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In a defensive mode

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Even a job this size isn't a tall order for ADI.
Letters to the Editor

What Need Exist?

Dear Sir,

Squadron Leader Rushworth’s letter to the editor (vide Defence Force Journal No 85) serves as a further illustration of a fallacious contention that a viable FAA in the Australian context infers the operation of carrier based organic fixed-wing in the air defence and maritime strike roles. Were our national objectives, strategic guidance and (more to the point) national economy able to support such power projection, this may be true. However, as this is not the case, apparently (as SQN LDR Rushworth contends) we can neither afford nor need a FAA.

The RAN has continued to develop and operate a viable FAA during the seven years since the Government’s decision not to proceed with a replacement for the aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne. During those years the FAA commenced a fundamental change in doctrine from a carrier air arm to a more flexible, albeit smaller aviation force based around the provision of ships flights. The requirement for such flights was and is based upon the need to integrate organic air power into existing and planned air-capable ships to provide the necessary and significant advantage in ships weapons/sensor system capabilities and performance over regional non air-capable ships.

It is the level of integration into the sea force that takes the FAA beyond being merely a maritime adjunct of RAAF Air Power and affords it the status of an Air Arm. In achieving this, the aircraft of today’s FAA have, by necessity, become (with the exception of the land based HS748 fixed-wing EW training and support aircraft) entirely rotary wing.

I have long since lost count of the number of times that I have encountered sincere surprise when I talk to friends and associates about the activities of today’s RAN’s FAA. Sadly, they too assumed that the demise of carrier borne fixed wing aviation in the RAN meant that the FAA was dead. Loss of a fixed-wing aircraft carrier and certain of its attendant organic air assets does not mean the loss of the FAA. There are over 1 000 very dedicated, professional FAA personnel stationed at HMAS Albatross who will attest to that; indeed, it is my earnest wish that in the future, ship’s personnel will add their voices too.

Squadron Leader, the RAN does need, can afford and is well on the way to achieving a very cost effective, viable, non role specialised (carrierless) FAA. A FAA based upon the employment of organic air assets as integrated ship’s systems; systems employed in support of the achievement of sea power objectives, systems that could otherwise be employed in support of air power campaigns.

The FAA is dead ............. long live the FAA!

G.J. Bell
Lieutenant Commander, RAN

Air Power Reserve

Dear Sir

I read with great interest the article by Group Captains Kavanagh and Schubert, and Wing Commander Waters in the Defence Force Journal December 1990.

I’m astonished they have made no reference or provision for reserves in the RAAF order of battle, even suggesting that “other uses of civil aviation in augmenting ADF air power in time of conflict could be surveillance and search and rescue”.

With great respect, the authors reveal a dreadful naivety of operational warfare if they think these duties could be carried out by civil authorities, quite apart from which the Australian civilian record in air sea rescue is abysmal.

One of the great problems with today’s Australian defence leaders is that very few have any operational experience of war, which is not a 9—5 Canberra Public Service experience.

If Australia was seriously threatened by an aggressor, the RAAF in its present size and form wouldn’t last very long, notwithstanding the authors rather academic statement that “the RAAF must be employed in such a way that the disproportionately adverse effect of attrition on its assets are minimised”.

The only way the RAAF could satisfactorily defend Australia with any real effect is to have a substantial and well trained reserve of aircrew who could with a minimum of training operate the technologically advanced aircraft now in service as well as the less demanding roles such as air sea rescue and transport.
The current philosophy of the ADF to come as you are is absolute nonsense if any real threat emerged against this country, and let us not have any more of this no threat for fifteen years nonsense as an excuse for not creating a credible defence deterrent not only for the RAAF but the Army and Navy as well.

Peter Firkins O.A.M.

In view of these circumstances, we feel that Major Copeland's recommendation that the book not be accepted within the Department of Defence may be as valuable and as timely as a recommendation that Australia not send forces to the Gulf war.

J P C Kenyon
Wing Commander

Author's Reply

Dear Sir,

I write with regard to my review on the booklet More than G'day—A Guide to People working with Overseas Students and the response by Wing Commander J.P.C. Kenyon and Lieutenant Commander Araya Amrapala, I must admit that I am disappointed at the lack of professional rigour in the response.

In my review, a number of serious concerns were raised as to the suitability of the booklet both in support of Australians and in demonstrating to our Asian and South Pacific neighbours that a reasonable outlook is being promoted in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) towards training foreign students.

The authors have seen fit to ignore totally all concerns raised and to quote in general terms only that certain persons have praised the booklet. This is cold comfort.

The over-riding concerns should be that accurate information is given to Australians and that we should be more than willing to pass this booklet to foreign Governments. I still maintain that the booklet is not up to standard on both counts.

B.D. Copeland
Major RAAEC
The Australian Army Heritage

The Australian Army commemorated its 90th Anniversary on 1 March 1991 with celebrations around the country. Earlier in February the Rising Sun badge replaced the crossed swords and kangaroo as the principal emblem of the Army.

The crossed swords and kangaroo was adopted as the official emblem in 1969, although the Rising Sun continued to be recognised as symbolic of the Army.

The basic shape of the Rising Sun badge has remained unchanged since 1904 and was worn with pride by soldiers of the Australian Imperial Force during both World Wars, and in Korea, Malaya and Vietnam.

The Chief of General Staff, Lieutenant General John Coates said he believed that many Australians were searching for more traditional values and it was fitting that the Army should enter into the same spirit and identify closely with its heritage.

A replica of the original shield from which the 'Rising Sun Badge' is believed to have been designed.

Approved in 1969, this badge had only the word 'Australia' on the scroll. It featured the Federation Star surmounted by the Crown.

Introduced into service in 1964, this became the General Service Badge and was worn by Australian soldiers during both World Wars.

The crossed swords and kangaroo emblem has now been replaced by the 'Rising Sun Badge'. It will now be used only in special circumstances such as United Nation participation where the kangaroo gives an Australian identification.

Introduced in 1949 the wording on the scroll was changed to 'Australian Military Forces'. The wording 'Australian Military Forces' was never used on an official hat badge.

The new badge introduced in 1991. The design is closer to that of the 1904 version and clearly identifies the wearer as a member of the Australian Army.
In April 1990, a group of World War I veterans made the historic pilgrimage back to Gallipoli to take part in the events marking the 75th Anniversary of the landings at Anzac Cove.

The pilgrimage involved the deployment of a Quantas 747 aeroplane especially named 'The Spirit of ANZAC' to carry the veterans and war widows to Gallipoli. The Australian Defence Force provided medical teams to care for the pilgrims as well as an Australian Army Half guard, a military band a Catafalque party and escorts for each veteran.

The Royal Australian Navy was represented by the landing ship HMAS Tobruk, the guided missile destroyer HMAS Sydney and the submarine HMAS Oxley.

It was the biggest overseas movement of civilian and military personnel in the history of our nation.

The Australian Defence Force Journal was there to capture the atmosphere of this emotional event and has produced the book 'The Spirit of ANZAC'. This unique publication is a collection of excellent paintings by Defence artist Jeff Isaacs with the narrative prepared by Michael Tracey.

The Spirit of ANZAC is available from the Australian War Memorial bookshop for $9.95
The Origins of Australia’s Army: The Imperial and National Priorities

By Dr John Mordike, Department of Defence

The First Step

The withdrawal of British Army units from the self-governing colonies in 1870 was a significant event in early Australian defence history. The circumstance is important as marking an event in the history not only of this colony, but of Australia’, the Sydney Morning Herald remarked on the departure of the last detachment of the 18th Regiment. It was ‘... the first step towards—nationality...’, the newspaper observed, a nationality which was ‘not the result of direful conflicts and years of suffering’ but ‘... the well-considered conclusion...’ of British statesmen. In future Australians would have ‘... the responsibility of managing our own military affairs’.

Self-reliance

Two weeks earlier the Sydney Morning Herald had contemplated the future development of Australian defence in the light of the impending British withdrawal. Possible alternatives for establishing a military force, it had considered, were the use of unpaid volunteers, paid part-time militia or the raising of a small professional army. Yet there were more fundamental issues also to be resolved. ‘... these questions opened up some very wide considerations...’, the report had continued, ‘... and involve questions that go to the root of the relations between the mother country and her dependencies, and also the relations amongst the colonies themselves.’ While it was not stated baldly, the newspaper was undoubtedly suggesting that self-defence was an important step along the way to self-reliance and would only be achieved with unostentatious co-operation between the Australian colonies, perhaps federation. But this is probably all the newspaper was hinting at. It is unlikely that the conservative Sydney newspaper would have been bold enough to suggest that the assumption of nationhood would mean independence from Britain; each of the colonies was a constitutional member of the British Empire and it was reasonable to expect the same relationship with Britain in the event of a federated Australia. Yet during the last quarter of the 19th century nationalism was a significant influence in the Australian colonies and, at times, some British authorities would fear the possibility of Australian independence. Its strength also worried British strategists who, becoming increasingly convinced of the possibility of conflict with a European power, attempted unobtrusively to manipulate colonial defence developments for imperial purposes. As a result Australia’s Army was founded in a state of tension between the priorities of nationalism and imperialism, producing reverberations which would continue for many years to come.

Part-time Soldiers

During the 1860s each of the six Australian colonies raised units of part-time volunteers but growth was hampered by the problem of maintaining enthusiasm and attracting sufficient enlistments. Incentives were provided in New South Wales and Queensland with land grants in return for the completion of five years service. Pay was also introduced for part-time soldiers in South Australia. With the British withdrawal in 1870 the first permanent soldiers were enlisted in New South Wales and Victoria. Attention also turned to more elaborate schemes and plans for colonial defence. At the request of the governments of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia, two Imperial officers, Colonel Sir William Jervois and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Scratchley inspected and advised on local defence in 1877 and 1878. Their recommendations were based on the principle that the colonies should rely, for their first line of defence, on armed vessels operating at sea. The immediate protection of major ports would then be provided by powerful forts in conjunction with mobile forces consisting of paid, part-time soldiers.
and a small number of colonial regulars. The recommendations of the two Imperial officers were given urgency with a Russian war scare in 1878. Adding to the concern of Australian colonists were the growing imperial interests of France and Germany in the Pacific region. Encroachments by the two European powers to the near north and north-east of Australia induced a state of anxiety. Early in 1883 Queensland annexed Papua in the name of the British Empire, hoping to exert control over the area and to curtail German expansion. It was a move which gained the support of all Australian premiers, although with some reservations. In the same year similar fears arose over the French annexation of the New Hebrides, producing a note of concern at an intercolonial convention. Included in the convention’s final resolutions was a condemnation of any further incursions by foreign powers into the South Pacific. The Australian colonies were beginning to develop a perception of a threat to their security with dramatic results for the development of colonial military forces.

In 1883 the strength of permanent and part-time soldiers was less than 8,000 men but by 1885 the colonial forces had increased to a combined strength of nearly 22,000 men. Barely 1,000 members of the expanded forces were permanent soldiers, filling positions as administrative staff on headquarters, instructors and, in the technical areas of the forces, artillerymen, submarine miners and artificers. The remainder—particularly the infantry and mounted units—were citizen soldiers. A significant evolutionary stage had thus been reached: the strength of the forces and their composition would be generally maintained for the rest of the century. Indeed, in practical terms the development of the defence forces in the mid-1880s was a much more important, if much less remembered, feature of colonial military history than the brief episodes of Imperial involvement, such as the imminent Sudan Campaign.

Call for Recruits

In February 1885 the Australian colonies were shocked to learn that General Charles Gordon, a revered hero of the Empire, had been killed in Khartoum by the forces of an insurgent known as the Mahdi. Gordon, whose exploits were well known to the men, women and children of the colonies, was the embodiment of Victorian virtues: a devoted Christian, philanthropist and soldier, he served selflessly as an inspired missionary of the Empire. His death at the hands of an Islamic rebel demanded retribution. The acting premier of New South Wales, William Bede Dalley, cabled Britain with an offer to send "... two batteries of our Permanent Field Artillery, with ten sixteen-pound guns, properly hosed; also an effective and disciplined battalion of infantry, five hundred strong". This force, Dalley informed the British Government, could arrive in the Sudan thirty days after embarkation.

There was an immediate response to Dalley’s call for recruits. Two weeks after Dalley offered the force, its 770 men; and 218 horses were ready to go. The departure on 3 March was watched with intense public interest and support with some 200,000 of the 300,000 residents of Sydney turning out to farewell the contingent. Yet in the midst of apparent unanimity there was dissent. Sir Henry Parkes, a former premier of the colony on the verge of re-entering parliament, denounced the undertaking. His complaints were trenchant. The contingent could make no difference to the outcome of the campaign; it was economic folly to encourage able-bodied men to migrate to the colony as labour while sending others overseas to war; and, furthermore, it was improper to commit money to such an undertaking, as Dalley had done, without the sanction of parliament. Significantly, Parkes was also upset because Dalley’s action overturned the tradition that the local military forces were raised exclusively for service at home. He could not know that the despatch of the contingent was the first manifestation of a powerful imperial influence which would come to dominate Australian defence thinking for most of the next century.

