th>
<th><strong>DuBrin (1998)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Link workplace learning to business and individual needs.</td>
<td>• Provide managers and supervisors with training in coaching skills and techniques.</td>
<td>• Communicate clear expectations to group members.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stimulate team and individual learning and creativity.</td>
<td>• Perform thorough coaching analysis.</td>
<td>• Provide specific feedback.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Set clear parameters and guidelines for high quality discovery.</td>
<td>• Prepare in advance for the coaching discussion.</td>
<td>• Listen actively.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Actively listen and talk with employees.</td>
<td>• Be constructive, helpful and supportive.</td>
<td>• Help remove obstacles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seek partnerships and networks with leading coaches.</td>
<td>• Involve the employee in the discussion.</td>
<td>• Give emotional support.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Authorise and empower employees to carry out their learning.</td>
<td>• Provide constructive, specific, behavioural feedback.</td>
<td>• Reflect feelings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Celebrate team and individual learning achievements.</td>
<td>• Set specific goals during the discussion.</td>
<td>• Reflect content and meaning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It must result in positive performance change and new or renewed commitment to:</td>
<td>• Coaches require:</td>
<td>• Determine what the performance issues are.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– self-sufficiency.</td>
<td>• Capacity for self-awareness.</td>
<td>• Identify the knowledge and skills required.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– the organisation’s goals and values.</td>
<td>• Capacity to inspire others.</td>
<td>• State the goals of the coaching program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– continuous learning.</td>
<td>• Capacity to build relationships.</td>
<td>• Discuss the expectations of both parties.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– continuous improved achievement.</td>
<td>• Capacity to be flexible.</td>
<td>• Set the learning objectives for the program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It must result in achievement or maintenance of positive work relationships.</td>
<td>• Capacity to communicate.</td>
<td>• Consider suitable learning strategies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is a mutual interaction.</td>
<td>• Capacity to be forward looking.</td>
<td>• Map out a development plan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It communicates respect.</td>
<td>• Capacity for discipline.</td>
<td>• Implement the development plan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is problem focussed.</td>
<td>• Capacity to manage professional boundaries (this is not for everyone – coaching may not be the best option for a particular individual).</td>
<td>• Review progress.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is change oriented.</td>
<td>• Capacity to diagnose issues and find solutions.</td>
<td>• Evaluate the program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It follows an identifiable sequence or flow and requires the use of specific communications skills.</td>
<td>• Capacity for business.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4 – Coaching Requirement Framework (Source: Devised from the references cited)
popularised in the UK by Clutterbuck (1985). Mentoring is generally described as involving ‘forming and maintaining an intensive and lasting developmental relationship between a senior organisational member (the mentor) and a junior organisational member (the protégé)’ (Dickenson and Southey cited in Smith 1992, 161). Others perceive contemporary mentoring is more fluid and need not reflect this hierarchical approach (Darwin 2000, 3). Regardless, it can occur ‘naturally’ or be part of a formal career management system in which the relationship can contribute to the career development of both parties (Harris and DeSimone 1994, 351). In the latter sense, it appears both conceivable and appropriate within the SLDP.

Several generic functions are identifiable in mentoring literature including career-oriented, psychosocial and role model outcomes. The former involves those aspects that enhance career advancement whilst the latter two concern the protégé’s sense of competence, identity, and professional effectiveness (Harris and DeSimone 1994, 351; Nankervis, Compton and Baird 2002, 372; Tharenou and Zambruno 2001, 2). Couched within these functions, mentoring can aid induction and socialisation, complement formal learning, improve performance and contribute to the realisation of promise. It has further potential to retain younger staff through increased support and opportunities. The absence of these might otherwise lead them to separate prematurely and unnecessarily from an organisation which they may grow to consider does not value their ability. This latter point is significant given OPERA’s expressed concerns over the opportunity cost of ‘derailment’ and of both the early separation of high potential officers and current high attrition rates in mid-level officers.

Informal mentoring reportedly ‘goes on daily within every type of organisation’ with the mentor generally initiating it (Nankervis, Compton and Baird 2002, 372). However, the 1980s saw a rapid growth of mentoring plans, and organisations began deliberately assigning mentors to promising employees (Nankervis, Compton and Baird 2002, 372; Stone 2002, 364). Formal programs may be either internal or external to the organisation (Gardiner in Barker 2002, 44) though can be further structurally characterised by Kram’s four phased mentoring model (Kram 1985 cited by Dickenson and Southey in Smith 1992, 162–3). Burgess (1994) subsequently related Kram’s phases to the four seasons (spring, summer, autumn, winter) and suggested an average mentoring relationship not exceeding three years. More recent corporate examples imply approximately one year is optimal (Corporate Leadership Council 2000, 3). Burgess’ model is shown below in Figure 5.

Smith (1992, 113) sees both short- and long-term advantages of mentoring including: use of specifically planned development programs tailored to individual needs; recognition of effort and worth, increased satisfaction and or motivation; accelerated learning, broadened work experience, enhanced promotion opportunities; utilisation of the organisations communication and power networks to give assistance to job related problems; socialisation of protégés by modelling the mentors attitude and values; and the creation of holistic though individualised approaches to learning. Yukl (1994, 124–5) further identifies fostering mutually cooperative relationships; identification and preparation for greater responsibility; and increased commitment to the organisation. To these Gardner (cited in Barker 2002, 44) adds inter alia
that there is also ‘some limited support for the idea that mentoring should help to reduce the amount of stress experienced at work’.

The sum of these constitute relatively obvious benefits for protégés however those available to the mentor or organisation ‘are more nebulous’, usually longer term and are difficult to quantify. They broadly include: encouraging development in the mentor; increased teamwork, shared values and communication; satisfaction for the mentor; potential peer and or organisational recognition for effective mentoring; further development of leadership skills; and reinforcement of the organisations climate and culture (Smith 1992, 113). Smith (1992, 116) also suggests that mentoring can be combined with project work or academic study, creating an ‘umbrella strategy’ over individual and organisational development activities. Rylatt (1994, 237) discerns organisational benefits in terms of clarification of organisational mission and goals; competency development; increased productivity, cost effectiveness, and innovation as a result of improved communication and mutual understanding; improved capacity to resolve work and life challenges; supportive career development; promoting shared experience from a range of people; and increased confidence and fulfilment for both parties. Probably the most fundamental point, is that properly conducted, mentoring offers substantial and valuable benefits to both protégés and mentors, as well as to the parent organisation. Moreover if (on the basis of the principles outlined in Figure 1) the thrust of the SLDP concept is accepted
as achieving growth and learning through diversified experience, it is difficult to imagine not including formal mentoring as an element within it.

On the other hand of course, a range of disadvantages and problems have the potential to constrain these benefits. Du Brin (1998, 396) voices concern over protégés becoming inferior imitations of their role model. Similarly, the establishment of ‘unhelpful influence pyramids based on building personal power needs to be monitored and ameliorated’ (Elliot in Barker 2002, 145). Dickenson and Southey (in Smith 1992, 161–162) note that the effectiveness of mentoring rests largely with the clarity of the mentor’s role and of their skill and commitment. This skill has important consequences; for without it, there may be a tendency to avoid the discomfort of addressing the negative aspects of performance and in the long term, lead to the protégé blaming the organisation for not meeting their expectations. Cost (given one-on-one contact with superiors) can also be an issue; however potential gains may outweigh this. Smith (1992, 114) sees the following latent problems: independent learners objecting to ‘big brother’ overviewing them; mentors complaining that they don’t have the time or the necessary skills to be a mentor; complaints that the organisation does not reward mentoring activities; organisations objecting to mentoring using scarce resources on long-term ‘nebulous’ development and removing senior staff from ‘productive’ work; and finally, it is difficult to assess and therefore reward mentoring activity. Harris and DeSimone (1994, 351–2) add further issues, the most important of which in the context of officer development is probably the potential for negative feelings on the part of those not involved in the program.

The following general points thus emerge concerning mentoring. First, in respects it appears ubiquitous, occurring ‘daily within every type of organisation’ though in all likelihood, often in a relatively unplanned, ad hoc fashion. Lack of planning almost certainly limits its potential. Secondly, information on its benefits, problems and the conduct of programs is abundant within the literature. This indirectly questions why Army appears not to have analysed them. Third, the benefits of mentoring appear to outweigh the disadvantages, again raising questions over why Army seems not to have considered it in any real detail. Finally, the literature emphasises that much learning occurs outside formal courses and education. Moorby contends it ‘is often asserted that over 90 per cent of what we learn as adults is acquired in the process of working’ (1991, 421). This raises a key question over who in Army actually guides this learning? Nankervis, Compton and Baird (2002, 372) feel that people ‘will often learn best when associating with others who have been successful’. It thus follows that in times of rapid change, or for example SLDP ‘fast tracking’; high quality mentoring could offer unique possibilities. Rylatt suggests that together, mentoring and coaching are among the fastest and best ways to meet workplace challenges and believes that they should be especially promoted ‘as a legitimate part of learning rather than (seen) as some form of elitism that stifles and inhibits (it)’ (1994, 234).
Similarities and Differences

A challenge within the literature is the frequency with which the terms coaching and mentoring are used interchangeably (and or also with the term counselling). Smith (1992, 112) confirms that the three are often used as synonyms, but do have specific and different meaning. He himself sees ‘significant differences’, but notes a commonality ‘revolving around one member of an organisation being heavily involved in planning and promoting the learning of another’. Smith (1998, 295) believes coaching gets confused with mentoring and that the latter is a ‘very different, and far more extensive process’. Zeus and Skiffington (2000, 18) identify a range of similarities and differences between coaching and mentoring. They also suggest however that ‘perhaps the simplest way to define the connection between the two roles is to view coaching as a style of relationship that can be employed in mentoring’.

This technical potential for coaching to ‘reside’ within mentoring (Moorby 1991; Rylatt 1994; Zeus and Skiffington 2000) raises some important issues for both roles. For example Burns (1998, 312) believes that supervisors ‘are not always the best mentors’ because their responsibility to ‘assess the person for work performance, pay or competency skills’ has inherent potential for role conflict. Sorley (1988, 76) also identifies the tension between the mutual trust and regard required for mentoring and the more immediate realities of accurate performance appraisal. Notably, the latter was raised within a military context. These points imply that ideally the roles should be separated. Furthermore (as already noted) despite being a direct supervisor’s responsibility, coaching is: often ignored or overlooked, difficult, and is undermined by the prevalence of a narrow, reactive view of the function (Rylatt 1994, 239; Harris and DeSimone 1994, 264–5; Du Brin 1998, 260). It could therefore be argued that a paucity of coaching skills within an organisation also undermines its capacity to mentor effectively. These arguments accentuate the symbiosis of the functions as well as the need and importance for both to be performed well. Thus, for Army’s consideration of the SLDP to proceed, it is important to understand how coaching and mentoring are currently being applied. What is the extent of their present application within senior and potential senior leader development and how does the skill base for both roles develop?