Underlying the outcry by Parkes was the knowledge that Australians were powerless to influence the determination of imperial policy and therefore, should be more circumspect about their involvement in imperial operations. Australia’s impotence was demonstrated two years earlier when Britain failed to support Queensland’s annexation of Papua. Although southern New Guinea was subsequently proclaimed a British protectorate, there were angry charges that Britain had neglected Australian interests when it was learned in December 1884 that Germany had annexed territory of its own in New Guinea. Graham Berry, a noted Victorian politician, recalled that it was at this time that the idea of colonial federation first enjoyed
widespread currency because it would add weight to Australian representations in Downing Street. Likewise, Parkes claimed that he had no doubt that if there had been a central government in Australia—if Australia could have spoken with one voice in the year 1883, New Guinea would have belonged to Australia.

Loyalty to the Empire

Australian anger over the New Guinea issue did not go unnoticed in Britain and evoked some concerns that it might lead to Australian independence. Dalley’s offer to send troops to the Sudan was therefore greeted with relief because it confirmed Australian loyalty to the empire, probably explaining why the offer was accepted so readily. As Parkes had realized immediately, the New South Wales contingent could make no appreciable contribution to the military operation and, furthermore, Britain certainly needed no assistance from an untried and untrained force, despite its enthusiasm. Yet there were other influences acting to produce a positive British response to Dalley’s offer. Since 1879, Britain had begun to consider how colonial resources could be implicated in imperial defence strategies. The report of a royal commission under Lord Carnarvon into the defence of Britain’s empire and trading interests had recommended that the Australian colonies should be directly involved in imperial defence and that they should make financial contributions for the upkeep of the Royal Navy. Carnarvon’s report also anticipated assistance from colonial military forces in future. The New South Wales contingent was therefore a step towards consummation of these imperial goals.

The worry for British imperialists was that, as reassuring as the spontaneous Sudan offer was it did not constitute a reliable commitment by the Australian colonies to imperial defence. In particular there was no colonial defence structure on which the empire could rely. Britain sought the comfort of something more predictable and permanent than the Sudan model. As the contingent sailed through Sydney heads, the preliminary steps towards this objective were being taken by the Royal Naval commander of the Australia Station, Admiral George Tryon.

Tryon had been posted to Australia in 1884 with instructions from the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Cooper Key, aimed at eliminating the nascent naval forces of the colonies and delivering Australian naval defence into the hands of the Admiralty. The plan had evolved from Key’s wish to impose uniform standards on the colonial naval forces. It called on the colonies to forgo the development of their own seagoing navies in return for the allocation of an additional number of Royal Navy warships to the Australia Station. Crews for the ships were to be provided by Britain and the colonies were to meet capital and running expenses. Although there was disagreement among the colonies on the financial aspects, the resolute Tryon was successful in gaining a positive response to the other elements, of the Admiralty’s proposal. To be known as the auxiliary naval squadron, the additional ships were essentially a branch of the Royal Navy, financed, to some extent, by the colonies. The colonial governments had no control over the squadron’s movements, except for the power of veto over its removal from the Australia Station.

The naval agreement was a primary means of inculcating a dependent mentality in Australians for their own defence. The auxiliary squadron was an element of the world’s most powerful navy. The claim that Australian security was guaranteed by the Royal Navy became the first plank in imperial defence strategy. Of course its size and power acted as a deterrent but British strategists ensured that it achieved another important objective: they argued that it obligated the colonies to contribute men and resources for imperial military operations. Essentially, it was a calculated method of locking the colonies into imperial policy and discouraging the self-reliance which might result from the establishment of an independent navy.

The naval agreement was formally ratified at a meeting of colonial leaders held in London in 1887 to coincide with Queen Victoria’s golden jubilee. Defence was an important issue for discussion at this first Colonial Conference. While Britain worried about French designs on Egypt and the possibility of conflict with Russia in Afghanistan, the Australians continued to fret about European encroachments into the South Pacific. Confirming the extent of Australian uncertainty about the future, Sir Samuel Griffith, the premier of Queensland, told participants that he feared some larger nation might invade Australia. His major concern was the lack of uniformity among the six separate colonial forces which, he believed, would impair effective defence.
especially where colonial co-operation was required. He therefore asked whether an Imperial general could inspect the forces and offer appropriate advice for their improvement. He did not have to wait long for an answer. The next day the meeting was told that Griffith’s request was supported by Edward Stanhope, Secretary of State for War, and the Duke of Cambridge, Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Army.

As a result of Griffith’s request, Major General Sir James Bevan Edwards arrived in Australia in June 1889 and proceeded to inspect the forces and the fixed defences in each of the colonies. At the conclusion of his visit he submitted a report to each colonial government on their respective forces but, in addition, he reported on the prospect of combining the six forces for military operations. In this report he recommended that the colonies should organize their forces on a uniform basis so that they could combine effectively for military operations. He believed that the colonies should plan to establish a force of 30,000 to 40,000 men to combat a hostile landing in Australia. When this force was concentrated for combined operations, Edwards recommended that it be commanded by an officer of the rank of Lieutenant General.

There were some significant inconsistencies in Edwards’ report. Ignoring the realities of distance and limited transport infrastructure, he had failed to explain how the force of 30,000 to 40,000 men could be concentrated in sufficient time to oppose a hostile landing, for example. On this fundamental issue his report was unconvincing. Yet this problem is resolved if the report is interpreted not as a local defence proposal—as Edwards had presented it—but as an attempt to satisfy the wider requirements of imperial need. What Edwards was really trying to achieve with his recommendations became clear when he addressed the Royal Colonial Institute on his return to London.

The Edwards Report produced an immediate reaction in Australia. During his visit to Sydney the Imperial general had had several discussions with Sir Henry Parkes, who had become premier of New South Wales, and it is obvious that the two men had realized that mutual benefit could accrue from the report on military defence. Recalling his visit to Australia, Edwards mentioned meeting with several prominent people, especially Parkes. He gathered that there was a consensus of opinion favourable to Federation . . . , Edwards recounted, . . . but that the realisation of some common need was required to bring it about. Within a week of the publication of the Edwards Report, Parkes broached the subject of federation with other colonial premiers and before the end of the month made a public declaration in the northern New South Wales town of Tenterfield.

United as One Army

‘The Imperial General who inspected the troops of the colony . . .’, Parkes told his audience, ‘. . . had recommended that the whole of the forces of Australia should be united into one army.’ If this recommendation was accepted, Parkes said, then some central executive authority was required to control the army. Suggestions had been made by some colonial statesmen that the Federal Council was the appropriate authority. Parkes continued. This body had been established by the colonies in 1883 but New South Wales had never been a participant. There were, however, more fundamental reasons why Parkes rejected the suggestion that the Council could become the
controlling authority. The Federal Council

'... had no power to do anything of the sort, as it had no executive function; and, moreover, was not an elective body, but merely a body appointed by the Governments of the various colonies; and did not, therefore, carry with it the support of the people ... ', Parkes argued.

Another suggestion, according to the premier, was that the British government should be requested to pass legislation authorizing the colonial forces to unite as a federal army. But this was also an unacceptable proposition. 'The colonies would object to the army being under the control of the Imperial Government, and no one of the colonies could direct it', Parkes told the audience. The premier then asked '... whether the time had not now come for the creation on this Australian continent of an Australian Government?' As he believed it was essential to preserve the security an integrity of the colonies by establishing a federal army, Parkes therefore concluded that '... the time was close at hand when they ought to set about creating this great national government for all Australia'.

Parkes' proposal answered some of the questions posed by major Australian newspapers when they had commented on the recommendations by Edwards. The Age had referred to them simply as, '... political difficulties ...'. The Sydney Morning Herald had been more specific, discussing Edwards' recommendation to appoint a commander-in-chief for the combined colonial force. It posed '... certain questions of a delicate nature ... concerning the basic issue of control and co-ordination of an Australian force, the newspaper had observed. The newspaper referred to recent arrangements for the auxiliary naval squadron where control rested with the British Admiral in command of the Australia Station. This senior officer was '... only hampered by the condition that he cannot take the ships ... out of Australian waters without the consent of the Australian Governments. 'Are the Colonies prepared to entrust corresponding powers to the military Commander-in-Chief?' The Sydney Morning Herald had asked. The same question had troubled the Brisbane Courier because the Queensland newspaper had presumed that the military commander would be appointed from the Imperial Army. '... [B]ut will he take his orders from the Horse Guards in London?'. It had wondered. 'This arrangement would be most strenuously resisted by the colonies.' This nationalist sentiment had been given more radical expression in the pages of the Bulletin while Edwards was still in Australia. The journal had published one correspondent's letter which called for the formation of an Australian Republican force to serve as a national guard. 'The imperialists would not dare put it down ...', the writer had claimed. 'The men would only be banded together for national defence.' The next edition of the weekly journal had featured a cartoon on its title page which depicted an English vulture with British Army emblazoned on its wing. The bird stood, wings spread, menacing an Australian lamb. The vulture would provide protection, it informed the lamb, in return for '... a pound or two of [its] wool'. 'Thanks ...', responded the lamb, declining the offer. 'You're much too fond of mutton to be trusted."

In the conservative and radical press of Australia there was agreement that defence was a subject of direct interest to Australians; Parkes had been astute in selecting it as an issue to initiate the difficult process of federation. As his Tenterfield address indicated, he was well aware of the need to appeal to nationalist sentiment by rejecting any suggestion of imperial control of Australian forces. In a subsequent letter to Victorian premier Duncan Gillies, Parkes reiterated his belief that '... the colonies could never consent to the Imperial Executive interfering in the direction of [the Federal Army's] movements'.

In response to the issues raised by the premier of New South Wales, a meeting of colonial politicians was convened in Melbourne in February 1890. Here it was acknowledged that there were benefits to be gained from political federation and a formal conference, the National Australasian Convention, was subsequently convened in Sydney in March 1891. Taking a leading role, Parkes proposed four principles on which the federal government should be founded. Together with the preservation of colonial rights, intercolonial trade and the power to impose customs duties, the New South Wales premier moved '... [t]hat the military and naval defence of Australia shall be entrusted to Federal Forces under one command.' While this was duly resolved by the Convention, defence attracted little debate in subsequent meetings held in Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne. It was not that defence was not taken seriously. Federal control of Australian defence forces and the attendant benefits were considered to be beyond question.
A Promising Start

As promising as the start towards federation was, by 1892 the movement had lost some momentum. Its achievement demanded difficult, prolonged negotiation between the colonies. Furthermore, after 1890 Australian politicians were distracted to some extent by a severe economic depression. Wishing to see the Australian colonies federated at the earliest opportunity, the British authorities became annoyed with colonial tardiness. Their interest in Australian federation was promoted to some degree by their wish to implicate the Australian colonies in imperial defence strategies. They realized that it would be much easier to deal with one Australian government rather than six colonial governments. Furthermore, a combined Australian military force could be more easily deployed on operations overseas than six separate forces. Becoming impatient, the British authorities came to believe that a federation of colonial military forces might be achieved before political federation.

When the government of New South Wales acted on the advice of a senior Imperial officer, Major General Alexander Tulloch, in 1893 by requesting Britain to provide an officer to command its colonial forces, the British authorities decided to use the appointment to achieve their imperial objective. The permanent undersecretary at the Colonial Office, Sir Robert Meade carefully briefed the appointed officer, Colonel Edward Hutton before he departed London, leaving him in no doubt about his role in Australia.

Meade told Hutton that his primary role in New South Wales was to organize the military force for the defence of the colony but he was also expected to fulfill important imperial requirements. In this regard, Meade informed Hutton that the federation of the Australian colonies was '... within the sphere of practical politics'. Therefore, as a preliminary step, he considered it possible '... to shortly bring about a Federation ... for Defence purposes'. As this would happen before a federal government was established, Meade told Hutton that the federated military force would '... act under the direction of a Council of Federal Defence, or under the command of a chief nominated by such a Council'. Hutton was therefore expected not only to reform the forces of New South Wales but to influence Australian military developments on a federal basis.

To begin with he was told that, as far as possible, there should be uniformity in the administration, arms and equipment of the various colonial forces. In a very important additional charter, Meade stated that, in the event of war with France, '... the Australasian Colonies might be called upon to take the offensive in the Pacific and to provide an Expeditionary Force for the occupation of New Caledonia or other such possessions in those seas,' Meade's immediate concern about the possibility of conflict with France had been sparked by a threatened clash of British and French imperial interests in South-East Asia. Yet the need to keep this imperial objective at least partially hidden was recognized candidly. Meade warned Hutton of the strength of nationalism in Australia, indicating that imperial meddling in colonial affairs would be inflammatory. The Imperial officer was therefore instructed 'to omit as a question of practical imperial policy, any reference to the possibility of Colonial Forces being necessarily expected to take part in Imperial military operations'.