Current Practice

At the time of writing there were no formal mentoring programs specifically within Army and the extent of informal mentoring was and remains essentially unmapped. Several Defence initiatives, the most significant of which are the Capstone Program and a mentoring program initiated in 2002 for Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies (CDSS) students at the Australian Defence College, Weston Creek, have had a handful of Army participants. This has continued in 2003. Also in 2003, the Royal Australian Engineers (RAE) initiated a mentoring program for junior officers, though ‘imposed’ is probably a more accurate verb. Importantly though, (other than the RAE example) these only involve officers already holding staff rank. Mentoring is also virtually unknown within Australian Army doctrine. It has no direct reference in various
command and leadership manuals (Australian Army 1973a; Australian Army 1973b; Australian Army 1990; Department of Defence 1991) and is mentioned only in passing within the most newly published doctrine—described in the second last paragraph of the final chapter of a new leadership manual (Australian Army 2002). The direct identification of coaching is also limited, however there is a strong, but essentially intuitive, organisational culture of responsibility for subordinates and an emphasis on performance counselling within both doctrine and the performance appraisal policy which supports it (Department of Defence, 2001a and 2001b).

Whilst the paucity of information on mentoring in particular appears curious, it seems possible that a combination of factors has limited its appreciation and acceptance in the Army. The first of these comes from the RODC’s identification of Army’s ‘neglect’ of management theory and practice, and failure to pay sufficient attention to their rapid development (Australian Army 1978a, 1–9). The span of nearly 30 years between ‘just past’ and ‘just published’ leadership doctrine tends to support this observation. The second factor derives from the enshrined belief that ‘bypassing levels of command, in either direction, creates confusion and undermines the responsibility of the immediate commander; it violates the principle of unity of command’ (Department of Defence 1991, 1–9). Thirdly, this is probably responsible for the assumption that commanders can, should, and are capable of performing both roles. Contrasuggestively, some of the literature asserts that the involvement of a direct supervisor in mentoring is undesirable.

In comparison to the latent Australian approach, the US Army appears to have placed a higher emphasis on mentoring. In The Challenge of Command for example, Nye (1986, 149–153) devotes his epilogue to ‘The Commander as Mentor’ and describes recognition within US Army officer professional development of the need for the officer corps to ‘rekindle their commitment and skills as mentors’. He identifies the difficulty of the role, raises key questions over what its ‘curriculum’ should be, and queries how many commanders are actually knowledgeable and skilful enough to lead it. This may account for Ulmer’s (1998) view that ‘mentoring and coaching have long been in the (US) Army lexicon, but their routine use is a localised phenomenon, highly dependent on the interests and skills of unit leaders’. This notwithstanding, Reimer (then Chief of Staff of the US Army—a four star general) describes mentoring as ‘key to the current and future health of the (US) army … Mentoring, I am convinced, must be at the heart of any serious leader development program’ (in Hunt, Dodge and Wong 1999, 291). Mentoring, coaching and counselling have featured heavily in US military professional journals for some years. That they nonetheless appear to have had difficulty optimising them despite this emphasis may place the Australian Army at an advantage in being positioned to apply them in a more tailored fashion. Regardless, a range of issues need to move beyond theory and rhetoric if coaching and mentoring are to become a useful part of the SLDP and perhaps even eventually assume a more meaningful position in broader officer development.
Emergent Themes and Questions

A number of themes and issues emerge from the literature:

• First, the OPERA SLDP concept cited coaching and mentoring without clearly defining what they meant. Furthermore, the two terms (and also counselling) are frequently used interchangeably in the literature in a fashion that is unhelpful because it can obscure important differences and issues including responsibilities, authority and training requirements. This suggests that if intending to use coaching and mentoring more overtly, Army should consider defining the two terms more clearly, perhaps also identifying how the different roles are to be performed and by whom. In terms of where we go next, the key question that emerges from this theme is ‘What are the terms currently understood to mean within Army?’

• Second, the extent of coaching and mentoring in current senior and potential senior leader development in the Australian Army is difficult to discern. The former occurs on courses and through the mandatory requirements of the performance appraisal system but this does not speak of its wider frequency or of its standard. This implies that an audit of coaching in particular and of the training officers receive in its underpinning skills might be considered, principally because in due course coaching feeds the mentoring gene pool. Similarly, although now available for current students at the CDSS (in a Joint rather than Army sponsored program) mentoring is conspicuously absent from Army doctrine and presumably therefore, from practice. This identifies a liability in doctrine development that will need to be addressed if an SLDP mentoring program is to be established. The key question emerging from this theme is ‘What is the extent of coaching and mentoring in “current” senior and potential senior leader development?’

• Third, the literature implies that enhanced use of coaching and mentoring can play a significant role as means, inter alia, of optimising performance, generating trust, increasing commitment, retaining talent and crucially, for collapsing the time impost of individual development. How this might be achieved within a construct like the SLDP is less clear. Is it realistic for example, to presume individual supervisors can and should perform both roles? Might it be plausible or desirable to bring a third party into the ‘command’ relationship, particularly as the SLDP is likely to involve relatively modest numbers? The American military experience of seemingly coveting but perhaps not fully securing the fruits of coaching and mentoring suggests that the dogma of leader responsibility for both roles could be questioned. Might it be an anachronism, a more traditional requirement that is not compatible with the intent of the SLDP and perhaps not even applicable more broadly? Two key questions emerge from this theme: ‘What limits the use of coaching and mentoring in senior and potential senior leader development?’ and ‘How might coaching and mentoring be used in order to enhance them?’
Finally, there is an issue of what the ‘curriculum’ should be, i.e. are or should there be core requirements within the SLDP that are specifically dealt with through coaching and mentoring? If up to 90 per cent of learning occurs in an informal environment, it seems probable that there may be certain core needs, experiences or vehicles that might be best dealt with through coaching or a formal mentoring approach. This need not constrain the program, but rather may well provide the necessarily foundation to make it professionally credible. The key question emerging from this theme is ‘What should coaching and mentoring focus on teaching or imparting in order to achieve a potential leap in effectiveness in development?’

Investigative Methodology

Answers to the questions raised above were sought in late 2002 using a qualitative research methodology called grounded theory and interviews with 15 senior and potential senior leaders. Qualitative methods focus on evidence that will enable the researcher ‘to understand the meaning of what is going on’ and turn up possible explanations through illuminating issues (Gillham 2000, 10). Grounded theory in particular was selected because it ‘is proactive in intent … toward emancipatory knowledge and purposeful change. Grounded theory develops agents for change through the inclusion of participant researchers, and opens up spaces for action and reciprocity’ (Neff in Farris and Anson 1998, 132). This was felt to be consistent with the need to explore, discover, and inform further practical action towards the OPE vision.

Emerson (2001, 291) emphasises four primary procedures within the theory: simultaneous data collection and analysis, systematic coding of data, memoing, and theoretical sampling. Building empirically grounded theory requires a give-and-take relationship between data and theory in which data are allowed to generate dialectical propositions using a priori theoretical frameworks, but which keep ‘a particular framework from becoming the container into which the data must be poured’ (Lather in Creswell 1994, 95). Grounded theory is thus useful where a current model or understanding may not adequately explain what is occurring and one may therefore need ‘to build a new theory by using an inductive model of thinking or logic’ (Creswell 1994, 95). This rationale is depicted in Figure 6. In grounded theory, Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that theory development is the culminating aspect of the study, i.e. a theory grounded in the data. This is perceived as different to a quantitative project, for the ‘model’ is not being tested in the study per se, but rather is modified in it (Creswell 1994, 95–96). A further aspect of working within grounded theory is that a questioning stance is maintained up to the end of the project and even beyond. Neff (in Farris and Anson 1998, 126) contends that ‘those applying the methodology must learn to live without closure’.

Participants

The participants involved in the study leading to this article were all volunteers and included students at each of the Australian Command and Staff College (ACSC) and the Centre for
Defence and Strategic Studies (CDSS) courses of 2002 and a number of more senior officers. An original intent to interview seven officers in each group and to interview in ascending rank order from more junior to more senior became impractical due to a combination of participant unavailability and a shortage of time. In the end, four officers ranked brigadier and above, five colonels and six majors were interviewed. The ACSC interviews preceded the CDSS interviews. The more senior participants were interviewed in a ‘trickle flow’: two before, one between and one after the other groups. Participants were selected on the basis of their availability for interview and for their rank level in order to establish data from three distinct groups. However those in the most senior group were also selected because of their status as ‘elite’ interviewees. Gillham (2000, 63–64) describes this term as out of favour because of its inegalitarian connotations, but nonetheless it is both conventional and important because of the ability of such subjects to provide insightful and comprehensive answers. The CDSS group was also specifically targeted, though in their case it was primarily due to their being involved in a formal mentoring program, conducted as part of their course—the first group of their rank thus involved. In turn, probably the most important characteristic of the ACSC group was their youth, and the possibility that through this, their perspectives may be different to the other two groups. The participants additionally represented a variety of military corps, though no deliberate effort influenced this factor. Only one participant was female, the remainder male.

![Inductive model of research in qualitative study](Source: Creswell 1994, 96)

**Interview Themes and Deductions**

The interview responses illustrated that coaching and mentoring are considered to be important and demanding functions. They are present within Army to varying degrees of understanding and they could be used more effectively as tools in leader development. To allow this however, a range of obstacles needs to be considered and catered for as part of developing a framework.
for their more coordinated application. Key themes and the deductions flowing from the
interviews are outlined below.

**Current Understanding—Institutional Awareness**

In terms of understanding them as formal, procedurally based methods of improving performance of yourself or another officer … I think there’s a poor understanding.

I’ve never had anything to do with mentoring in a formal sense until this year. I suppose as you go through with your junior officers and that sort of thing there’s always a bit of coaching, guidance and mentoring … but this is the first formal interaction I’ve had with anybody.

Both of the terms too, I find difficult to relate to a chain of command military hierarchy and structure in that if you’re too close inside the chain of command I’m not sure that you can be overtly seen to be coaching and mentoring.