Hutton was expected to fulfill his instructions without disclosing the aim to Australians.

Throughout his appointment in New South Wales Hutton was careful to make no public comment about an imperial role for Australian troops. Furthermore, he did not tell the political leaders of the colony about Meade's instructions. Yet, shortly after Hutton's arrival, concerned reports began to appear in the newspapers of the colony charging that the commandant was working to an imperial agenda. The Sydney Morning Herald claimed that some military officers believed that imperial requirements were now dictating equipment patterns and force structure with the object of facilitating future service with the Imperial Army.

This was a disturbing development for many colonists. The Sydney newspaper considered that proposals to copy British military practice were welcome if they meant '... improvements in regard to organisation, training and equipment ...', however, this was as far as assimilation should go. Any suggestion, the Sydney Morning Herald concluded, that '... one or the whole of the colonies might send a contingent to India or some other place where Great Britain might require assistance, was scouted by many as being of a character that would not be tolerated in the colony.' The Newcastle Morning Herald reported one rumour that the British authorities had directed their Colonial Governors to introduce measures which would make the colonial forces 'available in other parts of the British Empire'. If this were true, the newspaper
continued, then it was '...a very grave and serious innovation on the relations which have hitherto subsisted between the mother country and these colonies.' Similarly, the Daily Telegraph charged that Hutton had confidential plans to have amendments introduced to colonial defence legislation '...of a decidedly imperialistic nature.' If he was successful, the newspaper had been informed, it would mean the '...alteration of our military constitution to such an extent that the Australian soldier was in future to take his orders from the Imperial head, and was to hold himself in readiness for foreign service when called upon.'

The Newcastle Morning Herald came to the conclusion that if Hutton was indeed acting on instructions from the British authorities then it was '...a mischievous and dangerous policy.' When pressed for a response to these allegations, Hutton refused to confirm or deny them. Yet Hutton’s actions and his comments to military officers fuelled persistent rumours, leading to an unseemly public confrontation between himself and the premier, Sir George Dibbs. Angered by a reduction in the defence estimates, Hutton provided an interview for a reporter from the Daily Telegraph in which he criticized the premier’s action. In response, Dibbs charged that Hutton was an imperialist who looked to Whitehall rather than Macquarie Street for direction. 'If he had his way', Dibbs told the Daily Telegraph, '...I should merely become his recording clerk.' To help relieve the strain which had developed between the two men a meeting was arranged in the premier’s office.

'I was summoned to the office of the [premier] at 9pm on 13th November 1893,' Hutton recorded in his private papers, 'and so apprehensive was I of what might occur from Sir George Dibbs’ well-known hasty temper that, being in uniform at the time, I arrived on the scene with my revolver concealed in my great-coat pocket.' Hutton had decided that he was ‘quite determined’ to make his position clear and reassured himself that he ‘had the great mass of public opinion ... behind [him] and the militia force to a man’.

**A Staunch Imperialist**

A staunch imperialist, Hutton had an arrogant disregard for the practice of self-government in the colonies. He also had an aggressive personality. These shortcomings led him into error in his relationship with the premier. There were no grounds for Hutton to believe he was under some bodily threat from Dibbs. It is astonishing, therefore, that Hutton believed physical violence, or the threat of violence, could assist him in asserting his position with the premier. There could only be dire consequences from such action. Despite Hutton’s sinister preparations, however, the meeting was conducted on an amicable basis, superficially at least. Perhaps the presence of Mr Critchett Walker, the principal undersecretary, discouraged any animosity between Hutton and Dibbs. Hutton simply complained to Dibbs about his failure to meet with him on a regular basis and Dibbs rebuked Hutton for regarding the Governor as his principal rather than himself.

The fundamental issue which divided Dibbs and Hutton was the commandant’s determination to fulfil his imperial directions by organizing an Australian federal military force. One can easily understand Dibbs’ lack of enthusiasm because such a development would result in diminished control by a colonial government over the forces it raised and maintained. There can be little doubt that the premier also suspected that Hutton had an imperial objective in mind.

Frustrated by Dibbs’ intransigence, Hutton attempted to rally public support for the federal force by speaking publicly on the proposal at Bathurst in January 1894. His comments, which were reported in the press, drew a swift response from Parkes. There could never be a federal army, the elder statesman informed Hutton, unless it was under the control of a federal government. It was quite impossible, Parkes emphasized, to achieve a common defence act, the union of the colonial forces and control by a council, as Hutton had advocated, without first establishing a federal legislative body. But it was advice Hutton was reluctant to accept. Despairing, the politician then told Hutton, ‘...as I have pointed out a hundred times...’, that the Australian military forces could only be brought under one federal law and one federal command, ‘...by the Australian colonies uniting under one federal government.’

Hutton chose to ignore Parkes’ advice but, confronted by Dibbs’ resistance, there was little that Hutton could do. However, in August 1893, when the Dibbs government left office, it appeared that Hutton might achieve his goal because the new premier, Sir George Reid, agreed with Hutton’s proposal to develop plans for an Australian federal
force.40 While Reid’s support was based on his belief that a federal force would provide better defence for Australia, it was still a step forward for Hutton because it was an opportunity to begin formal discussions with the other colonies.41

With Reid’s support, Hutton organized a conference of colonial military commandants in Sydney in October 1894. The major issue for discussion was a draft federal defence scheme which Hutton had drawn up with advice from London. In presenting the scheme to the conference, he was careful not to mention an imperial role but confined himself to local defence. An important feature of Hutton’s proposal was his recommendation to divide the colonial forces into two separate groups. To one group he had allotted the role of ‘passive defence’ and to the other ‘active defence’; his choice of words reflected the need to keep a cover on his imperial designs.42 Indeed the active defence component would soon be called the field force—this title was potentially less provocative, diverting attention from its offensive role as an expeditionary force. In years to come the function of ‘active defence’ would undergo a similar euphemistic transformation and become ‘forward defence’.

While Hutton could easily introduce an expeditionary force structure under the guise of a local defence force, this was as far as colonial sensibilities would allow him to go in his federal defence scheme. Contrary to his real wishes, he included a clause in his proposal which tied the field force to operations within Australia. In his own words, overseas service was ‘...a great political question which [he] was sure the Government was not prepared to take up...’. He considered it best to make the military preparations in advance of political decisions and informed London that the force would be ready if the colonial governments were prepared to countenance overseas service in future.

Hutton had no difficulty achieving the agreement of the other military commandants at the conference but, ultimately, the proposal to establish a federal force failed for the very reason that Parkes had continually emphasized. ‘What would be the Government responsible for the direction of the Federal Army?’, the Sydney Morning Herald asked. ‘If it had a commander-in-chief, to what Government would he be subordinate and from whom would he take his orders?’44 When Reid put Hutton’s proposal to a meeting of colonial premiers in Hobart in January 1895 it was rejected. While the premiers acknowledged the obvious benefits of federal defence, they would not create a federal force before a federal government had been established.

Federal Defence Scheme

Hutton sent a copy of the federal defence scheme to the Colonial Defence Committee in London but, failing to appreciate the mood in Australia, they were critical of the clause which restricted the federal force operations to Australian territory. ‘To me personally...’ Captain Nathan, secretary of the Committee, complained to Hutton, ‘...this seems the chief raison d’être of the whole scheme.’45 Responding to Nathan, Hutton explained that overseas service was an object he had kept in mind continually but he had ‘...never dared to hint publicly’ at it. There was ‘...a strong, and very blatant party, who denounce the Soudan [sic] Contingent and any idea of helping the old country’. Hutton reiterated. ‘It would do more harm than good just now to court this opposition considering the condition of party politics...’, he explained.46

As a result of lobbying by Hutton, another conference of colonial military commandants was convened in January 1896. Here Hutton tried to overcome the restriction in his first federal defence scheme by surreptitiously amending the clause which defined Australian territory. The amended area, which was described by longitudes 110°E to 180°E and latitudes 0° to 50°S, included New Zealand, New Caledonia, the New Hebrides, New Guinea and parts of Borneo and Java. He also included an amendment which would have permitted overseas service if the individual soldier volunteered.47 But his attempts to satisfy the wishes of his superiors in London were futile because the scheme was again rejected by the colonial premiers. On his return to London early in 1896 Hutton told Meade that he had tried to follow his imperial instructions to the letter but had found it ‘...impossible...’ to arrange for a federal force to serve outside Australia because of ‘...public and political opinion...’.48

With the failure of the federal defence scheme the British authorities turned to other ways of implicating the Australian colonies in imperial defence strategies. Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, an energetic and talented imperialist, decided to await Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee on 22 June 1897 when the colonial premiers would again visit London for a Colonial Conference. At this meeting Chamberlain proposed that the colonial
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Colonel Edward Hutton—Commander of the Military Forces of New South Wales, 1893–1895
governments send military units to Britain for training and, if they approved, deployment on active service. As Chamberlain put it, he saw "... no reason why these Colonial troops should not, from time to time, fight side by side with their British colleagues". He hoped that colonial participation would weaken resistance to more extensive involvement in future. Yet, despite Chamberlain's persuasive skill, he was unable to enlist support for his proposal from any of the colonial leaders. For the resolute Colonial Secretary, however, this was only a temporary setback.

Before leaving for the diamond jubilee celebrations, the leaders of the Australian colonies had participated in a four week session of the National Australian Convention in Adelaide, producing the first draft of the constitution for the proposed Commonwealth of Australia. As the constitution was to be enacted ultimately by the British Parliament, the Australians bought a copy of the draft to London, seeking comments. However, while the British authorities were determined to encourage federation, they were quite worried by what they read in the draft.

On 19 June, three days before the diamond jubilee celebrations, a worried John Anderson, head of the Australian section at the Colonial Office, noted that it was "... impossible to view [the draft constitution] as entirely satisfactory, especially in regard to the unity of the Empire". One of Anderson's major concerns was that section 70 of the draft implied that Australia's military forces. It referred to section 68 of the draft which provided that the commander-in-chief of the military and naval forces would be "... the Governor-General as the Queen's Representative". The British authorities wanted the reference to the Governor-General deleted and that, instead, the Queen be designated as the commander-in-chief. The intent of this suggestion seems clear: it would have given the British Parliament a constitutional basis to command Australia's forces. The Queen was compelled to act on the advice of her ministers—British ministers.

It is inconceivable that Chamberlain would have contemplated exercising control over Australian forces without the consent of an Australian Government, but the proposed amendment is an indication of the British determination to prepare the way for the colonies to participate actively in imperial defence. It was the latest in a series of possible answers to the question of ultimate control of Australian federal forces, posed originally by the Edwards report and echoed in Hutton's federal defence scheme. Yet there was no doubt in the minds of Australia's politicians. Participants in the final Constitutional Convention of 1898 were in complete agreement that the Governor-General would command the forces acting on the advice of...
Australian ministers. It is therefore not surprising that Reid made no attempt to introduce the amendment suggested by Chamberlain. The command of Australian troops was an issue on which there was no second opinion. One prominent participant in the final Convention, Alfred Deakin, succinctly captured the mood of the meeting when he concluded that:

‘In no case is [the Governor-General] to be endowed with the personal power to act over the heads of Parliament and the Ministry, by whom these forces are called into existence and by whose contributions they are maintained.’

Australians were determined to command their own military forces in accordance with accepted practice for a constitutional democracy.

Before the federation of the six Australian colonies was consummated Britain was at war with the two Boer republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. While the governments of the larger Australian colonies, especially New South Wales, were reluctant to be formally involved, there was widespread support from the community. In an outburst of imperial patriotism over 16,000 men and some 60 nurses from all Australian colonies volunteered for service in South Africa, making it a far more significant event than the Sudan Campaign. In London, the Colonial Defence Committee now looked to the future with optimism because, as its secretary noted in January 1900, there were two important matters, ‘... bearing on the question of troops from Australia for Imperial Service in war’. First, Australian federation was imminent and would remove many difficulties by producing a single military force rather than six. Secondly, the commitment of troops by the Australian colonies provided a valuable precedent on which to build more ambitious military developments in the near future. The Colonial Defence Committee therefore decided to await federation before proposing the establishment of an imperial military force. Joseph Chamberlain endorsed this decision, believing that experience gained in South Africa would suggest ‘... the best method of organising and utilizing Col. [sic] troops for Imperial service’. The Colonial Secretary anticipated that an Australian federal government would co-operate in future without reservations. However, the British authorities were too sanguine, failing to understand the ambivalence in Australia on the issue of defence.