Army’s institutional awareness of coaching and mentoring appears loose and intuitive, however this should not be construed as suggesting that they are not there. Rather, the key issue is that they are not specifically defined, and in an organisation like Army clear definition is the basis for resource allocation and concerted, sustained action. A further consequence of this imprecision means that their potential and importance as procedurally based methods of improving performance may not be fully appreciated. Moreover, that they actually are present can further deceive in that it can lead to an assumption that if they are already in place, they must be functioning effectively. As a consequence, it might therefore be presumed that there is no real need for debate or questioning of the status quo. This is unhealthy for Army. To whatever extent coaching and mentoring feature as important elements within leader development at any level, they should be better defined. As a minimum this would provide an appropriate basis for informed debate, and a better targeting of the effort committed to their conduct.

**Extent and Current Application**

I’ve yet to see an article that describes it and gives, I think, what military people want—here are the advantages, here are the disadvantages, this is a process you can go through and this is what you can get out of it.

We probably believe that our personnel management is pretty good anyhow: that it can be handled inside of the chain of command … that it can be handled inside the reporting system—and I think that’s wrong.

The interview responses gave greater insight into the extent of coaching and mentoring in senior and potential senior leader development than was available purely from the literature.
review. Essentially their current application appears fragmented, but this has both positive as well as negative dimensions. In certain respects for example, coaching should justifiably be considered well established in Army, as was suggested by a number of the participants. The evidence and examples they offered in a training sense reflect many of the factors identified in Figure 4 as necessary or desirable for effective coaching. This implies that Army coaches well on its courses. Similarly, Army’s formal appraisal system is the tool utilised for reporting on workplace performance and which drives virtually the whole selection process for appointments and promotion. Less clear however, is the extent to which that system is used to improve or develop, as opposed to assess officers. Equally unclear is the extent to which officers with subordinates regard themselves as coaches of those subordinates beyond the mandatory requirements of completing an annual report on each of them. To whatever extent Army is assessing rather than developing its officers, and to whatever extent its leaders, for whatever reason, do not perceive a coaching role beyond that which is mandatory, the potential of coaching is being underutilised. The example given by one participant of the qualitative impact on Army shooting standards of the Small Arms Coaching Course is an interesting case in point of what might be done. No one questions that standards have dramatically improved in military shooting, or the preparation and fitness preservation of Army sporting teams. This implies Army could investigate the practicality of integrating the principles that achieved those successes into its philosophy of performance coaching.

Meanwhile, at the time of interviewing the only mentoring occurring inside the Army was informal. Those few officers involved in formal programs were doing so outside of it, under Australian Defence Organisation (ADO) sponsored programs. The extent of its use in senior leader development therefore remains limited to those officers who are either mentors or protégés in the Capstone and CDSS programs and whatever else may be occurring informally beyond these. For potential senior leaders, there is no sustained organisationally sponsored mentoring program, though some may experience the influence of mentor-like figures role-playing on various courses. Additionally, the assumption is made that commanders perform a de facto mentoring role but on the basis of views expressed by a number of interview participants (of varying ranks) the frequency, effectiveness and desirability of this is actually questionable, despite the intuitive acceptance that all officers are responsible for the development of their subordinates. The lack of organised mentoring for potential senior leaders means that officers can reach senior rank with no real experience of what mentoring involves or can achieve. The continuation of this situation is not in Army’s long-term interests and is antithetical to the OPE vision.

Obstacles and Limitations

You just put your nose to the grindstone and don’t you worry about that. That’ll look after itself if you’re performing. You just do everything you’ve been told and everything will be sweet. Even to the extent of … ‘Don’t be a letter writer’, that was the culture.
Superiors don’t like doing EDRO’s (performance appraisal). We don’t like reporting and confronting people with what their limitations might be and similarly … we’re trained to just plod along … there’s a reluctance to engage in one-to-one counselling.

Yeah, it’s a busy organisation. It’s a big responsibility, it’s a big task. I mean you see it in units; people get slack with interim reports because of the tempo and what we’re doing. It’s not easy. I think it’s the hardest part of leadership.

The use of coaching and mentoring is constrained by culture, time, structure and process. In effect, these obstacles all accentuate the logic behind defining and formalising a more pragmatic use of both tools. One participant described at some length that coaching and mentoring could only be successfully applied if they were aligned with Army’s culture. With this in mind it would be fundamentally impractical for instance to impose significant additional responsibility on people who already have too much to do. Hence, culture and time should be attacked together by focusing on making the job of commanders easier rather than harder. This is the key rationale behind providing clearer definition, establishing a framework and utilising carefully chosen and prepared third parties to operate in support of commanders to the benefit of individual officers and the organisation. Such a system cannot be quickly established on a large scale, but it is feasible within the context offered by the SLDP concept, which because of its recency is not expected to immediately deliver on a grand scale.

Scope for Future Use

The lack of definition and fragmented nature of application already described, in conjunction with the things Army actually does well suggests that a more systematic approach is possible and desirable. What the interviews identified is that if a ‘system’ were established it would require an aim, objectives and a viable framework for their application. Additionally, it would need to function in two distinct environments: the relatively homogeneous unit or formation environment and the more fragmented heterogeneous world of major headquarters or non-Army group organisations. Similarly, it would need the flexibility to cater for different generic needs related either to the level of the officer concerned, and or to the next job(s) they were being groomed for i.e. at different levels subject to the seniority and developmental needs of the officer. As part of an integrated approach, coaching should be a focal point in chain of command priorities, though be expanded in definition so that the ethos of responsibility for subordinate development is not excised. It should also continue to be emphasised on Army courses. The mentoring function however should be separated from the chain of command. For members of the SLDP it should probably commence formally at ACSC under the tutelage of CDSS students or possibly retired officers, ‘grey beards’. The latter could also potentially provide formal mentoring support outside the SLDP or by exception preceding ACSC, administered, trained and orchestrated by a small unit or cell established to sponsor Army’s mentoring program. This unit would establish and maintain a mentor bank of internal and external mentors and require a close but autonomous relationship with the Directorate of
Officer Career Management. The mentoring conducted within this system would thus reside within a formalised framework but be executed in an informal fashion, on a voluntary basis.

‘Curriculum’—what should we target?

We have to really understand this as an organisation... What is it that we actually value in this individual? What are they going to bring to the organisation and okay, how do we enhance that?

You can be the world’s best staff officer. You can be the world’s best tactician. You can have management degrees coming out the ying yang but if you can’t form effective, trusting and (pause) not effective, really effective personal relationships then you’re not going to make it happen as well as you might … I’ve watched several senior commanders who’ve been very, very good at ‘people’ and they’ve worked hard at forming good personal relationships. And the power of it is just (pause) unimaginable.

The more senior we want that person within our profession, the more ‘Joint’ they need to be, the more aware of how the bureaucracy works we want them to be, the more aware of the civil–military interface we want them to be and the better aware of the political dimension we want them to be.

In its SLDP, Army needs to focus on its ability to answer the question, ‘What do we value in this person and how can we enhance it?’ Coaching should focus on improving workplace performance and building teams within the chain of command as described earlier. Mentoring on the other hand should be more discretely tailored. This said, it might comprise several ‘levels’. The first of these, a philosophical level, might concentrate on consolidating values and the development of effective relationships. The second might consider job specific issues related to a future appointment. A third might deliberately target long-term systemic issues. Each of these possibilities emerged from the interviews. One participant candidly opined that despite ‘enduring points’ in his reports, no one had ‘ever really sat down with (him) and described … “why?”’ He suggested that a mentor could help address long-term systemic issues and help develop strategies for self-improvement in a fashion not presently available without risk of judgement. A further option, also from the interviews concerned the possibility of study based mentoring. At the more senior level it might include Australian Public Service SES-like study opportunities to overcome the fatigue of ‘hard running in the bureau-wars’. Above all however, for the SLDP to be a credible concept, coaching and mentoring action must transcend the view expressed in one of the interviews that:

There’s certainly no feeling that DOCM have sat down on some ambrosia scented mountain top and said ‘Yes, he is someone who has potential we should realise at some stage, and therefore we will apply a degree of guidance along the way’.
A Theory for Future Action

Inasmuch as a ‘theory’ emerges from the above assessment it is this: that Army should refine its developmental paradigm to formally and more comprehensively embed tutelage as part of its leader development equation for the SLDP. This is illustrated in Figures 7 and 8. The former of these depicts the difference between the current and future ‘equations’: an increased emphasis on the importance and use of tutelage in a learning sense to achieve the outcomes that are possible through more effective coaching and the use of institutionalised mentoring. The impact of this notion is further developed in Figure 8. What this second model summarises is that ‘selection’ into the ‘existing’ SLDP is informed by the product of our current approach to coaching (i.e. performance appraisal). The development of potential senior leaders then occurs through a combination of training, education and experience. This process works—but is it good enough to meet the standard required of the OPE vision? The development coffee table does the job—but what if something heavy gets put on the open ‘21st century’ corner? Our current process takes a calculable, relatively set, time-in-rank derived period to build a senior leader: Time ‘x’. The lower portion of the model suggests that selection should occur first, that mentoring should be formally added to the ‘process’, and that coaching should support all four developmental pillars. This might require development of supporting doctrine and consideration of the use of ‘third parties’ in the developmental process. It challenges the notion that one size fits all in terms of development time liability and makes an alternate time, Time ‘y’, plausible.

Of course this ‘theory’ invites energetic debate, but if we want to get on with it, recommendations of how to do so are outlined below.

![Figure 7 – Leader Development Equations](image-url)
Specific Recommendations

It is recommended that Army should:

• Re-affirm its commitment towards the development and implementation of a formal SLDP, using coaching and mentoring as a central plank within the concept.

• Define the terms coaching and mentoring more clearly with specific regard to their function of improving performance. This definition should stipulate what they entail, who is responsible for them and give clear guidance on how they are performed.

• Re-emphasise its commitment to coaching as a chain of command priority, focused on the improvement of performance over assessment. Meanwhile, it should formalise its approach to mentoring, separate it from the chain of command and establish an autonomous cell to sponsor its development and application. As part of this, Army should pilot a small-scale formal mentoring program at ACSC as soon as possible.
• Study the characteristics that have made the training and sporting dimensions of its coaching effort so successful and overtly apply these to the workplace performance dimension of its coaching effort.

• Review the extent of training currently provided to officers to prepare them for coaching and mentoring functions. Given that most officers will be involved more in the former, the focus should initially be on what effort is devoted to their training in the use of coaching tools, specifically, their training in the use of the current performance evaluation tool.