On 1 March 1901 the Commonwealth assumed control of the former colonial military forces by proclamation under section 69 of the constitution. Having a total membership of 28,500 men, the forces included some 1,500 permanent soldiers, 18,000 militia and 9,000 volunteers, who were not paid for their service. Yet, despite Chamberlain’s imperial dreaming, the Australian Army was to be a home service army. This outcome reflected long held reservations about Australia being drawn permanently into imperial military commitments with a concomitant loss of autonomy in defence developments. It was a mood which had been reinforced by contemporary involvement in South Africa, making many Australian politicians wary of the possible excesses of British imperialism.

Certainly, the outbreak of war had mobilized substantial support for the empire but, as the war dragged on, it also produced a number of concerned comments about future military undertakings. Speaking during the debate on the first defence bill, Samuel Mauger of the Protectionist Party said he was ‘... inclined to think that we have just overstepped the mark in our anxiety to be loyal and serve the old country ... we have engendered here a spirit of militarism that is likely to be detrimental at some distant date’. George Reid of the Free Trade Party denounced ‘... dreams of military adventure in other lands ...’ and warned that we should ‘... not let the statesmen of England think, because we are ready to send our men to Africa, that we are infected with any lust of military enterprise’. At the same time, Charles McDonald of the Australian Labor Party hoped that ‘... the day will never dawn when Australia shall become a recruiting ground for the British Army’. These comments, typical of many emanating from parliament, motivated sufficient members to place firm limits on the area in which the Army could serve. As a result, the first Australian Defence Act of 1903 denied a government the power to send any soldier, and therefore any unit or formation, outside Australian territory. It was intended that the Army would be organized and maintained as a national force for the defence of Australia, not imperial operations. However, having effectively restricted the Army to service in Australia, the strength of the imperial attachment could not be ignored. It was clear that
many Australians would wish to rush to Britain's aid in a crisis. The Defence Act therefore permitted overseas service if men volunteered as individuals.69 These were the provisions which determined the nature of Australia's contribution to World War I and World War II where the 1st and 2nd AIF's were raised from volunteers as special forces to serve overseas for the duration of hostilities. From the outset, therefore, the ambivalence surrounding the role of Australian military forces, formally acknowledged in the first Defence Act, produced complexities of motivation and function which would lie at the heart of Australian military history—and planning—for several generations.

NOTES
1. Sydney Morning Herald, 24 August 1870, p. 5
2. ibid., 6 August 1870, p. 6
6. ibid., pp. 84-85.
9. ibid., p. 53 & pp. 73-74.
11. ibid., p. 92.
19. ibid., p. 196.
22. Age, 15 October 1889, p. 4.
32. Cutting from Newcastle Morning Herald & Miners' Advocate, 21 August 1893, Hutton Collection, Vol. 6, Australian Newspapers 1893-94, f. 61, Ms. 1215, ANL.
33. Cutting from Daily Telegraph, 21 August 1893, ibid., f. 58.
34. Daily Telegraph, 4 November 1893, p. 9.
36. Private and Confidential Resume of a Personal Interview between Sir George Dibbs and Major-General Hutton, At the Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney, on 13th November, 1893, at 8 p.m., Mr Critchett Walker. Principal Under Secretary being Present, ibid., ff. 205-210.
41. Report and Summary of Proceedings Together with Appendices and Minutes of the Federal Military Committee, October 1894, Minutes and Summary of Proceedings, Minute by G.H. Reid, 23 October 1894, with cabinet approval, p. 1, AWM Folio Pamphlet Collection No. 301.013, Queensland Defence Reports, Box No. 49A, AWM.
42. ibid., p. 25.
43. ibid., p. 26.
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51. Comments on the draft constitution by John Anderson, Chief Clerk Australian Section, 19 June 1897, with minute by John Bramston, Assistant Under Secretary of Australasian Affairs, South Australia No. 12012, 7 June 1897, Colonial Office 13/152(1), microfilm copy, ANL.
52. ibid., Minute by Joseph Chamberlain, 29 June 1897.
54. Chamberlain to Reid, July 1897, South Australia No. 12012, 7 June 1897, Colonial Office 13/152(1), ANL.
56. Draft Federal Constitution 1897, Section 68, ibid.
60. Telegram Beauchamp to Colonial Office, 9 July 1899, N.S.W. No. 17790, Colonial Office 201/625; & Telegram Governor, Victoria, to Colonial Office, 3 July 1899, Victoria No. 17285, Colonial Office 309/148, microfilm copy, ANL.
Figures for nurses provided by Ms J. Bassett from her study into Australian Army nursing. The figures include 41 enlistees in official contingents but, in addition, at least another 25 nurses joined units already in South Africa.
62. Memorandum—Australia: Colonial Troops for Imperial Service in War, M. Nathan, Secretary Colonial Defence Committee, 26 January 1900, Cab 11/121, PRO.
63. Nathan to Sir E. Wingfield, 2 February 1900, & Draft J.C. Joseph Chamberlain] to Beauchamp, 7 February 1900, N.S.W. No. 24346, Colonial Office 201/625, ANL.
65. Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, Vol. III, Mr Mauger, p. 3320, Mr Reid p. 3107, Mr McDonald pp. 3519-3520.

ABBREVIATIONS
ANL National Library of Australia, Canberra
ANU Australian National University, Canberra
AWM Australian War Memorial, Canberra
BL British Library, London
PRO Public Record Office, London

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Heritage of Strangers:  
The Australian Army's British Legacy

By Dr Peter Stanley, Australian War Memorial

British Style Army

The Australian Army is recognisably a British-style army in its heraldry, traditions and style if not in its hardware. Despite its Austrian rifles, German tanks and American personnel carriers, the Australian Army still visibly bases its uniforms and traditions on those of its erstwhile parent, the British Army. This heritage clearly derives from Australia's place as a member of the British Empire and Commonwealth, and from shared experiences on and off the battlefield over a hundred and five years, from the disembarkation of the New South Wales contingent to the Sudan at Suakin in 1885, to the annual exchange of individuals and sub-units which continues today.

The Australian Army's British connection has been and doubtless is still both a source of strength and a cause of irritation. Even in the largely conservative world of the Australian military the gradual Australian assertion of independence from the British assumption of colonial subordination has been a detectable and at times dominant theme since in the 1850s the Australian colonies first raised military forces. At times, in the world wars particularly, contact between the two forces has engendered in Australians the familiar ambiguities of adolescence, of relishing the senior ally's approval while simultaneously resenting patronising tutelage. Whether such feelings are now a part of history only those who encounter their Commonwealth colleagues on courses or exchanges can say, though when they do their shared heritage will ensure that each will know what to expect in the mess or in the field.

The British Army's relationship with Australia anticipates, however, the formation of the Australian Army, or even the colonial forces which preceded it. Its connection with Australia dates from the arrival in 1790 of the first party of the New South Wales Corps, a colonial unit of the British Army. Curiously, though, this eighty year-long sojourn has bequeathed barely anything to the present Australian Army, a circumstance which requires exploration and explanation.

The service of British soldiers in colonial Australia is doubly forgotten: the British Army itself is barely aware that 24 regiments of the line garrisoned the Australian colonies, and the Australian Army feels little connection with a force which preceded it as Australia's defence force. The reasons for each's neglect are related: essentially because the soldier's role in early colonial Australia was more that of gaoler than guardian.

The British Army's neglect of its Australian history is understandable. A nation with so rich a military history could be excused for overlooking a period apparently devoid of the drama with which that history abounds. While the Australian colonies' garrisons seemingly stagnated other regiments defeated Napoleon, won an empire in India, and fought in Afghanistan, South Africa, China, Portugal, Canada, and the Crimea, adding to the battle honours which today adorn the regiments' colours and still form the staple of their museums and military histories. Soldiers at the time saw little advantage in serving in so uneventful a station—because war meant the chance of promotion and advancement—especially in so demeaning a duty as guarding convicts, and few who could avoid it accepted an Australian posting. Military history's concentration on war has led to the neglect of regiments' often mundane Australian service, and years of duty are still dismissed in a few paragraphs before turning with relief to the wars the regiments generally encountered when they moved on to India. Certainly British soldiers won no battle honours in Australia, though they were engaged in intermittent and often savage fights, with bushrangers, convict rebels and Aborigines, though these small and often squalid conflicts were not regarded at the time as worthy of the name of warfare.

The nature of the British Army's Australian service explains in part why its role in Australian history has been largely ignored: the soldier in colonial Australia was part of the mechanism of official repression. A society which has come to celebrate the male convict as the harbinger of a masculine national culture and the bushranger as a hero looks askance on the servants of an oppressive penal system. The attitude is probably rooted in the
This obelisk in Watson's Bay commemorates the work of men of the 73rd Regiment of Foot, the first British line regiment to serve in Australia, from 1810 to 1814, in building a road from Sydney to South Head. (author)

antipathy which existed between soldiers and most poorer—and especially Irish—colonists in early Australia. Contemporary attitudes toward the military as an institution were in any case strongly imbued with the traditional British suspicion of the 'standing army', and many immigrants and emancipists regarded themselves as superior to the soldiers, whose servitude was liable to end not with a ticket of leave but most likely in a fever ridden Indian hospital.

The more prosperous colonists, whose interests the soldier directly protected, and who often profited from the army’s valuable commissariat contracts were more sympathetic. The colonial middle class applauded the army, if only at a distance when the troops turned out for their regular field days, and, seeking closer engagement, manoeuvred their daughters toward eligible subalterns at balls and levees. Still, there were ambiguities in even the respectable colonists’ view of the army. Colonial liberals were conscious of how autocratic governors, such as George Arthur and Ralph Darling had impeded the colonies’ progress toward representative self-government, and all were aware of how the New South Wales Corps had usurped constituted authority in the 1808 ‘Rum Rebellion’.

The prevailing popular lack of sympathy between soldiers and colonists persisted long after the departure of the regiments, and found expression through, for example, literary works, such as in the presentation of Captain Frere in Marcus Clarke’s For the Term of his Natural Life, or in the stories of the Bulletin’s Price Warung, who in the 1890s portrayed the soldiers guarding the convicts as unfeeling and brutal upholders of the ‘System’. Elements of this attitude survive, in the stock character of the callous, sneering British officer found in television dramas set in penal settlements. Toward the end of the century, when British troops had been gone for twenty years and the ‘convict stain’ had long been diluted by decades of free immigration, the colonists seem to have shared the romantic adulation of ‘Tommy Atkins’—so much so that Australians going to South Africa in 1899 were at first suitably respectful about their proximity to famous British regiments.
The British Army's Australian heritage seems slight. Perhaps its most tangible reminder, as generations of Australian soldiers will recall, is in the buildings, like the 'Lancer' barracks at Parramatta, which survive from as early as Macquarie's term as governor. Many of these survivals are particularly fine examples of early and mid-Victorian military architecture; Victoria Barracks in Melbourne and Sydney, Anglesea Barracks in Hobart or fine fortifications, such as Fort Denison. Other reminders are much less visible. Thousands of Australians must number a soldier among their ancestors, though few seem aware of it, and compared to the much greater proportion claiming convict descent the importance of soldiers in European settlement cannot be seen as particularly significant. Linguistically the British Army bequeathed little. There are several Barrack Streets or Soldiers Points, and many names of individual soldiers are found on maps, but compared to the rich linguistic inheritance of the world wars the reminders in slang are few. Military paymasters in colonial Australia, dealing both in colonial and imperial money bequeathed the description of Australian-born as 'Currency', as opposed to the British born 'Sterling'. The soldiers picked up little in return, though the expression 'the haul up', still used in the Royal Highland Fusiliers to mean, to be put on a charge, is traditionally supposed to have originated among men of the 21st Fusiliers as guards aboard convict transports sailing to Van Diemen's Land.

In creating an Australian Army attempts were made to build stronger connections between the imperial and the dominion armies. The British Army was an obvious model, both organisationally and in creating a military tradition. For much of its first ninety years the Australian Army simply adopted British procedures, formations and terms—with good reason since it expected to fight alongside the senior ally. In creating for Australia a military tradition, though, while drawing on indigenous traditions, such as the slouch hat, the Army also borrowed freely from an army whose heraldry and customs had evolved over 250 years as a product of a particular relationship between army and society. As is evident at parades today, the Australian Army adopted virtually as a piece the paraphernalia of bands, colours, battle honours and regimental distinctions. Whether this has been a complete success is debatable. For a time Australian Militia battalions sported incongruous but engaging titles adapted from the parent army: the North West Murray Borderers, the Adelaide Rifles or, inevitably and with variations, several species of Highlanders. Australian units adopted British regimental marches, such as 'Braganza' by the City of Newcastle Regiment, or 'John Peel' by the Kennedy Regiment, both deriving from British regiments with which the Australians were linked.

The effect of this borrowing on the development of an indigenous military tradition and on the Australian Army as an expression of an Australian identity has not been explored: neither armies nor their friends, such as military historical enthusiasts, are likely to enquire too closely into the value and effect of their heraldry and tradition. The wholesale adoption of imperial heraldic forms and the virtual absence of indigenous military heraldry—apart from some superb, though sadly short-lived, Australian Militia badges—was itself a reflection of a hesitant Australian national identity, over which there seems little point in cavilling. The question is relevant, though, to the arguably tenuous connections which evidently have existed between the Australian and British armies. The lineages of Australian units show through successive reorganisations, 'affiliations' between British and Australian units. From the late 1920s, for example, many Militia battalions were allied to British regiments, and the degree to which such official affiliations reflect meaningful ties between the members of units is doubtful. Though a few British regimental museums or messes today hold boomerangs or other mementoes presented by their Australian affiliates many connections were short-lived, and involved exchanges of greetings on anniversaries rather than personnel. Consequently few close personal ties resulted, since many alliances occurred at the beginning of the 1930s depression and before rapid air travel they could not have been expected to 'take'. Many, indeed, seem to have been distinctly arbitrary: connections were often based on the foundation of Australian units having the same numbers as the old British regiments of foot, so that the 44th Battalion, the Western Australian Regiment, was allied to the 1st Battalion of the Essex Regiment, the old 44th Foot.

As indications of Australia's British heritage and as ceremonial gestures such alliances were justifiable, but whether they bolstered the Australian soldiers esprit de corps is problematic.
The relationship between military heraldry and tradition and fighting efficiency is usually assumed rather than examined, and there are substantial arguments on both sides. It seems likely, though, that the performance in action of Australian Militia units in the Pacific war owed little to their recently acquired ‘traditions’ and much more to their members’ awareness of their first AIF predecessors; hence the unique Australian devotion to the colour patch and the warmth with which its revival has been greeted. It seems that for Australia the connection between heraldry, formal tradition and military efficiency is relatively weak. While institutional attempts to forge an identity—like the Militia affiliations—have failed whereas heraldic devices like colour patches have succeeded in ways which could not have been anticipated at the time of their introduction.

Meaningful institutional alliances with other armies have developed most strongly when they have grown out of shared experience in battle, as between the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment with Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry in Korea. Here, though, the Australian Army’s failure to create and sustain an institutional continuity, as its tortured lineages suggest, has done the Army a serious disservice. The creation in two world wars of volunteer forces for overseas service, leaving the Militia largely for home defence, has prevented the development of close ties between Australian and overseas units. Many of the experiences which Australians shared with British and other forces—in North Africa, for example, with the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers at Bardia the Royal Horse Artillery at Tobruk—concerned AIF units which left no institutional progeny to perpetuate the connection.

The Australian Imperial Force

The Australian Army’s British heritage must, therefore, be sought elsewhere. It is arguable that its most enduring connection with the British Army—apart from shared battlefields and, often, graves—had little to do with the service of the regiments in the garrison, with heraldry or institutional affiliations, and more to do with people. The colonial volunteer forces were not established in emulation of the red-coated regular regiments which they supplemented and later replaced, but, rather, on the model of the British rifle volunteers, whose character and motivation was altogether different from those of the infantry of the line. The regulars drew on men who were supposed to have no option but to enlist, who served and fought under rigid unthinking discipline. (The popular impression distorts grossly the reality, but this is no place to contest it.) Colonial troops, respectable men, serving voluntarily and finding restrictive discipline and rigid tactics unnecessary, nevertheless still needed military skills, and called upon former regulars to provide both commissioned and non-commissioned direction. The volunteers’ junior officers were at first often elected, but for many years senior officers were seconded from the Imperial Army. The influence of these officers, notably of General E.T.H. Hutton, who by stealth succeeded in creating the concept of the Australian Imperial Force, was substantial, though again it is beyond the scope of this article.

Of equal importance to shaping the military force which became the Australian Army may have been the non-commissioned officers and warrant officers who joined colonial forces after their retirement from the British Army. Other British NCOs sought or accepted secondment to the colonial forces, often becoming officers, and in the meantime enjoying a prosperity and standard of living to which few could have aspired after discharge in Britain. Little serious research has been undertaken on the genesis of Australia’s military tradition, and we know less than we would like about who these men were and what they contributed to the professionalism of the precursors of Australia’s defence force, nor even how many of them there were.

Some of them, however, are celebrities. Every visitor to Victoria Barracks in Sydney learns of Sergeant Major Henry Green, holder of regimental number ‘1’ in the New South Wales Military Forces. Green, the first man enlisted when in 1871 the colony formed the first permanent force following the imperial troops’ departure was a legendary figure who seems to have done much to form the ethos of the colonial force. But even Henry Green, though a former Royal Artilleryman who joined the NSW force shortly after the departure of British troops, had no connection with the Royal Artillery units which served in Australia from 1856 to 1870, having served in India and Britain, and arrived in Australia as a migrant after having his discharge. Another former British soldier who played a critical role in shaping the early Australian Army was Harold Chumleigh, a former trooper in the 12th Royal Lancers who enlisted in the Royal Australian
Ensign Sydney Darling, son of Governor Ralph Darling, a member of the 51st Light Infantry during its service in Van Diemen’s Land, 1843. Ensign Darling was probably born in New South Wales during Darling’s term as governor, 1824–30. His portrait is now in the collection of the regimental museum of the King’s Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, Doncaster. (author)

Artillery in 1909 and who became in 1914 RSM to the Corps of Staff Cadets three years after being posted to the newly established Royal Military College. Chumleigh remained at Duntroon for fourteen years, impressing officer cadets with his military bearing, amazing them with his anecdotes of active service and confounding them with his colourful private life.

Natural Soldiers

The significance of the presence in Australia’s military forces of these men for the Australian Army as a whole has neither been explored or explained, but it may be that their contribution was greater than their numbers and their continuing neglect might suggest. The question relates to one of the central concerns in Australian military history: how are Australian soldiers made? The definition of an Australian military tradition has been dominated by a persistent celebration of Australians as ‘natural soldiers’. Contemporary commentators, before federation, in South Africa and in the first world war, contended that Australians were often already half soldiers before enlistment, having acquired through employment or leisure skills in riding, shooting and bushcraft. The idea prevailed among journalists, politicians and even soldiers, and found its most influential expression in the official histories written and edited by Charles Bean. The contrary view, that military skill comprises more than bushcraft picked up in rabbit shooting and must be imparted through professional training, contested the easy assertion of inherent superiority imparted by bush life, but made little headway, then or since, in the face of an explanation which answered so well a need for a national mystique. The role of the little-known warrant officers and NCOs in imparting these skills has perhaps been unexamined because it tends to diminish the ‘natural soldier’ explanation, and anyway our ignorance of who these men were and what they taught has not informed the debate which has occurred.

The importance of exploring and understanding the lives and work of these men should not simply interest those few individuals unaccountably interested in the esoteric subject of the origins of the Australian Army. Because of the peculiarly conservative nature of armies it relates to the style and
The regimental colour of the Royal Tasmanian Regiment, which illustrates the incorporation of an Australian heraldic motif - the wattle spray - into a design which otherwise follows exactly the pattern of a British regimental colour.

character of the force in which many of the readers of this journal live their professional lives. Though rapid technological change typifies modern armies’ operational environment, they are institutions in which attitudes and ideas—what the army calls tradition and what sociologists call ‘culture’—change at a much slower pace, especially when, as in British-style armies tradition and convention are revered. This conservatism gives such armies a unique character, in which the modern coexists with the ancient, the rational with the unreasoning, and the utilitarian with the apparently pointless. In dress, terminology, customs and practices, experience is handed on from the old to the young, attitudes, ideas and styles persist long after their originators have passed on and the reasons for their introduction have been forgotten.

It is the strength of continuity which makes a study of sergeant majors and their successors so important. It would be interesting and possible to trace an unbroken line of influence from the sergeant majors of the various colonial forces to the present day, establish who instructed whom in the qualities that make a good and efficient soldier. The line of succession would be as complex as a family tree, and harder to determine given the paucity and dispersion of much of Australia’s military records. But with diligence it could be traced, through the colonial forces’ consolidation as a federal army, the establishment of the Australian Instructional Corps, the formation and disbandment of two AIFs and several militia schemes and the creation of a regular army. That such a task would not be simply fanciful is the obvious similarities between the imposing uniform and bearing of Harold Chumleigh and the Army’s senior NCOs and warrant officers today, and the impact, to judge from soldiers’ memoirs, that RSMs and their ilk have made on young and impressionable recruits. Today’s RSMs represent the blending of the British tradition—in the sash, stick and badge—with the most characteristic feature of the Australian military heritage, the slouch hat. The presence and influence of these men is perhaps one of the British Army’s most substantial legacies to its Australian counterpart: would that we knew more about it and them.

Peter Stanley is Head of Historical Research at the Australian War Memorial, where he has worked since 1980. In 1986 he wrote The Remote Garrison: The British Army in Australia, 1788 -1870, and in 1987 received a Menzies Fellowship to make a study tour of British regimental museums with Australian connections. He is presently undertaking a doctoral thesis on the European troops of the East India Company.
The Royal Australian Air Force at Guadalcanal

By Robert K. Piper RAAF Historical Section, Department of Defence.

HISTORY has forgotten that both the Australian air force and army saw action in the south Solomon Islands during the early stages of World War II. Indeed, we were there for a year before the Americans arrived on the scene and Guadalcanal became the famous name it is today.

Subject to regular attacks by Japanese flying boats, and later dive bombers, the RAAF men built an imitation Catalina aircraft out of wood and galvanised iron and hung washing on nearby abandoned houses to distract the enemy. The ploy never failed to attract the enemy aircraft from the main targets.

Finally, warned by coastwatchers and their own patrolling Cats that an invasion convoy was on the way, the Australians destroyed their base and supplies to make an organised withdrawal south. The whole action had been a prelude to the Battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942.

When war broke out with Germany in 1939 an urgent need arose for Australia to have a series of Advanced Operational bases to protect its far flung perimeter. These links in the chain were to extend from the north of Darwin, around the top of Australia, to Vila in the New Hebrides off our east coast. It was a piece of first class strategy and one that would pay dividends time and again as we prepared our defences behind these distant outposts.

The first survey carried out by the RAAF for a base in the Solomons was in November 1939 when Empire flying boat A18-10 visited Tulagi, as well as Rabaul and Samarai. This was followed in May 1940 by the then head of the RAAF, Air Chief Marshal, Sir Charles Burnett, making a personal inspection in the same aircraft and holding discussions with the Resident Commissioner, W.S. Marchant, on Tulagi Island.

WGCDR's Brogan and John Lerew, 52 natives and the Frenchman worked from dawn to dark. The last reading on the Vernier scale was made by the light of a match and within ten days the survey had been completed.

While our official name for the new site was Tulagi Advanced Operational Base, the RAAF installations were in fact some two miles away on Tanambogo and Gavutu Island. The latter was formerly Lever Bros (soap manufacturers) area headquarters, with the two tropical islands were linked by a stone causeway.

The site selected for the Tulagi AOB, was in a thick mangrove swamp and jungle on the island of Tanambogo adjacent to the government station of Tulagi. WGCDR's Brogan and John Lerew, 52 natives and the Frenchman worked from dawn to dark. The last reading on the Vernier scale was made by the light of a match and within ten days the survey had been completed.

Life at Tanambogo and Gavutu was occasion­ally interrupted by bizarre events which only the tropics can conjure up. During October 1941 FLTLT W.B. Burton was flown, via Tulagi AOB, to investigate the “Tom Frum” cargo cult developing on Tanna Island, in the New Hebrides. A tall, fair male with a high pitched voice had been inciting the local natives on an anti-British stand and a project to make the island flat. The latter was interpreted “as building an aerodrome”. (Nothing later eventuated though the cult exists even today).

On completion Tanambogo Island had a properly built station which included an administrative block, stores building, kitchen,
Sergeants Mess, airmen’s quarters and four galvanised huts. There was also a hospital built by Levers before the RAAF obtained the island. A bomb store, marine equipment store and a large “T” shaped underground shelter completed the mini base on the tiny twelve acre island.

Other equipment included septic tanks, electric lighting plant, ten refrigerators, a wharf and mooring facilities for the flying boats and carefully camouflaged fuel dumps. By October 1941 most of the work had been completed with RAAF staff arriving during the final stages of construction.

Marine equipment comprised an 1800 gallon refuelling barge named Betty June, a bomb scow and a small launch with a 1.25 h.p. engine. A few weeks before evacuation they received a standard airforce crash boat.

The base usually held 90,000 gallons of aviation fuel as well as a supply of bombs. The former was dispersed in 45 gallon drums in thick scrub. A thousand drums were brought in regularly by the RAAF vessel Wanaka, sufficient for three weeks to two months, depending on the amount of flying carried out by the Cats stationed there.