**Senior Command**

If the SLDP concept is to be pursued and if coaching and mentoring are to form an effective part of it, the concept will need to be re-affirmed at Chief of Army Advisory Committee (CASAC) level and direction issued for its further development including responsibilities and a specified timeline for its implementation. Direction would also need to be issued for the establishment of the integrated coaching and mentoring approach along lines outlined earlier. This should include clearer definition within doctrine of what the functions are and how they are performed. If enacted, senior commanders will need to take an active role in accentuating the importance of coaching and mentoring in enhancing the performance of Army leaders. The time liability attached to this need is substantial and should not be underestimated. This necessitates lateral consideration of how ‘time paucity’ can be ameliorated and suggests a role for retired officers (and perhaps other third parties) in supporting the concept.

**Army Staff at CDSS and ACSC**

Army staff at CDSS should seek to enhance the mentoring program for Army students by increasing their preparation in anticipation of its commencement and considering the use of external facilitators in the initial meeting(s). This may have already occurred. Army staff at ACSC should liaise with CDSS to establish a voluntary pilot program for ACSC students as soon as possible, with willing CDSS officers acting as mentors. This pilot should aim at increasing the mentoring exposure of students at both institutions and testing the potential for a wider program.

**Officers**

The expectations being placed on officers of all ranks as commanders, leaders and managers are considerable and growing. Within the bounds of their own ‘time paucity’ officers should be encouraged to expand their coaching skills in particular, and their understanding of mentoring more generally. Those in the ‘existing’ SLDP (i.e. psc officers or those approaching ACSC) need to increase their exposure to mentoring to overcome the existing situation whereby they can currently reach senior rank with little or no experience of it.
Doctrine

Doctrine should be amended to define and explain coaching and mentoring in more detail and to highlight their importance within Army leadership and development—regardless of whether or not Army continues to formally embrace the SLDP concept. The virtual absence of these key terms from our doctrinal lexicon is a telling deficiency that we need to address. This could entail either amending the recently published leadership pamphlet or issuing interim doctrine specifically related to coaching and mentoring.

Career Management

No recommendation is offered on the issue of career management at this stage; however the use of coaching and mentoring has implications for this pivotal area that are worth noting. Specifically, the product of our coaching effort (performance appraisal) is currently the main driver of the career management system because that system is assessment based. A more focused use of coaching and mentoring (even if it is only applied in detail to those in the SLDP) will challenge the present system—as OPERA said it would. It seems likely Army will need to consider how it will achieve its measurement goals if the focus of our main effort is to fall on improving performance rather than on assessment.

Conclusion

This article has sought to examine the potential role of coaching and mentoring in senior and potential senior leader development in the Australian Army in support of Project OPERA and the OPE vision. It concludes that coaching and mentoring are already present in Army’s existing leader development system but the manner of their consideration and use is nowhere near as well integrated or developed as it might be. The primary reasons for this fundamentally distil to a lack of definition and the absence of a system for their effective marriage and application. Could they provide a leap in effectiveness? The literature review suggested that they might and most of the interview participants felt that they could. What must be stated however is that without a vehicle, they almost certainly will not. Accordingly, the two need each other if a leap in effectiveness is to be achieved towards the OPE vision i.e. coaching and mentoring need the SLDP as a vehicle, and the SLDP needs coaching and mentoring to enhance its depth. That this will occur is not a given. The obstacles identified via the interviews constitute powerful disincentives to the confirmation of both. This leads to a conclusion that re-affirmation of the SLDP concept and a visible commitment towards enhancing the use of coaching and mentoring in it are critical prerequisites to further action. The priorities for getting there are: to reaffirm commitment, establish definition, emphasise and formalise the system, seek to incorporate the characteristics of existing successes and review training.
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Completing the ‘War Book’: A Practical Defence Workforce Plan

by Luke Fraser, Department of Defence

Holding together (the) mass of (pre-WWII) committees, boards and other bodies was, in theory at least, the much-touted ‘War Book’—supposedly based on the British one . . . little progress had been made by the time of the Czech crisis in September 1938 and there were still serious weaknesses when war broke out . . . the sections on supply, manpower and transport remained incomplete…

Eric Andrews, The Department of Defence

History: Defence and the War Book

The notion of a War Book is still with Defence, although the concept and application itself is now over 90 years old. The original War Book was developed in Britain in 1911 by Sir Maurice Hankey (the soon-to-be Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence). With the threat of a large-scale naval and military conflict looming on the continent, ‘the task of the War Book was to coordinate the administrative actions of the civil Departments with the mobilisation plan of the Army and Navy’. This role involved coordinating planning input from many different agencies of state. These books achieved much in coordinating government efforts during (in the case of the British War Book) two World Wars and, later, the struggle with ‘the fearsome new atomic reality’. Yet an enduring criticism of both the British War Book and its Australian equivalent is of their missed opportunities in truly synthesising government planning; War Book historians often bemoan the tendency for bureaucratic inertia and internecine politics to impose its dead hands on new ideas.

Despite their shortcomings, these documents remain important examples of attempts to muster working-level information into a structure that promotes effective decision-making at the highest government level. This was a stated dilemma for Prime Minister Asquith, the progenitor of the War Book who wrestled with ‘how to combine rapid and effective executive action in the various theatres (of war) with the maintenance of cabinet responsibility and control’. It would seem that, whether at the highest level of government or at the portfolio level, straightforward and effective planning and decision-making structures are at the heart of any potential solution to this problem.

The War Book was built on the contributions of various government agencies, but the Defence Department was probably the central contributor. In its own way, Defence’s annual portfolio-level planning forms its own ‘War Book’. These days, the summit of Defence’s regular planning process is found in the Defence Management and Finance Plan (DMFP), which incorporates the Defence Capability Plan (DCP, formerly the ‘Pink and White Books’) and the Defence Facilities Plan (the ‘Green Book’). Together, these plans encapsulate the capital, facilities, logistics and other operating elements associated with delivering Australia’s Defence capability; they
reconcile to the government’s higher strategic policy for Defence matters. They also offer a planning basis within which contingencies, such as sudden alterations to higher Defence strategy, can be explored. Such plans are considered by government annually. Yet as with the Australian War Book in 1938, the Defence Workforce Plan, the ‘section on manpower’—has not existed, or at least not in a form that lends itself so readily to ‘rapid and effective executive action’. Regardless of the reasons for this omission, the absence of an effective Defence Workforce Plan constitutes a strategic weakness in overall Defence planning. A Defence Workforce Plan would sit well in support of the wider plans that inform general government policy on the Australian workforce. In this respect, such a plan fulfils a key role—one that Hankey, the father of the modern Cabinet system, surely saw clearly—for reconciling military plans with the wider planning considerations of the state.

So why the delay in producing such a plan? Clearly there is something about a workforce plan that presents complexities and challenges not found elsewhere. If the best efforts and intentions could not manufacture such a document prior to World War II, perhaps the blushes of more recent practitioners may be spared a little. It has been pointed out before now that ‘issues relating to personnel are among the most complex that any armed force must consider’. Specifically, workforce planning attempts to ‘address fluctuating wastage and recruiting rates while keeping the overall workforce cost within budget and maintaining the ability to support future Defence initiatives’. At a more abstract level, it links the people of Defence into a plan that assesses Defence’s capacities and strategies—within available resource constraints—into the future, in the context of broader government policy. Such assessments are necessarily qualitative; there is no clear ‘profit and loss’ statement attributable to a workforce if its role is not to manufacture and sell soap powder, but to defend a sovereign nation and its interests. Nevertheless, Defence personnel must also be reconciled to the operating statement and the balance sheet. In this way, they undergo a metamorphosis from ‘people’ to ‘workforce resource’. Workforce planning must address both of these realities: the workforce both as fundamental capability and as workforce resource pressure. And any truly useful workforce plan—that ‘manpower section’ of the War Book, as it were—must encapsulate these two views in a single, manageable document; one that promotes useful planning and decision-making at the highest committee level.

**Here and Now: Workforce Planning is Becoming More Challenging**

*Society changes … the military have to react in a measured way to social change. On the one hand, the military cannot be so alien from the society that they are defending that no-one wants to join them. On the other, if the values of society are very different from (the military) or if young people are not up to the demands made on those joining the military, we also have a problem.*

Sir Timothy Garden KCB, (2002)

Workforce Planning is becoming more complex in direct proportion to the increasing complexity of wider Australian society. Defence organisations within all of the developed world’s economies
are now all facing the same problem: as standards of living rise steadily for the majority, that same majority are developing lifestyles commensurate with their expanding capital base. As people find themselves with increasing amounts of free time, they develop more extra-curricular commitments. In turn, job descriptions—like almost everything else—are heeding the mantra of individual choice and preference. In historical terms, the pace of change has been rapid: it is sometimes worth pausing to remember that the modest personal aspirations borne of the Second World War and the Great Depression are only two or three generations distant from the current Zeitgeist. As the Australian workforce becomes ever-more highly-skilled and sought-after, it raises its expectations of what its next potential employer should provide, in terms of overall satisfaction and further development opportunities. Increasingly, this target workforce expects its employer to accommodate and perhaps even augment its chosen lifestyle. Recent market research undertaken by the Australian Defence Force into the attitudes of Australia’s young people towards a Defence career confirms these trends.9

A Workforce of Increasing Complexity: The Example of Military Compensation

Not only are attitudes changing, but each part of ‘the Defence workforce resource’ is becoming more complex. Military compensation is a worthy example of this wider phenomenon:

Following World War I, Australia’s military personnel, newly-returned from the rigours of war, were afforded compensation cover under the Repatriation Act 1920. The sheer processing aspects of these entitlements are daunting, considering the number of military personnel at the time—around 331,000 Australians served overseas in the Army alone throughout WWI,10 yet in 1918 the combined military and civilian staff of Defence HQ Melbourne numbered only 1,483!11 However, quite apart from the scale of work involved, the legislation mostly only compensated injuries, illness or death deemed to have occurred under conditions of ‘war and warlike service’. Compensation cover was therefore very limited for peacetime duties (there were 105,000 members of the citizen forces and around 90,000 senior cadets serving in Australia during the Great War12). The government then moved to establish limited peacetime compensation provisions for Australia’s military members under the Commonwealth Employees Compensation Act 1930. In 1971, further refinements were made to the Repatriation Act 1920 to cover cadets and trainees. By 1981, separate provisions had been made for ADF peacekeepers. Thereafter, the Veterans Entitlement Act 1986 introduced the validity of specific compensation under ‘hazardous’ service conditions (being service that was not ‘warlike’ but nevertheless deemed to be higher-risk than ‘peacetime’ conditions). Two years later, the Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 introduced further complexity to the military compensation field.13 Subsequently, the Military Compensation Act 1994 amended the Veterans Entitlement Act 1986 and the Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 to usher in a Military Compensation Scheme that would streamline the two acts. In 1996 the government extended additional compensation benefits for severely injured ADF members and for the families of those personnel deceased in compensable circumstances. Compensation in addition to that payable under the Safety,
Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 therefore became available in the event of death or severe and permanent injury. This determination also provided for payment of a bereavement benefit and the cost of obtaining financial advice. The proposed new Military Compensation Act (yet to be passed through into legislation at time of writing) is a conscious attempt to streamline what must, for its practitioners and claimants alike, seem an increasingly Byzantine process, spanning as it does two separate Federal agencies.