In addition there were emergency fuel dumps on nearby Florida Island.

Four Cats, drawn from 11 and 20 Squadrons at Port Moresby, were initially based at the AOB. Three carried out daily searches as far north as Bougainville and south to Noumea. Meanwhile one rested up, concealed in an inlet some 50 miles away. These same flying boats, with their huge endurance, could operate direct back to the east coast of Australia if the occasion warranted it. The Tulagi AOB staff were responsible for refuelling and arming the Cats as well as providing accommodation for the men that flew them. Minor servicing was done by the aircrews themselves.

The RAAF staff at Tulagi averaged 24 personnel, consisting of twelve wireless operators, eight boat crew, a medical orderly, an armourer and an OIC at FLGOFF to FLTLT rank. Supplementing them was a detachment of the 1st Independent Company AIF numbering around twenty with LT Don Russell in charge. There was also a permanent native staff of 32 islanders, who were supplemented with local conscripts when necessary.
Port Moresby was Tulagi's parent station and transmitted nightly operational orders to them for the Cats. The Cats searched from dawn to dusk, returning to the base for the evening meal and sleep. Crew reports and sightings were transmitted to Townsville and the Central War Room through Moresby. Three watches were maintained, an aircraft, point to point and teleradio. The last was linked to the coastwatchers, including the famous Mason and Read, right up to Bougainville and the AOB contacted each twice a day. It was a highly organised and smooth running group, operating over a vast expanse of water and islands. The eyes and ears of the north east approaches to Australia.

Women and children on Tulagi proper (the Government station) and Gavutu had commenced being evacuated from 14 December 1941. Tulagi AOB had its first enemy reconnaissance aircraft over on 9 January 1942. As far as could be ascertained these were four engined Mavis flying boats operating from Rabaul Harbour at the leisurely and economical speed of only 100mph. Sporadic bombing commenced on 22 January and continued to April, when it intensified to about three raids a week.

During the first attack the Mavis had descended from 10,000 feet to only 600, attracted by the lucrative target of a Cat moored offshore. PLTOFF Moore quickly started the engines and zig zagged madly across the water as two 100 lb bombs dropped on either side and sent up two plumes of water. While the Mavis circled the Cat trying to take off the AIF opened up with a machine gun. At the same time the Cat crew joined in firing furiously upwards. Airborne at last Moore's aircraft took to the clouds while the Japanese flying boat contented itself with dropping another two bombs.

To complete the visit the raider poured machine gun fire around two native boys, Benny and Daniel, in a small launch. On return to the shore they angrily requested rifles to personally respond on the next arrival of a "Balus bilong Japan".

On departure the Japanese aircraft had appeared to be damaged and issuing smoke or fuel. It was later reported to have arrived at Kieta and subsequently crashed on takeoff there. No claim was made by the RAAF or army back at Tulagi AOB!
Japanese 'Mavis'—already outdated in 1942, they were quickly replaced by the vastly superior 'Emily'.

Japanese Navy crew loading up their 'Mavis' flying boat at Rabaul in April 1942.
Thereafter the raids were from 6,000 to 7,000 feet and were preceded by three or four leisurely dry runs over the target before the bombs, up to 500 lb, came raining down. Despite the consistent raids little damage was done until the last few days when floatplane dive bombers came into action. Normally the Japanese flying boats came in threes or fours but on one day there were nine. In addition there was at least two attacks by land based Mitsubishi (twin engined) Nells.

On one occasion a 500 lb bomb fell 25 feet from the fibrolite transmitting station on Gavutu. The crater was 42 feet across and eight feet deep, the station was absolutely untouched. Indeed the only damage in more than thirty attacks was an iron hut, the airmens’ mess and a badly damaged store. There were to be no casualties due to the fickle bombing and seemingly charmed life led by the airforce and army there. However, one suprise for the RAAF personnel had been the discovery of English writing on part of a bomb fragment that they had found on the ground. It was deduced that were were getting our own back from stocks left behind at Rabaul or elsewhere.

A feature of the bombing was the extremely tight formation kept by the Japanese pilots and a black puff of smoke that was the signal for bombs away. When they had finished their run the aircraft invariably turned to port to allow the gunners to use their cannon on the defenders below. The one advantage of the bombing, when it fell in the sea, was the welcome addition of fresh fish on the menu.

A small, battered launch arrived on 7 February with five members of the AIF. They had escaped the Japanese landing at Kavieng, on New Ireland. Hugging the coastline and island hopping they had made their way to safety.

Meanwhile the Cats left each morning at dusk and managed to continue their searches unhindered. On the 18th March Sqn Ldr Chapman in A24-2, out of Tulagi, located five American floatplanes on the south east end of Rossel Island. Landing in the lagoon six members of the stranded crews were taken aboard and flown to the AOB. The rescued men were from Task Group 11.7, commanded by RADM Crace (an Australian), and the floatplanes had become separated from the USS Astoria, one on the 10th and four on the 12th. The second group had gone
to search for the first aircraft and had apparently ended up in the same predicament.

The following day, 19th, PLTOFF Bolitho flew a servicing party and fuel back to the stranded floatplanes. On alighting he slightly damaged the hull of A24-12 on a reef but the Cat remained at the station.

Luck couldn't last forever. At dawn on the 30 April the Japanese dropped some 26 bombs on two Cats moored offshore (this was raid number 22). One was slightly damaged, with the instrument panel being rendered useless, and PLTOFF Townsend departed and flew it to Rathmines for repairs. FLTLT Ekins' Cat, A24-23, had its mainspar damaged in the same raid and could not take off. In an attempt to save it from certain destruction the RAAF crash boat towed it south to Aola for possible salvage.

The RAAF's slit trench system of protection against the raids was entirely satisfactory and borne out by the fact that we had not a single casualty. There was a dugout in the side of the hill but it was found that personnel preferred the slit trenches. As long as they could see what was happening there was little or no panic.

On the night of Thursday, 30 April, the RAAF at Tulagi were warned by a coastwatcher that Japanese vessels were steaming south east down the Solomons and were only 190 miles away. By 1 May they were only ninety miles distant and sheltered that night and all the following day, Saturday, in Thousand Ships Bay on Ysabel Island. They were unaware that the coastwatcher Kennedy was almost directly above them and keeping the RAAF posted of their every movement. At dusk that evening the vessels put to sea again.

FLGOFF Peagam, anticipating the seriousness of the situation, had all RAAF personnel withdrawn to nearby Florida Island at 6 a.m. on the morning of the 2nd. The exception were three key men, CPL Gully, LAC Miatt and Cummings, manning the radio watches. At 6.30 a.m. the Mavis flying boats arrived. Again the
coastwatchers further north had warned the RAAF with their terse message, remembered by Martin Clemens as “here comes the usual”.

From 9.30 a.m. Tulagi AOB was dive bombed and strafed by pairs of floatplanes at regular thirty minute intervals throughout the day. During the first raid they quickly took out the newly received 30 foot and thirty knot crash boat, the pride and joy of the marine section. The coxswain, LAC Robinson, dived overboard to safety as it was riddled with bullets and quickly sank. It was later claimed, by some observers, that he ended up in the water with the wheel still in his hand.

That evening the RAAF, with the help of the army, commenced demolition of the base. All buildings were burnt, except the hospital, bomb dumps exploded, fuel destroyed, petrol barge dynamited and bomb barge scuttled. It was reported that the flames could be seen forty miles away.

To escape, in the event that Catalinas were not available, the RAAF had earlier impressed a 28 ton coastal vessel named the Balus (bird) from the island trading company ‘Carpenters’. The vessel had been standing by at Dende, on the south coast of Florida Island, for some two months with its European captain Charlie Bird and native crew. During this period it was camouflaged with mangroves and was completely invisible, even to our own Cats which knew its location. A quarter of the vegetation had to be replaced each day, as the mangrove died and exposed the vessel.

At 1.30 a.m. on the 3rd May the Balus headed south. From their position aboard the escapees could see fires blazing on Tulagi proper, caused by the Japanese shelling as the enemy vessels softened up the non existent defences before landing troops.

The first stage of the retreat was to Aola on Guadalcanal and the party arrived there just before dawn. The Balus was once again camouflaged and contact established with the crew of A24-23 and Martin Clemens, the District Officer (later coastwatcher). Clemens fled and housed the large party from his own supplies and provided them with the use of his teleradio. Arrangements were also made for the damaged Cat to be stripped of its radio and instruments and this equipment was also taken aboard the Balus. Martin was later to sink the Cat after the group left because, as he recently stated, “it was pointing the Japanese straight to my doorstep”.

Some of the Tulagi evacuees on board HMAS Manoora 23 May 1942
FLGOFF Peagam’s party departed at dusk on the 3rd May and headed down the coast of Guadalcanal to Marau Sound, arriving at an earlier planned rendezvous there at dawn on the 4th. Within three hours of their arrival the trio of army schooners sailed in. These had proved relatively unseaworthy and so the entire complement of AIF joined the already overcrowded RAAF vessel. When the Balus left shortly after midnight (5th May) it was found the propeller had been earlier damaged when backing up a creek to take on fresh water. Consequently only thirty miles was covered that night and dawn found the vessel off the coast with nowhere to hide.

At daylight a Japanese biplane passed in the distance but did not see them. However, around 7 a.m. the vessel was noticed by a Mavis which made a careful inspection from a thousand feet. Prior to this all the European passengers were concealed under tarpaulins leaving only the native crew exposed to view. It apparently fooled the Japanese into believing that the vessel was merely an unimportant native trader.

Three hours later a single floatplane came down to 50 feet, climbed again to 500 and dived directly at the Balus. Those on board were just expecting to be riddled with bullets when it pulled up and headed for Tulagi.

Two heavy cruisers sped past the group at 11 a.m., making about 25 knots, in the direction of Tulagi. In retrospect it would appear they were American, en route to the Battle of the Coral Sea on that same day.

Two alternatives were now open to those on the Balus. The first was to follow the usual track of small vessels and hug the islands heading south. The second was to cut across the open sea to Espiritu Santo. Having already been sighted it was decided the first choice might be fatal. Despite three days and nights without sight of land and lacking proper charts or navigation facilities, they arrived safely at midday on Saturday the 9th May, after an anxious voyage.

Vila and safety was reached (14 May) after an eleven day journey where the party were greeted near the harbour mouth by a low flying Walrus off the Leander. It was here that they were well looked after by the Americans for two weeks before being finally evacuated back to Sydney, with the RAAF Vila AOB contingent, aboard the armed merchant ship Manoora.

Only a day after the Japanese took Tulagi American aircraft from the carrier Yorktown swept in with dive-bombing and torpedo attacks to sink a destroyer and several smaller craft and damage several other Japanese ships, including a minelayer. On the 7th August 1942 the 1st Marine Division retook the area after some bitter fighting over two days. However, the islands were to be contested with the Japanese in many further drawn out battles.

The rest is now history. The RAAF never returned to the southern Solomons; it became an American theatre of war and legend centred around great sea, air and land battles and best remembers by the single word — Guadalcanal.

On 7th August 1992 a plaque will be unveiled at Honiara, now capital of the Solomons, possibly by President Bush (the President was a U.S. Navy carrier pilot in the area during the war). It will commemorate all Allied units that served there and will individually list those of the RAAF in both the northern (Bougainville) and Guadalcanal theatres. It is hoped we will be well represented by appropriate World War II veterans and the latter day RAAF.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS


Martin Clemens, former Coastwatcher, of Melbourne 1990.

FLGOFF J.B. Peagam of Perth (accounts given 5 June 1942, 25 July 1945).


Bob Piper has been with Defence for eighteen years, the last twelve as RAAF Historical Officer. Prior to this he lived in Papua New Guinea, where his interest in writing and photography first commenced. As a private pilot he has a natural interest in aviation and specialises in military history, of both sides, during World War II in the South West Pacific.