The reader is invited to draw breath here. One cannot help but look back at the original Repatriation Act provisions and marvel at just how complex a single workforce issue can become in the space of a few generations. This journey into complexity is one among many that could have been chosen to make the same point; the fields of military discipline, discrimination, housing and remuneration—notably remuneration—all boast similar histories. In their own ways, they reflect the increasing complexity and changing societal expectations of Australia itself.

Workforce Supply Pressures: A Shrinking Pool

In addition to changing attitudes and increasingly complex management requirements, demographic research suggests that the total number of young workers that form the basis of Defence’s future recruitment cohort is shrinking. Australia’s population growth has been declining since the 1960s, from around 2 per cent per annum to around 1.1 per cent per annum throughout the 1990s. Growth is projected to decline further to around 0.9 per cent into the present decade. Defence’s own demographic projections reveal that labour participation rates in males will fall across the coming 10–15 years, while the percentage of 15–24 year olds in the workforce—Defence’s core recruiting field—will fall by almost 2 per cent over the coming 15–20 years. It would seem then that Defence is facing the prospect of a future employee who—prima facie—expects more from their employer, is less likely to work on a full-time basis throughout their career and whose age group will not be as well represented in the community as has been the case in the past. Individually, each of these factors is a cause for concern. Taken together, they should reinforce the need for an effective workforce planning mechanism that is capable of planning for the necessary strategic remedial responses in a timely fashion.

The Structure of a Workforce Plan

It is encouraging that recent years have seen a marked acceleration in efforts to understand this increasingly complex workforce. Both the ‘Glenn Review’ (Serving Australia: The Australian Defence Force in the 21st century (1995) and Defence’s Strategic Workforce Planning Review (2003) constitute thorough internal assessments of the Defence workforce, in all its complexity.
But what is a Defence Workforce Plan trying to achieve? This question has been brought into keener focus in recent years, as both of these reviews, as well as the Australian National Audit Office’s report on *Workforce Planning in the Australian Defence Force* (1996), its report *Retention of Military Personnel* (2000) and the joint Department of Finance–Department of Defence Review of Defence Financial Management (2000) have each acknowledged the increasing complexity of the field. Most have also identified a need for a centralised workforce plan in Defence. Taken together, these reviews have advocated a number of common characteristics that should underpin such a plan:

- It should reconcile personnel numbers with available budgets;
- It should have a long-term planning focus, so that the need to deal with the many workforce pressures of today does not compromise the delivery of appropriate future workforce capabilities;
- It should incorporate the ‘total’ Defence workforce, by including full-time ADF, Reserves, APS and industry personnel in its planning assumptions and assessments;
- It should link itself effectively to the hierarchy of Defence plans, to reconcile with higher Defence strategy and resource planning;
- It should recognise and accommodate trends of relevance in the wider national workforce; and
- It should provide an effective vehicle for considering the workforce as an investment in capability, like any other.

**Shortcoming No 1: Without the Right Structure, Plans Remain Just That**

Unfortunately, these broad objectives alone are not enough. If we accept that facilitating ‘rapid and effective action’ is a primary goal of any planning process, we are forced to look more closely at the quality of the planning *structure*. Building a robust and efficient bridge between the working level—where information and expert opinion resides—and the executive, decision-making level—where action is decided upon—is crucial to the utility of a workforce plan. Accordingly, to the ‘must haves’ identified above, we might add that a useful Defence workforce plan:

- Should deliver the best analysis available of workforce priorities and pressures, as endorsed at the working level by work sponsors, in a form that is suitable for promoting ‘rapid and effective action’ and better understanding at the higher committee level.
Shortcoming No 2: Does a Plan Only Define the Problems, or Does it also Deliver the Solutions?

Following government endorsement of the recommendations of the Review of Defence Financial Management in mid 2000, Defence expended much intellectual effort debating the question of whether, in addition to identifying core workforce planning priorities, a workforce plan should not also deliver the solutions. If it was not to do both, were two different plans needed?

Trying to both identify and solve all of the key workforce pressures facing such a large and complex organisation as Defence was deemed too much to ask of a single document: even if pressures were to be identified effectively, some presented no immediately obvious answers. This problem has since been resolved through Defence endorsement of a Defence People Plan. This document is worthy of separate attention, but it will suffice to say that the Defence People Plan is intended to work as the implementation mechanism, the means of collating and promulgating the ‘rapid and effective action’ that has first been identified as a priority or pressure in the Defence Workforce Plan. In this way, an annual workforce planning process takes shape, revolving in a cycle driven by two documents—a Defence Workforce Plan and a Defence People Plan. This process thereby replicates the classical continual improvement and re-evaluation cycle that is so important to any ongoing management process:

Diagram 1: A Proposed Annual Defence Workforce Planning Process

1. Defence Workforce Plan identifies workforce priorities and pressures over Defence’s ten-year planning cycle

2. Senior Defence Committees endorse the Defence Workforce Plan, thereby endorsing its identified priorities and pressures

3. Defence People Plan draws on endorsed workforce priorities and pressures to organise remedial human resource and capability planning action

4. Annual Re-evaluation via Senior Committees; a new revised set of workforce priorities develops
Content of a Defence Workforce Plan

With an effective structure developed, the content of a Defence workforce plan also requires consideration. Historically, very few attempts have been made to prescribe content. Perhaps the most comprehensive attempt was made in the Glenn Review (1995), where ‘Personnel and the Strategic Planning Process’ were considered diagrammatically: within this diagram, the organisation’s workforce environment—its workforce policies, practices and performance indicators—were alluded to as effective categories for organising the plan’s content. However, this proposed structure never evolved into a cogent and practical planning outcome.

Notwithstanding this ‘false start’, the Glenn Review’s identification of the workforce environment hints at the right course of action. Environmental analysis must be at the heart of the workforce plan’s content, if it is to deliver an informed appreciation of priorities and pressures. One very useful general application for developing environmental analysis is Porter’s Five Forces of Competition Environmental Assessment Framework. While usually confined to strategic business analysis and generally of a microeconomic flavour, in its most basic form the model asks some simple questions that might provide a sensible basis for developing Defence workforce plan content. It has been adapted here to provide a potential basis for shaping plan content:

![Diagram 2: Porter’s Five Forces Framework–Defence Workforce Plan Context](image-url)

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**Current Workforce Profile: Numbers, Skills and Budget**

**Workforce Policy, Planning and IT Support**
Pressures on short, medium and longer-term support of the Current Defence Workforce Profile in terms of Defence policy, processes, management structures and planning and workforce IT support systems.

**Workforce Supply**
Changing availability of workforce numbers and skills in the short, medium and longer-term due to:
- Wider demographic influences
- National job market trends
- Current Defence recruitment and separation forecasts
- Defence feedback (surveys)

**Workforce Demands**
Change Pressures on the Current Workforce Profile in the short, medium and longer-term due to:
- Shifts in Government Policy/Defence Strategy
- Changes to Force Structure/Preparedness, Numbers
- Changing Employment Policies

**Workforce Resource Constraints**
Pressures on short, medium and longer-term funding in the context of the Current Defence Workforce Profile, due to:
- Changes to remuneration policy
- Discrete cost increases (e.g., housing)
This environmental framework encompasses the key dynamics of the workforce—recruitment and retention; supply and demand; resource constraints and the support of policy, planning, management and IT systems. The separate identification of short, medium and longer-term pressures in each of these four fields would allow Defence to collate its workforce planning contributions in a structured fashion. Linked to the effective structure discussed earlier, such a document could perhaps drive the more practical remedial actions that have eluded the attentions of earlier reviews and analyses. The importance of linking a hierarchy of pressures with a scheduled remedial process cannot be overemphasised. In an organisation of Defence’s size and scope, funding priorities can often go awry in the absence of clear guidance. Without a means of making priorities relative, even well-meaning working-level activities will consume scarce government funds without knowing whether or not their objective is of truly strategic value to the wider organisation.

**Workforce Planning: the ADF Example**

*The need to attract, develop and retain civilian personnel is just as important (as the corresponding requirement for the military). Many of the advances in private sector human resources management have not been incorporated into the DoD civilian personnel system.*


Over many years, Australia’s Defence Organisation has developed a sophisticated and effective means of delivering the Navy, Army and Air Force with the right types of skills in the right place, at the right time. This workforce planning function bases itself on two core pieces of agreed information:

a) a workforce rank structure that supports capability outcomes—i.e. a structure that determines the optimal number and type of people required to man each element of military capability to agreed levels of preparedness and sustainability; and

b) a set of all of the discrete trades that deliver and support the full range of military capability.

Building on these two constants, complex dynamic workforce models have been developed within the ADF. These models track an optimal trade and rank structure against changing levels of recruitment, promotion and separation. At any given time, the ADF is therefore in a strong position to know how its different people contribute to capability, where the main shortfalls are across its workforce, and what the effects of prolonged shortages might be. Such vital knowledge allows targeted remedial action to be taken. Emerging workforce gaps in capability support can be predicted and, hopefully, avoided.
Workforce Planning: The Challenge of Civilians

By contrast, Defence’s Australian Public Service (APS) civilian workforce has not been planned and modelled in this way. Historically, a ready labour market, the (traditionally) generalist nature of many APS positions and the ability to recruit laterally from other employers at all levels of the APS hierarchy have together ensured that civilian workforce planning has been largely ignored. Yet given the complexities and trends in the wider workforce alluded to earlier, the time has arrived to do more. This same need is being recognised by other large organisations across the world—including the US Department of Defense, which has sought to develop ‘a strategic human resources plan for military and civilian personnel’. As competition for specialised civilian skills or greater talent increases and the prohibitive costs in dollars, time and knowledge associated with high employee turnover begins to be better understood, such effort will undoubtedly gain momentum. To achieve this goal, Defence’s APS civilian workforce needs to base itself on the same two tenets that drive effective military workforce planning, namely:

a) an understanding of how many and what types of APS civilians are required to support Defence capability (i.e. the notion of a ‘rank structure’); and
b) a clear understanding of all of the discrete trades that make up the APS civilian workforce contribution to Defence.

Fortunately, this work has begun. Defence’s recent endorsement of a Business Skilling Review (September 2003) has recognised a need to consider the civilian workforce in the context of its discrete skill-sets, or ‘trades’. At the same time, Australia’s Department of Employment and Workforce Relations job taxonomy has been analysed as a useful means of classifying the Defence workforce into meaningful job categories that can be used to inform better planning structures. It is unlikely that the APS workforce would ever require the extent of planning that its ADF equivalent receives, but some rudimentary trade planning is a sensible step forward towards securing a sustainable civilian workforce of the right ‘shape’ for the entire ADO.

The results of military and civilian trade planning fit logically into the ‘demand’ and ‘supply’ elements of the workforce environmental analysis at Diagram 2. By beginning to identify key pressures and threats relating to Defence civilian job categories in the short, medium and longer-term, Defence will be better placed to drive targeted recruitment and retention strategies. Defence is not alone in this process—large government agencies all over the world are developing responses to civilian workforce planning. The Office of Personnel Management, the Federal agency responsible for human resource planning in the United States, appears particularly coordinated and advanced in its thinking in this respect.
Current Status

A Defence Workforce Plan is at present being developed along the lines discussed above. As the themes of the preceding discussion might suggest, much of this development work is focused upon optimising the structure and nominal content of the plan. Actual content is in the process of being collated from work sponsors across the Defence organisation. These sources include research cells both in Defence and within other government agencies (providing valuable information on national work skills and areas of general shortage, as well as demographic trends in the community), advice from ADF workforce planners and capability managers on trade and rank and demand and supply pressures and their impact on capability, as well as advice on pressures confronting Defence’s workforce IT support systems, housing requirements, Defence community pressures and many other fields. As such, the plan is intended to form an amalgam of the endorsed advice of ‘subject-matter experts’. This is an important ‘insurance policy’ on the validity of such work; perhaps more than any other field, workforce planning can too easily be susceptible to ‘motherhood statements’ that fail to deliver practical solutions.

Conclusion

The objective driving all of these efforts is, of course, to link worthwhile information about the Defence workforce into a cogent and manageable document that is considered by the senior decision-makers in Defence, to drive more targeted workforce initiatives into the future. It is the formal conduit between the wealth of subject-matter expertise residing at the working level and prioritised, strategic analysis and direction at the most senior Defence levels. It is designed to be subjected to annual re-evaluation, to allow an effective forum in which new and emerging workforce issues can be considered. Most importantly, the Defence Workforce Plan should drive the ‘rapid and effective executive action’ that Asquith sought, and which his successors and their ilk have desired ever since. A Workforce Plan is perhaps only one part of a much larger Defence planning system, but it is certainly a missing and sought-after piece of the War Book puzzle.
NOTES

4. The British and Australian War Books alike were the aggregated product of many individual departmental contributions. Burk, op. cit., Appendix 1 reveals how politicised the process of this aggregation was within the British civil service; Andrews, op. cit., p. 93 suggests that as each State department was to have its own War Book, each player was eager principally to ‘protect its areas of operation (rather) than contribute to a clear plan of action. Confusion and interdepartmental bickering resulted’.
5. Asquith was Prime Minister during Hankey’s development of the War Book and oversaw its initial implementation.
8. This straightforward definition was provided as part of the Australian National Audit Office’s Review of Workforce Planning in the Australian Defence Force (1996) ANAO archives p. 9, para 2.2.
9. Defence has commissioned formal market research into the attitudes of target Defence recruitment groups (i.e. schoolchildren and young adults) for some years. The resultant analysis reveals a strong respondent preference for future employers to incorporate their lifestyle aspirations into their employment conditions. Details of this analysis can be sourced from the Directorate of Strategic Personnel Planning and Research, Defence Personnel Executive.
12. ibid.
19. Practitioners in this field may benefit from visiting this Agency’s on-line resources at www.opm.gov
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Decisive Strike, Criticality and Homeland Security

by Dr Christopher Flaherty, University of Melbourne.

Identifying criticality in national infrastructure has become an important feature in the war against terrorism. Objectively, the quality that makes a target critical is that if it were destroyed, captured or some way overwhelmed this would disrupt or end an opponent’s capacity to conduct operations. The effectiveness of criticality or decisiveness is attached to the type of target chosen. However, throughout history the characteristics that have given such a target importance have been circumstantial. Countries like Australia continuously seek to identify within their civil infrastructure potential terrorist targets and how to protect these. Considering the notion of criticality in the context of homeland security raises an important question as to what type of operational concept or concepts are we talking about? Historically, the concept of criticality has been incorporated into the notion of decisiveness. Military theorists and practitioners have seen decisiveness in most types of operations as the ‘knock-out’ blow in conflict. Even more recently, Australian Defence Force doctrine employs the notion of criticality in multidimensional manoeuvre theory. This doctrine links simultaneous actions against weak or weakening targets as a contributing factor in creating the circumstances for decisive manoeuvre. Historically, however, the means to achieve decisiveness and when it is achieved has never been fully discerned. Ironically, the notion of criticality has the same ambiguity about it. The argument developed in this article is that criticality is not a fixed concept and in effect is highly subjective. That is, criticality (like its predecessor concept—decisiveness) is the product of a number of factors, and the manipulation of circumstances. Determining criticality is largely a product of discourse as opponents attempt communications using violence. The notion of criticality is also highly relevant to understanding terrorist actions, using as they do a modified—type of axiological targeting. This article will explore the factors that determine criticality and an operational concept aimed at creating and exploiting criticality.

Some Historical Examples of Creating and Exploiting Criticality—Circumstances and Deception

Historically, many famous generals achieved criticality through strategies and tactics. The Duke of Marlborough’s battlefield trademark was his preference for flank attacks. Designed to create local superiority thus forcing his opponent to move reinforcements to those areas, thereby weakening and opening their centre for a major battle winning thrust. Frederick the Great used manoeuvre to achieved criticality in linear tactics. He would manoeuvre his Prussians across the battle-lines of opponent armies enfilading them with firepower causing their battle order to collapse.

In the Napoleonic wars a combination of deception and manoeuvre was used to first concentrate French troops against divided and unequally matched portions of opponent armies. This same operational paradigm worked successfully for the Germans at the Battle of Tannenberg, 1914.
German higher staff planning for the campaign rested on the knowledge that the critical point in two opposing Russian armies was to be found in personal rivalries between the respective Russian commanders. Exploiting this weakness the Germans through deception and manoeuvre separated the Russian armies and defeated them piecemeal.

This short historical review demonstrates that by creating the right circumstances criticality can emerge in an opponent’s system, organisation or structure. Thus, we can conclude that criticality develops firstly as a result of circumstances; and secondly deception operations underpin successfully creating the circumstances where criticality emerges.

**Operational Concepts—Timing, Resources and Opportunity**

Any organisation or structure will have weak points which if manipulated will cause some type of damage that could escalate until full-scale failure occurs. Defining such weak points has dominated operational thinking throughout history. Military authors have identified criticality in different ways nevertheless the concept has not altered. Machiavelli and later Clausewitz saw criticality in terms of strategic timing. Clausewitz also identified criticality as massing military power against an opponent’s weaknesses. Jomini also dealt with the issue of criticality in terms of cutting-off opposing military forces from their logistical support. Liddell-Hart identified the relationship between command and control systems, and criticality. He formulated his maxim that, ‘armies were articulated entities, and the weak points were the places where various organisational parts formed a juncture’. Essentially, all these observations about the nature of criticality share a common relationship; namely that criticality is a combination of three factors—timing, resources and opportunity. These can be added to the earlier examples identifying circumstance and deception. All these factors in essence form the building blocks for developing an operational concept aimed at creating and exploiting criticality.

**Criticality in the Fixed Environment—Interrelationships**

Weak points in fixed or physical structures and networks are either the result of design, degeneration or integration with other structures, organisations or networks. Vulnerabilities in fixed or physical structures and networks can be identified by risk analysis. Thus, from a risk analysis point of view ‘the fundamental idea of risk assessment is: when we assess risks, the first thing we have to determine is what our vulnerabilities or exposures are, and these vulnerabilities or exposures are a weakness that enables a risk to have an impact’.

Rancich argues that as a result of this certainty a terrorist attack will tend to loose asymmetrical advantages. This is because ‘the terrorist has a mission-essential task list that he must fulfill to conduct operations, he has to recruit, train and deploy—all points at which he can be detected’. Jiang observes, ‘we can thus estimate the attributes of a terrorist force, the mode of attack, and the likely weapon’.
Liddell-Hart identified that the likely vulnerabilities in fixed or physical structures and networks tend to be where these interrelate with other structures, organisations or networks. For instance, the US Homeland Security Department: Federal Emergency Management Agency defines criticality in terms of:

*What are Critical Infrastructures? Critical infrastructures are the personnel, physical assets, and communication systems that must be intact and operational 24/7/365 in order to ensure survivability, continuity of operations, and mission success. In other words, they are the people and things absolutely essential to deter or mitigate the catastrophic results of all man-made or natural disasters.*

The fundamental issue in interrelationships is these involve highly complex linkages, connections and bonds which have never been fully measured, and which are dynamic and changeable. In such circumstances it is impossible to analyse all the possible interrelationships. Thus, vulnerabilities are undetected and await exploitation. Interrelationships can thus be seen as a sixth element (to add to the other five so far identified: circumstances, deception, timing, resources and opportunity) in developing an operational concept aimed at creating and exploiting criticality.