Many of his carefully researched articles are based on actual incidents and the reactions of those involved. The original participants have been located where possible and contributed to the stories.
Are We Really Serious

By Group Captain E.M. Weller, RAAF

'No one can guarantee success in war, but only deserve it'

Sir Winston Churchill

Introduction

Probably, few people would disagree with the notion that the defence of one's homeland is serious business indeed. Our nationhood, sovereignty of territory and way of life are at stake. However in a defence climate beset by resource problems, with a marked emphasis on capital acquisition, constrained by inter and intra service rivalries and constricted by committee bureaucracy and hidebound traditions, it is understandable that the most fundamental of the RAAF's objectives, namely the ability to conduct offensive air operations in defence of the nation, sometimes gets lost in the noise. If our current management objectives are critically judged against a maxim that the RAAF's capability to project air power, then there is reasonable suspicion that we are really serious about our business. In addressing the issue of whether we are as serious as we should be, this article might help motivate various levels of RAAF management to apply some squelch to filter out the noise and concentrate on the matters that make us serious about our business. At the outset, there is a plausible argument that we don't really seem to be too serious at a national level about most things or perhaps it's a matter of not being serious about those things that we should be serious about. Australians have often been accused of being easygoing people more willing to gamble than to put effort into long term planning and national commitments. And with reasonable cause. Historically, we seem to be a nation more interested in sport, recreation and taking the easy way. Our union leaders are intent on winning awards at the expense of fellow workers and the competitiveness of our industry. Even much of our private enterprise exhibits a penchant for a quick short term profit. Our political masters seem unwilling to want to commit themselves at all and certainly not beyond the next election. It seems almost as though the traditional Australian attitude of 'a fair go for everyone' has been replaced by one of 'I'm all right Jack'.

From a defence perspective, the community at large expresses little serious interest and concern. Much of the community seems to have a facile belief that because volunteers answered the bugle call to achieve victory in two World Wars, only a meagre level of defence capability needs be retained on a permanent basis, the logic being that volunteers again will come to the nation's aid if things get serious. What people forget is that in World War II our state of preparedness was so inadequate as to actually allow the enemy to lodge on our doorstep and to attack our mainland. Indeed, victory was only eventually achieved at great cost in the South West Pacific through a combination of the Japanese forces running out of steam and the enduring efforts of our allied forces in turn fuelled by the industrial might of the United States.

So the fact that from a national perspective, people don't get too serious about life in general, means that there is an initial attitudinal problem to overcome if we are to develop a feeling of serious intent within the RAAF.

Over the years, the RAAF has enjoyed a reputation to produce the goods when the chips are down. Our sterling performances in Vietnam and our Middle East peace keeping activities are cases in point. During World War II, the RAAF produced some magnificent operational efforts; operations in North Africa and New Guinea stand as fine examples of courage, dedication and skill.

History thus gives us some confidence that when things get serious, the RAAF can operate as an effective fighting force.

Conversely, a fair assessment of our history also must paint a darker picture with somewhat less honour and valour. It indicates that if we are to be serious about our role, then some hard won lessons, lessons in fact won at the cost of many lives, need to be remembered and never learnt. On reflection, all these lessons appear patently obvious and almost simplistic and trite in nature. But they have been learnt in that most serious of schools, war, and they all can be applied...
to our everyday practice of managing the RAAF in peacetime so that it might be better prepared for war. Pointedly, the lessons relate to inadequate states of preparedness and a lack of serious intent.

Perfection in Peacetime

In 1940, and before World War II hostilities commenced, the RAF and RAAF were ill-prepared for war in Malaya and Singapore. An RAF equipment officer of the day, noting the palatial messes and sporting facilities and the exquisitely correct administrative procedures that existed at RAF Seletar, recognised the perfection of the system in peacetime but questioned whether it would work in war. The answer was that it didn’t. Logistics arrangements in Malaya showed a similar lack of preparedness. There were few tools to permit urgently needed repairs to be conducted on aircraft and engines and cannibalisation was rife. Engines had to be sent to Singapore for repair with a weekly resupply by ship. After dozens of complaints, Headquarters in Singapore finally sent a staff officer to Malaya to investigate. Notwithstanding the steadily worsening relations with Japan and the imminent threat of war, he came and went away with a request that all the troubles be put in writing!

Some lessons particularly can be derived from the initial success of the Japanese campaign in Malaya and Singapore and the bombing of Darwin during World War II. A sobering consideration and an achievement worthy of some awe and respect is that in the space of 70 days after landing at Kota Bharu in northern Malaya, the Japanese pedalled and marched the length of the peninsula under an umbrella of air superiority and captured Singapore. In the face of this invasion force, ill-prepared RAAF and RAF squadrons with old aircraft and poorly trained air and ground crews withdrew in profusion and a certain lack of discipline. Large numbers of aircraft were lost in combat or destroyed as airfields were evacuated. Several specific instances serve to illustrate the lack of preparedness that existed at two major airfields from which the RAAF and the RAF were conducting air operations. Confusion existed on the day of the Japanese landing at Kota Bharu in Northern Malaya to the extent that personnel fled from the airfield well in advance of firm evacuation orders being given. Further south at Kuantan, the airfield was evacuated in such disorder that a FLTLT Bulcock, an Australian serving with the RAF, was moved to write ‘I was ashamed to be an Australian’. Decisive control of air operations was lost. The RN ships Repulse and Prince of Wales were sunk by Japanese aircraft only miles from Kuantan yet seemingly the base was not aware of the ships’ positions let alone being in receipt of any orders to mount air missions in an attempt to protect the vessels.

In case it may be overlooked, the result of this lack of preparedness and air superiority in Malaya was the fall of Singapore, the capture of thousands of Australian and British troops (including RAAF personnel) and the dreadful consequential internment of those troops in Japanese POW camps.

Air Power

It may be trite to say so but the RAAF has no right to be managed or to exist from an objective of self perpetuation. There is no divine right for the RAAF's existence or for its people, pilots, engineers or clerks. It exists solely because the defence posture of this nation requires that air superiority must be maintained through the application of air power. Of course the need for air power is consummately and patently obvious to Air Force people as it was to LTGEN Wainwright when he expressed a most perceptive view at Monzon (Philippines) after a World War II campaign that it is futile to fight a war without an Air Force. Notwithstanding, the RAAF and its respective elements exist to defend the nation and its people exist because they play an essential role in the organisation achieving that objective.

Sadly though, much of our management can be self centred, self indulging, self perpetuating and self gratifying. Self centredness is at the core of the dismaying increase in the pursuance of personal interests by many RAAF personnel. We indulge in the mysteries and black magic of our categories and respective military skills. We tend to want to perpetuate branches, categories, organisations and practices. Our sense of self gratification is often expressed through a grandiose and exaggerated understanding of the
essential and exalted nature of one’s position and organisation.

The attitudes of some people seem to be questionable. Maybe it's time for officers to generally recognise that no individual is bigger than the organisation. To plagiarise the quote of a former US president, we need to encourage officers to seek not what the RAAF can do for them but rather what they can do for the RAAF. Conversely, it may also be a case of misguided loyalty. Naturally, some level of self gratification is necessary to establish pride and *esprit de corps* in our various branches, categories and mustering. But there is a world of difference between that amount of legitimate loyalty sufficient to weld an outfit into an effective component of the RAAF and that amount of unreasonable self centred disloyalty that promotes the cause of self or the organisation at the expense of the RAAF. The trick of course is to get the balance right and the responsibility for doing so lies squarely with officers; it is a direct challenge to our respective qualities of loyalty and integrity.

Loyalty and integrity are rightfully and traditionally regarded as essential and fundamental qualities in the make-up of military personnel. They provide the backbone to the mutual degree of trust that must exist between all players in a military team. Amongst other things, loyalty allows people to accept that in the interests of the bigger picture, the self interest of personnel, categories, branches and individual organisations may need to be subjugated to the needs of a higher organisation. This situation obviously can exist at any level of management within the Services; for example between technical or supply organisations, a flight within a squadron, a maintenance wing or support wing within a group, a command within the RAAF or even the RAAF within the ADF.

Loyalty however is a dual edged sword because it must exist downwards to at least as great an extent as it exists upwards. A one way loyalty track in the upward direction very quickly breaks down the spirit of subordinate people; goodwill does not last forever. So whilst it is entirely fair for superiors to expect a measure of loyalty such that subordinate people and organisations can defer their self interests to the larger need, it nonetheless becomes unreasonable if not associated with a degree of empathy and understanding constituted in a clearly recognisable form of downward loyalty. That degree of loyalty can be enhanced if the subordinates are kept in the bigger picture and understand its ramifications and are confident that the importance of their own position within the larger picture is well understood and appreciated.

Again we can turn to our history to see some examples of self-centred thinking; unfortunately, one classic occurred at our highest level of command during the turbulent days of World War II. It concerned the well publicised confrontation between AVM Jones as CAS and AVM Bostock as the AOC of RAAF Command. A better example of pigheadedness, questionable loyalty and acceptance of authority and inability to see the woods for the trees would be difficult to find. Most regrettably, the issue was played out in full view of the Government of the day, the Army and Navy, our American allies, to say nothing of the membership of the RAAF. Most importantly and quite unbelievably, the confrontation threatened to jeopardise the conduct of RAAF operations in the South West Pacific during World War II.

Other more mundane examples of misguided loyalties can be found in our everyday life. The 'sharpie' versus the 'blunty' attitude is well known; similarly, the 'keep it to myself' and 'push my barrow' or the 'category's barrow' are also relevant.

There can be no place in the RAAF for a sharpie versus blunty stand-off. Over the last few years, many seem to have lost the fundamental point that the RAAF is a combat force composed of combatants. Many still sit with the comfortable
time honoured notion that in the RAAF, the officers (meaning aircrew) go to war whilst others remain behind to provide support. Some of our policies, particularly those related to the employment of women, in fact tend to legitimise a distinction between combat and non-combat personnel in the RAAF. These assertions that aircrew alone must fight or that a class of non-combatant people exists in our Air Force who don’t have to fight are invalid and have been proven so by history. There are many examples during World War II when ground crews were subject to air attack, some were required to fight on at airfields after the evacuation of squadron aircraft and many subsequently spent years in POW camps. During the Vietnam conflict, there were occasions when supply clerks were shot at during the weekly supply trips from Vung Tau to Long Binh and fitters were regularly fired on as they conducted pre and post flight servicings at Vung Tau. Ground crews must be combatants first and foremost and to try to arbitrarily distinguish between combatants and non-combatants is not being serious about our business. An assessment by General Gatsis of the US Army that such distinctions cannot realistically be made is worthy of note.

Ground Crews

Unfortunately, most ground crew do not regard themselves as combative personnel and we can scarcely blame them for this attitude. They get limited initial and continuation training on the subject. Their officers tend to become specialists in category matters and to steer away from the issue of combat. The whole emphasis, for example, in aircraft maintenance management is on technical supervision and proficiency. And finally aircrew, probably unwittingly, tend to foster the image that combat is their domain. In short, the matter of ground crew involvement in combat is not treated very seriously. Nonetheless and in a refreshing development, it must be acknowledged that during K.89, squadron technical personnel manned weapon pits and assisted in the perimeter defence of Curtin.

But if the RAAF is to be an effective fighting force and if we are to avoid those distressing problems that occurred at Kuantan, then the fighting capability of our non aircrew must be improved. The minimum acceptable situation is that it should be second nature for every service person to know his or her part in both the passive and active defence of an airfield. Every person should be able to dig and fight from trenches and gun pits and to have an appreciation and expectation of the terrifying nature of an air attack on an airfield. All our officers must understand how to organise the defence and evacuation of an airfield, to camouflage and protect aircraft, critical workshops, hangars and stores and fuel tanks. The defence of an airfield, in like manner to a ship at sea (which is handled in admirable fashion by our RAN friends) requires co-ordinated teamwork and is the responsibility of everybody, not just specialised ground defence personnel. It’s no use depending on a few well trained specialists if, during the first air attack on an airfield, such people become casualties in any respect.

If ground crews are not disciplined combatants then, as the early RAAF experiences in Malaya and Darwin during World War II show, a disastrous state of affairs can develop in a unit where its fighting will and morale can be decimated against a determined and competent adversary. Look at the chaos and disorder after the evacuation of Kuantan in Malaya and the air raid on Darwin. We can never permit a reoccurrence of the ‘Daly Water’ stakes where RAAF personnel streamed southward from Darwin in profusion after the bombing raids. In general, that level of disorder was caused by poor leadership and inadequate training and discipline.

The ‘keep it to myself’ or ‘keep it in the Category’ syndromes remain in the RAAF as popular ways in which the myths and black magic of various categories, musterrings and skills are procreated. In that sense they serve a useful purpose in maintaining esprit de corps and the morale of specialist groups. Sure, engineers for example, need to feel good about that which they do; but not to the extent that they prevent others from appreciating and understanding what the RAAF is doing overall and how each fits into the picture. Often, the attitude conveyed is one of ‘If I tell you, then you will know’ and the impression gained by the other party is ‘he can’t really tell me because he doesn’t know’ or ‘he considers that it’s too important or beyond my comprehension to understand it’. Neither the attitude or the impression is likely to lead to much confidence in the other party.
All officer categories are blameworthy. For too long, engineers have hidden away behind the sacred pillar of airworthiness and why should supply officers alone be concerned with logistics and most importantly, why should GD officers have an intrinsic right to solely be involved in matters operational? The point is that the ability of the RAAF to operate as a co-ordinated team is blighted by such self centredness.