**The Application of Axiological Targeting**

The recent Israeli gunship attack and killing of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin was a targeted assassination intended to punish the Hamas spiritual leader and decapitate that organisation's leadership. The motivation for doing so was that his killing was critical as identified by the Israeli Government in its war on terrorism. The strategic logic for this act is based on axiological targeting. This notion runs in parallel to the ideas of decisiveness and criticality. Kan in his recent review of contemporary airpower theory describes the concept:

*The term axiological, which combines the two Greek words axios (worthy) and logos (reason or theory), is the study or theory of values—what they are and where they are placed. The aim of axiological aerospace operations is to use air, space and information power to force a behavior shift in belligerent leadership in the quickest and most economical ways possible. Value targeting engages the minds and needs of leaders at all levels, knowing that they, and not their war-fighting stuff, are the real source of the conflict and its prolongation and the essential ingredient to its resolution. Axiological target sets might include bank accounts and finances, as well as entertainment, sports, and recreational facilities, used by the senior leadership. In other words, axiological targeting sees nonmilitary centers of gravity as more strategic and counter-value targets as more important than counterforce targets.*
Kan also links the concept of axiological targeting to terrorist activity noting:

*The attacks by al-Qaeda against the United States on September 11, 2001, prove instructive when one examines the central thesis of axiological targeting. The strikes against the World Trade Center, whose towers symbolised American power and prestige, were a potent example of axiological targeting.*

Kan, however, is also highly critical of axiological targeting, arguing that it is difficult and often impractical to accumulate sufficient intelligence to be able to ‘glean some insight into the mind of the adversary’. The other problem that can arise, is that criticality is not a fixed concept as the factors as to why a target becomes critical can be circumstantial, and perceptions as to why a target is or was important subjective. In a sense, the Clausewitz proposition that ‘war is a language’ is quite relevant in this case. The violence that each side makes toward the other is a type of discourse, each trying to convey meaning. The asymmetries of this situation are that both sides may be relying on a logic and ontology that either makes no sense to the other side, or that its actions are seen as ineffective or ludicrous. The significance of this point is that from a discourse point of view, an act of violence is symbolically meaningless and politically ambiguous until it is given a meaning resulting from public debate in the wake of the event. From this perspective, it is highly possible that axiological targeting may in fact have an opposite effect from that intended purely because people responding to the event develop a different interpretation. For instance, the relationship between the IRA and Sinn Fein provides a classic example of the way in which a terrorist group can use its political front to produce the rhetoric which explains its actions, motivations and reasons.

**Terrorist Effects-based Operations**

Mann, describing effects-based operations in 2001, stated ‘the basic premise of effects-based operations is focusing on the conditions desired—the effects—to achieve assigned objectives enables one to avoid focusing on pseudo-objectives, such as destruction’. Terrorism by its very nature always seeks to utilise effects-based operational concepts. That is, terrorism through violence attempts to shock targeted societies forcing political and attitudinal change. In the US, work by Pentagon military planners on the transformation paradigm identifies not dissimilar concepts identifying effects-based as the object of national security, which ‘aims to encompass all elements of national power and influence—not solely destruction by military force—to achieve positive political outcomes’. This concept tailors the selection of targets and the means to engage them ‘based on contributions to the desired effect, while minimising any undesirable or negative effects’. Conventional forces and terrorism alike share a similar methodology in the selection of targets:

*May be a physical object or structure, a geographic location, a network or system, part of the electromagnetic spectrum, a person, group, constituency or population. With the ultimate target of attack, being the will and perception of the decision-maker.*
In order to make the link between the decision-maker and target requires a high level of analysis. An example of the link between terrorism and intelligence activities would be the case of the Irish republicans’ terrorism and guerrilla war employed against the British between 1918 and 1921. In the spring of 1918, Michael Collins the de facto leader of the paramilitary Irish volunteers devised a strategy based on violence to secure Ireland’s complete independence. Collins organised terrorist cells, and led them in an intimidation and murder campaign of Irish collaborators, such as Irish police and British officials. The British efforts to track down and crush the IRA were frustrated by Collins’ intelligence department that was able to supply him in advance with exact information about British intentions and plans. In this particular case, Collins was able to decapitate British command and control and made it militarily impossible for the British to continue effective operations with use of precision strikes based on highly accurate information.

Creating an operational concept aimed at creating and exploiting criticality needs to draw together the key elements of axiological targeting and effects-based operations. The possible methodology would incorporate three elements:

- Firstly, a broad approach to targeting, one that seeks to identify and strike ‘all possible leverage points (military, leadership, public opinion, opposition, economic, and religious decision-makers and institutions)’.¹⁴
- Secondly, the conduct of a linked campaign seeking to win on the political fronts the battleground of meaning, as attacks occur.
- Thirdly, a highly developed intelligence facility that can find targets which if struck effect criticality in an opponent’s system, organisation or network.

Creating and Exploiting Criticality

Exploring historical examples where criticality was exploited, the operational concept itself, application to fixed environments and axiological elements identifies six unique variables which can be used to develop an operational concept aimed at creating and exploiting criticality, these are: circumstances, deception, timing, resources, opportunity and interrelationships. These factors, however are all related, and in order to be successfully employed by conventional or terrorists alike need to be balanced and integrated.

Instances where circumstances becomes an issue in criticality are usually where events are forced on an opponent, such as where pressure is brought on certain points that opens up weaknesses in other areas as resources are diverted. These weakening areas allow attacks to penetrate disrupting support, logistical, organisation and information flow. Examining some of the historical examples presented earlier it is clear that throughout the Marlborough, Seven Years, Napoleonic and First World wars successful commanders used envelopment and
concentrated operational concepts to create circumstances where critical failure occurred. Successful commanders literally pushed their opponents into situations where command and control was disrupted, organisational coherence collapsed and weapons became ineffective. The same principle can be seen in some terrorist operations historically, for instance Peru’s Shining Path guerrilla movement. The movement’s terrorist activities were designed in part to demoralise the government and wreck the Peruvian economy. This was achieved through bombing power lines, rural medical clinics, government offices and bridges, and wholesale murder.

Deception rests on the ability to manipulate information to fool, hide or overemphasis the importance of a weak point. In this case, the reasons why a weak point becomes critical are subjective. That is, through deception an opponent is effectively tricked into thinking that a weak point is important or that there is a weak point that can be exploited. A classic example of this would be Napoleon’s invasion of Russia in 1812. The French operational concept was predicated on capturing Moscow, seeing this as a critical point in Russia’s defence. Ironically, the Russians were able to abandon Moscow to the French, shifting their centre of gravity. The French deceived themselves into believing that they could achieve victory by capturing Moscow.

Criticality in any system can result from the time that an attack on a weak point occurs. A weak point may only occur at certain times or due to other events occurring. For instance, it has been observed that one of the factors driving Iraqi insurgents targeting is that the US is undertaking a rotation of forces, and replacement with less experienced troops opens opportunities for insurgents to trap and kill US/Coalition forces and civilian contractors.

The resources aspect of the criticality concept is closely linked to concepts like economy of force, logistics and broader economic issues. Jomini’s classical formulation explained that by blocking an opponent from their supply base creates weak points in their operations. Delbruck identified criticality arising through the poor linkage between political aims and broader economic realities. For instance, Delbruck saw economic resources as proportionally related to the ability to produce sufficient military power to achieve strategic and military goals. His analysis of the German failure in 1918 was based on the observation that the war aims set by the German high command were grandiose and beyond the ability of Germany’s armed forces and the economy to sustain. From this point of view, Germany created its own critical weak point which the Allies were able to exploit. Another example of where resources are significant in determining criticality can be seen in al-Qaeda targeting many times US and European commercial airlines during Christmas 2003. One possible explanation for this behavior was that al-Qaeda was
intentionally wearing-down Western airport security in order to open up weak points so to be able to launch a successful attack.

The opportunity to make an attack on a weak point is closely related to deception issues. For instance, if resources are dedicated to stopping a specific threat the possibility exists for an attacker to develop a deception that draws attention away from a target, and then opens the opportunity to act. It must also be remembered that one of the reasons why asymmetries arise between attackers and defenders is that one or the other adopts an approach, which the other opponent does not identify. Along with deception there is also Mimicking Operations. By way of example, a Mimicking Operation is where an attacker uses mimicry to enter into (like a Trojan Horse) their opponent’s defences and from within make their attack when the right opportunity arises.

Interrelationships have inherent weaknesses, which can be exploited by an attacker. In an operational sense, mixed systems, organisations or networks are inherently unstable, as these have not been deliberately engineered to fit together, rather they have been added in an ad hoc fashion. Thus, weak points can be found in the juncture, overlapping systems, inter-organisations or ‘networks-of-networks’. These can either be exploited to bring about a critical situation, or can be used as an infiltration point in a Mimicking Operation, allowing an attacker to get closer to another weak point that could be critical.

**Conclusion**

The six factors of circumstances, deception, timing, resources, opportunity and interrelationships are manipulated and combined in successful attacks to open vulnerabilities. Conventional and terrorist operational concepts are no different in this respect. Achieving decisive strike however is not a formulaic result of applying all or either of the factors that determine criticality in an operation. Rather, these factors can be applied simultaneously and depending on operational requirements the balance will shift between each. Even though vulnerability in a system, organisation, structure or network may be objectively pre-identified it is nevertheless the case that from an operational point of view such a weak point can still be manipulated. The operational art is to be able to produce the circumstances, time and opportunity where a weak point becomes critical. To do so requires a strategy that can overlap these factors to enable critical strike. The important point is that, all these factors are linked through the discourse element of axiological targeting. Which ironically is a mixed blessing for either the attacker or the defender. To succeed this requires sophisticated intelligence, and sophisticated use of the information aspects of the action. In a sense, the validity of the axiological selection of a particular target—is that actions speak louder than words.
NOTES

1. Hoffmann, a German staff officer proposed a ploy to confuse the Russian commander Rennenkampf. Hoffmann also knew that Rennenkampf held a deep personal vendetta with the other Russian commander Samsonov, and so would be disinclined to come to his aid if he had justifiable cause not to, which is exactly what happened during the battle.


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Reviews

‘A WAR OF PATROLS’  Canadian Army Operations in Korea
William Johnston
UBC Press, published in association with the Canadian War Museum
448 pages, distributed in Australia by East West Export Books

Reviewed by Major J.E. Cotton

A War of Patrols is subtitled ‘Canadian Army Operations in Korea’ and Johnston provides a very detailed account of the preparation, deployment and conduct of operations of the Canadian Army’s contribution to the war in Korea.

Canadian participation in the Korean conflict included sending rotations of infantry battalions based on regular troops and on battalions of ‘special service’ troops with experience in World War II directly recruited specifically to fight in Korea. The conclusions drawn by Johnston on the relative performance of such special troops as compared to the army regulars is fascinating, and warns of the consequences of an over reliance on ‘spit and polish’ and barracks discipline compared to the value of leadership and tactical proficiency. Australian tacticians reading this book should take these conclusions, along with implications in Johnstone book of the need to foster independent thought in and delegate responsibility to our junior leaders, as a warning.

In the book Johnston gives a fascinating counterpoint to the Australian history of the battle of Kap’yong. While 3 RAR defended hill 504 in that battle, 2 PPLI (at that time part of the 27th Commonwealth Brigade with 3 RAR and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) was occupying hill 677. Although the Canadian battle commenced in earnest on the night of 24 April after 3 RAR had been forced to withdraw off hill 504, the comparison and reflections through a Canadian point of view make interesting reading. The holding of hill 677 by Canadians effectively halted the Chinese advance.

The title A War of Patrols reflects key conclusions that Johnston reached in the latter part of his book regarding the value of patrolling in defensive operations, particularly during the mostly static nature of the last two years of the conflict. Johnstone’s conclusions, that patrolling is vital to tactical success as well as maintaining morale, are a result of an extensive review of direct accounts and from the Canadian official history of the conflict. What is of great interest to an Australian military historian are the comparisons Johnstone regularly makes between Canadian and Australian patrolling tactics.
Although the book may seem pertinent only to Canadian readers at the start, valuable conclusions for Australian readers are in the last half of the book. Australian military historians and serving officers and soldiers interested in reviewing the tactics of patrolling and the value of leadership and tactical proficiency should read this book.

Mussolini
R.J.B. Bosworth

Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Darren Kerr

In a period replete with heroes and villains, Benito Mussolini, il Duce, has generally been considered a bombastic, poorly educated buffoon who led his country to disaster during World War II. An easy figure of ridicule in Allied propaganda during the war, photographs of him and his mistress hanging upside down after their deaths at the hands of Italian partisans in 1945, cemented Mussolini’s place as the comic incompetent of the period.

Of course, as in most things, the truth was not as clear-cut. Like all great figures of history, both for good and evil, Mussolini was a complex figure who has been generally poorly understood in Western historical writing. To rectify this deficiency comes Richard Bosworth’s mighty work Mussolini. I use the term ‘mighty’ not so much for the quality of the biography as for the quantity. Bosworth seeks to provide the definitive biography of Mussolini by including every facet and nuance of the Duce’s life. Although still well short of Renzo de Felice’s biography, produced in eight volumes between 1965 and 1997, Bosworth’s work crams much into its 500 or so pages. How well does he do? Well, the devil is in the detail as they say.

Mussolini is clearly a labour of love for a historian who has spent the better part of his life studying Italian history. It may surprise some, it certainly surprised me, that one of the world’s leading authorities on modern Italian history is a Professor of History at the University of Western Australia. Bosworth has worked on modern Italian history for over 35 years and Mussolini appears a logical product of that concentrated effort. Mussolini is Bosworth’s first biography and that may explain both the strengths and weaknesses of the work.

The strength of the book is in its academic rigour. Bosworth provides a very detailed analysis of all the possible influences, both domestic and international, that helped shape Mussolini’s life. Commencing with Mussolini’s death in a very readable and engrossing first chapter, Bosworth
then pieces together Mussolini’s life in chronological fashion from his birth on Sunday 29 July 1883 through to his ignominious end (with a most readable final chapter that discusses the legacy of Mussolini in modern Italian history since World War II). In between is a work that seeks to provide a fresh analysis of the man who sought to raise Italy to a position of power in Europe, as Mussolini himself made clear after coming to power in 1925: ‘Italy wishes to be treated by the great nations of the world like a sister and not like a waitress’.

Bosworth’s academic work is impressive and the greatest strength of this biography. There are countless footnotes, many providing quite fascinating additional detail, and the bibliography is a virtual cornucopia of Mussolini source material. It is hard to imagine a source that has not been included such is the apparent meticulousness that Bosworth has brought to his task.

What are the weaknesses? Well, in his own words, Bosworth set out ‘to write a stylish and readable book; to view even a bully, coward and failure like Mussolini with the eye of pity; to place Mussolini into the context of the many histories of his Italy and his Italies’. While he has clearly achieved the last two objectives, I would question whether it really is a readable book for the casual, historical reader. Certainly there are parts that are engrossing and memorable, however, there are others that are turgid or so bogged down in minutiae that the reader despairs of ever reaching the end. I feel that the problem is that Bosworth knows his subject too well. A strange call for a biographer I know. Bosworth has claimed that he understands Mussolini much better than Mussolini did himself and in attempting to get this knowledge down in a biography he has tried to include every detail, no matter how obscure or irrelevant. For the future student of Mussolini this will probably prove to be a gold mine of detail, for the casual reader it makes for a long hard slog to the end.

So what is the casual reader left with? Without doubt, he or she is left with one of the benchmark studies of a significant historical figure. Bosworth’s ‘eye of pity’ is clearly in evidence and although this occasionally sits uncomfortably when cast on a man who oversaw widespread death and destruction in Ethiopia and Libya, including the use of poisonous gas, it does provide an insightful and intelligent look at a complex and still confusing figure. Mussolini is an easy figure to parody as the blundering, blustering, bald dictator. However, Bosworth portrays him as a man whose weaknesses and character flaws outweighed his strengths at significant cost to his country. But also portrays him as a man challenged by those insecurities and uncertainties common to all humans. Bosworth successfully manages to remind the reader that beneath Mussolini the dictator was Mussolini the man, and it is the man that deserves study because he made the dictator.

*Mussolini* is a meticulously researched and very comprehensive work that provides a balanced and very credible analysis of a complex subject. It may not appeal to all readers but for those prepared to make the slog it is ultimately rewarding. I am just not sure how many will stick around for the end.
ONE FLAG, ONE QUEEN, ONE TONGUE: New Zealand, The British Empire and the South African War
edited by John Crawford and Ian McGibbon
Auckland, New Zealand, University Press 2003, Illus.
225 pages.

Reviewed by Bruce Turner

This is a fine collection of 13 essays on all aspects of New Zealand’s involvement in the South African (Boar) War, 1899–1902. More than 30,000 troops from the colonies and India, Australia, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand fought in South Africa. Approximately 6000 plus of these were New Zealanders. Like Australia, the landscape of New Zealand is dotted with memorials to those who fought (and died) in South Africa.

This was New Zealand’s first participation in an overseas war and New Zealanders surely distinguished themselves there. In fact famous Australian writer A.B. ‘Banjo’ Patterson who was in South Africa as a war correspondent describes ‘Our New Zealand Cousins’ as ‘probably the best troops in (South) Africa’. Australian author J.H.M. Abbott, author of the semi biographical novel Tommy Cornstalk comments on the superiority of the New Zealand troops saying ‘none were quite as good as the Maorilanders. Never did they (the New Zealanders) fail to do the right thing at the right time. They were always sure and constant in everything they did’.

The essays that go to make up this book are of a uniformly high standard. Of especial historical interest are the attitudes of the military commandants of the Australian colonies, Canada and New Zealand including Major General Hutton of Australian fame.

Opposition to the war in Australia and New Zealand is well covered. An especially absorbing chapter (Ch 9) concerns the role of New Zealand women in the war, nurses of course but also schoolteachers.

Ian Van Der Waag provides a comprehensive overview of the Afrikaner experience of the war.

This book is highly recommended and will be of interest to all concerned with the military history of events in South Africa 1998–1902 and the military experience and traditions in what was the British Empire.

Today and in recent times, New Zealand has had and has military forces in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Bougainville, East Timor, The Gulf and Solomon Islands. New Zealand has also provided UN
military observers in a number of theatres. Sadly however, given the manner in which New Zealand’s Army, Air Force and Navy have been reduced it is obvious New Zealand could not provide a military force equal to that sent to South Africa all those years ago, no matter how great the need.

IN BAGHDAD – A REPORTER’S WAR
Paul McGeough
292 pages, RRP $24.95

Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Chris Field

The biggest hits in downtown Baghdad were psychological. Ordinary Baghdadis were able to see the precision nature of Friday night’s strikes [Fri 21 Mar 03] against regime targets, and Saddam’s continued absence from local reporting of the war fuelled speculation on his fate and that of his henchmen.

Day Four—A State of Denial
Sunday March 23, 6.30 am

Information Operations … that capability specifically designed to affect adversary decision-making and information flows, while enhancing or protecting friendly information and decision systems. This capability usually fulfils shape and shield combat functions in both offensive and defensive terms. It normally includes operations security, deception, computer network operations, electronic attack measures, electronic protection measures, counterintelligence, psychological operations … information operations planning, civil affairs, and public information.

Land Warfare Doctrine 1
The Fundamentals of Land Warfare
Chapter 5—Fighting Power

Paul McGeough’s book In Baghdad – A Reporter’s War is an example of the power that Information Operations can have, and may potentially have, on the shape and shield combat functions of a modern combat force. McGeough’s intimate information on the situation in Baghdad in the days before and after the commencement of OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF), information that was disseminated through Australian and overseas media outlets, proves the efficacy of the media as a key component of information operations. McGeough’s excellent access to Saddam’s regime based information and personalities also demonstrates the potential shaping and shielding functions that media, and Defence generated Public Affairs units, may have on future campaigns.
McGeough also provides excellent examples regarding the criticality of robust communications systems in the modern battlespace. McGeough extensively relied upon satellite-phones (Thuraya, and otherwise), laptops, and TV uplink dishes in order to support his particular form of information operations. Such modern communications, albeit in a secure configuration, will be vital for Australia’s future warfighters.

This book is a personal account of a remarkable experience, and is based on McGeough’s 28-day diary and newspaper articles written in the Palestine and Sheraton Hotels in downtown Baghdad from 20 March until 16 April 2003. McGeough was the only Australian reporter to cover most of OIF’s Phase III, decisive combat operations, from Baghdad. However, these strengths are also the book’s greatest weaknesses. McGeough gives an excellent and detailed view of Iraq from inner Baghdad (for example that it was not until Day 17—05 Apr—that ‘Baghdad had finally closed for war’) but, quite obviously, he is unable to give a wider view of the affects OIF had on the non-Baghdad Iraqi population, particularly with regard to the removal of Saddam Hussein. Such limited coverage of OIF by Western journalists, has been widely criticised by the OIF Coalition leaders in that the view from the 17-storey Palestine Hotel in downtown Baghdad, could not always appreciate the diversity of a country like Iraq.

_In Baghdad – A Reporter’s War_ also suffers from the speed in which it was written. McGeough departed Baghdad on 16 April 2003, and had written this book by May 2003, for publication in 06 June 2003. Hence, the book lacks depth with regards to many aspects of OIF, with McGeough simply making his analysis on the spot at significant events (such as the allied missile attack on the al-Shaab market place; the B–1B bomber attack on ‘Saddam’ at Mansur; the removal of Saddam Hussein’s statue in Firdos Square; and, the destruction of the Iraq National Museum) in a style suitable for newspapers, but found wanting with regards to any serious historic analysis.

McGeough’s study provides some interesting insights into the effects of modern war, as related to 28-days of OIF. In particular, McGeough gives a solid insight into the potential power of information operations. However as the OIF campaign is still developing, McGeough’s work, while useful, is rapidly becoming dated.