In some ways, the impact of this 'keep it to my chest syndrome' in the general duties world has the greatest impact. The problem is that all this handwaving in simulated stalls, rolls and loops in the corner of the bar prevents other people from understanding how the primary objectives of the RAAF, that is, flying aircraft and projecting air power, are achieved. The average airmen, NCO and other than GD officer has a pitiful understanding of the air environment, how air defence, strike, transport and maritime operations are prosecuted and they won't know unless someone takes the trouble to tell them. Yet this should be second nature to every single person in the RAAF; that is, to be able in a basic way to proudly state to an outsider how the RAAF conducts its serious business and why that person has an important job in helping getting that business done.

The result may well be amazing. Firstly, we might just find that we each feel a bit more understanding of the importance of ourselves and our comrades in the RAAF. We will be more inclined to do our individual jobs better. The supply people for example might understand that it really is important that Size 8 flying boots be available for issue. The engineer behind a desk in HQLC might better understand that the modification he has just designed must not simply work in the pristine safety of a hangar environment but in the middle of a gut wrenching 1½ engagement at 7Gs and 10,000 ft in darkness 150 miles out over Force 10 sea conditions. And finally, aircrew might understand that it is not their own interests that are being served but rather it is that the RAAF itself can do its serious business.

Most importantly however the RAAF depends on teamwork to achieve its role of projecting air power. So the more cohesive the team is, the better it will perform and the team will be more cohesive if we understand and have confidence in what each other is doing so that when we
are really serious, the team as large and as varied as this Air Force is, will be able to win when it goes into combat. Nothing else counts.

Australians traditionally have a reputation as an undisciplined lot. Perhaps it's a legacy of our easygoing approach to life or our predominantly convict background. We can see a trail of this nature in our military history from the Breaker Morants of the Boer War, through the first AIF's problems with British disciplinary requirements in Egypt and Gallipoli during World War I to the resignation of several RAAF squadron commanders in protest against the inefficient utilisation of aircraft during World War II and more latterly, to the occasional stop work decision. As AVM Hewitt aptly observed, Australians as a consequence are difficult to command because they always want to know the reason why; commanders must earn the loyalty of Australians by looking after their welfare and sharing their risks. Put another way, the discipline of Australians can be enhanced if they know what is going on, and what part they play in the proceedings. An important step clearly is that they must feel that what is required is important; that is that the matter is serious. If it is not, then it will be treated at the best with indifference and at the worst with contempt.

Whilst discipline is generally accepted as a crucial element in a military force, it is nevertheless a much misunderstood and maligned quality particularly in respect of personnel with highly developed technological skills. It is, for example, that quality in a crew which sustains morale and encourages control during an air or ground attack on an airfield and which will prevent the chaos and disorder of the type that occurred at Kuantan and Darwin in World War II. Thus it is under adversity that discipline really counts. Discipline can for example, allow a tradesman under active service conditions to work to the point of mental and physical exhaustion and yet still continue to work to service a critically required aircraft. Its the equivalent of the marathon runner hitting the wall and continuing to the finishing line. The same might be said of cooks working long hours under arduous conditions to provide meals or the supplier crating and shipping urgently needed parts through the early hours of the morning. The objective must be to ensure that quality of discipline is instituted at all levels of all RAAF organisations whether commands, groups, wings, squadrons, flights or sections, so that when we have to be really serious, we can rise to the challenge.

Attitude is obviously important if the RAAF's fundamental objective to fly and fight in defence of the nation is to remain paramount. It really means that in all conditions and situations whatever the category or mustering involved, that fundamental objective must be pre- eminent and be maintained above all other considerations. We know that the pilot necessarily has primacy of function. However and notwithstanding the glamour of that function, it does not mean that the fitter who prepares the aircraft or the cook who prepares the breakfast is any less important in the overall effort of getting the job done. We really have to be prepared to recognise and appreciate the innate worth of our fellow serviceperson be he or she, pilot or navigator, engineer or supplier, officer or airperson. We cannot allow the 'I'm all right Jack' attitude a place in our service.

An awareness of the RAAF's fundamental objective is not easy to maintain down in the weeds of the swamp with steadily rising water levels and alligators aplenty as the incumbents of various staff appointments can aptly testify. But again it's an attitudinal problem of being serious about our business.

Engineers need to remember that their basic charter is not to aim to have hangars and workshops full of aircraft and equipment. It might provide a lot of work and engineering opportunity but aircraft in the hangar are aircraft that can't fly. As GEN Douglas Macarthur said 'There is nothing so useless as an aircraft on the ground.' And whilst an aircraft will remain safe in a hangar that is not the environment for which it was either designed or built. Engineers' satisfaction must be in seeing aircraft flying and their objective is to see that, all things being equal, hangars and workshops are empty.

Supply of parts and material is obviously an essential element of maintaining and sustaining a force in readiness. But supply officers need to ensure that the equipment procedures, forms, stores accounting are simply a means to an end rather than an end to themselves. Sure, spares must be accounted for but spares also need to be delivered rapidly to the customer. Effectiveness of supply needs to be measured by customer satisfaction and aircraft or equipment made serviceable rather than procedural adequacy. Emphasis on accountability needs to be directed
towards ensuring adequacy and identification of unit holdings.

And when the mission is completed with the penultimate expression of the objective having been achieved, aircrew need to share their achievement with those who helped get them there. Let the support people, technicians, suppliers know what was achieved and make them feel they are part of a fighting team.

The critical nature of this article will probably produce some strong adverse reactions and indeed may invite some converse response. Some will no doubt feel that the comment is unreasonably severe and even ungrounded in respect of their particular situation. That may well be true. Indeed, the answer to the question posed by the title is that we, as a whole and in general, are indeed serious. After all, many RAAF personnel last year spent several weeks under canvas participating in K89. Recent changes to Officers Training School curriculum, for example, make the courses more serious in nature. The loss of helicopter roles from the RAAF order of battle and the massive restructuring of Air Force Office serve to illustrate the temporality of various capabilities, employment opportunities and units within the RAAF. Whatever the perceived legitimacy of such changes, they are symptomatic of an organisation being serious enough about its business to be prepared to make extensive alterations to long standing and traditional arrangements.

Nonetheless, whether we are as serious as we should be and whether we can learn to be more serious are the important points to consider. What this article hopefully produces is an understanding of the need to continually refine our attitudes so that the RAAF can be a more effective combat force. We should applaud and wholeheartedly support the initiatives taken by CAS to improve the understanding and appreciation of air power right across the RAAF. How effective this program will be will depend to a larger extent on how we as individuals respond to it. Importantly, the development and appreciation of air power doctrine is not solely within the domain of those who fly. Everybody in this Air Force needs to understand the how and why of RAAF operations.

Finally and whilst it could not be suggested that this article should be immune from criticism, think carefully before proceeding to criticise. After all, criticism might simply be a reflection of one's own self centredness!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Bulletin — July 19, 1988

Group Captain Weller enlisted as a RAAF apprentice in January 1958. After graduating from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in 1963 he has served in a range of engineering, logistic and project management posts. He completed several tours with helicopter squadrons including a year as the Senior Engineering Officer of No 9 Squadron at Vung Tau. His staff appointments include the Senior Engineering Staff Officer Washington, Director of the follow-on P3C program, Director of Engineering in the Tactical Fighter Project Office and Director of Aircraft Engineering — Air Force. Currently, GPCAPT Weller commands No 481 Wing at RAAF Base, Williamtown.
Servicewomen: Careers into the 1990s

By Major Kathryn E. Quinn, A A Psych Corps

Introduction

Australian women have a tradition of participation in war with Australian servicemen. In 1900 they sailed away to war in South Africa as members of the New South Wales Nursing Service Reserve. In 1914 Australian women sailed away to war on troop ships and hospital ships as members of the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS). These women served in several locations including Egypt and France, and in hospital ships such as those which anchored off Gallipoli. Some worked in casualty clearing stations close to the fighting lines which meant they sometimes served under fire and were wounded with shrapnel and shell fragments. Adam-Smith in her book Australian Women at War mentions a Sister Rachel Pratt who was awarded the Military Medal for bravery under fire during service in World War One.

The Second World War saw more than sixty thousand Australian women in the various services which were created for them between 1939 and 1945. These services included the Australian Women’s Army Service (AWAS), the Women’s Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS), and the Women’s Australian Auxiliary Air Force (WAAAF). Each of the three services also had a nursing service. The women served in a wide variety of postings in areas such as communications, transport, medical, logistics and supply, and in technical and mechanical trades. Ollif (1981) in her history of the AWAS shows a recruiting poster for motor transport drivers which offered training which would “give you the necessary mechanical knowledge to run a garage”.

The women’s services were disbanded at the end of the Second World War in 1945. Their structure formed the basis of the new services which were introduced in 1951; the Women’s Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC), the Women’s Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS) and the Women’s Royal Australian Air Force (WRAAF). These services were legitimately part of the Defence Force but they were separate in that women received shorter and separate training, and they could only occupy positions specifically designated for women. These services remained largely unchanged until there was a major review of servicewoman’s employment in 1975.

There have been substantial and significant changes to the conditions of employment for servicewomen since the 1975 report. These changes include equal pay, closer alignment of training and integrated training, and most recently the removal of the policy barrier which prevented women from serving in combat related positions. Perhaps the most important of the changes was the disbanding of the separate women’s employment structures in which women occupied gender specific positions and many senior women existed mainly to manage other women. Servicewomen then became identified as members of the armed services according to their functional role; that is, their contribution to the organisation through their work. Their membership became based on work, not gender, and the opportunity existed in theory for equal competition with servicemen for training, postings and promotions within employment groups.

In the ninety years since independantly financed or sponsored women went away to the Boer War in their efforts to serve their country, they have progressively moved closer to full membership of the armed services. Through the First and Second World Wars they became uniformed and officially sanctioned but they still formed largely auxiliary forces whose main role was to allow more men to participate in active duty. Throughout the post war period they became members of the armed services but with a membership still defined by gender until the disbandment of the separate women’s services. The combat and combat related exclusion policy which followed the 1984 Sex Discrimination Act relegated servicewomen to a position on the margins of the military profession because they were prevented from participating in the central function of the organisation. They were excluded as a category of persons, defined by gender, without regard for their individual differences and
their individual contribution. The recent removal of the combat related exclusion policy brings servicewomen into the 1990s with the greatest opportunity for full participation in their service careers.

The Servicewomen of the 1990s

What do we know about the servicewoman today? What are her career aspirations and expectations? How long does she intend to remain in the armed services and what factors are likely to influence her decision to stay or leave? What are her attitudes towards career generally and more specifically towards a military career? What is the importance of family and how does she manage career and family priorities? How does being married and/or having children influence career decisions and plans? Are the determinants of organisational commitment in women similar to those for men? What are her views about women serving in combat and combat related positions?

These are some of the questions addressed in the 1987 defence fellowship study of the career intentions and expectations of women in the armed services. Questionnaires were posted to two thousand servicewomen randomly selected from all rank levels of the three services. The response rate on the questionnaire was seventy per cent, and the actual research sample represented twenty per cent of all servicewomen, with proportional representation from all rank levels. Seventy women were interviewed as a follow up to the questionnaire.

Career Intentions

Thirty four per cent of the women indicated they expected to have completed twenty or more years of service by the time they left the armed services. When asked about their service plans, which was a different way of asking the same question, a similar proportion indicated they intended to serve indefinitely (14%), or the twenty years (20%). A further twenty per cent described their service plans as “undecided”, while twenty
four *per cent* said they would serve for ten years and then consider their options. Twenty *per cent* indicated they planned to "get out soon" or "in the near future". Overall then, about one third of servicewomen in 1987 planned long term (20 yrs/20 yrs+) military careers.

Expected length of service increased with age and years of service. Twenty three *per cent* of those who had served for three years or less, expected long term careers, compared with ninety three *per cent* who had served for thirteen or more years. Eighty seven *per cent* of those who were older than thirty five years intended to serve for twenty or more years compared with twenty *per cent* from the twenty one to twenty five year old age group.

Decisiveness about career plans was also related to age and years of service and those who were younger (25 yrs or less) were more likely to describe their service plans as "undecided", or "serve ten years and consider options". The average age of the servicewomen was twenty five years and their average length of service was five years, so as a group they were relatively young in career terms. A valid comparison with men would need to include examination of age and years of service. The relatively low average length of service is probably in part due to the fact that until fairly recently both policy and social practice dictated that women who married left the services.

Expected length of service was also related to rank level, partly of course, through the influence of age and years of service. The percentages of each rank group who expect to serve for twenty or more years are as follows: privates and equivalent (27%); junior non commissioned officers (25%); senior non commissioned officers (78%); junior officers (army Captain equivalents and below) (29%); senior officers (Major/ equivalents and above (89%).

**Family Biographical**

Thirty seven *per cent* of the women described themselves as married (30%), or permanently partnered (7%). The remaining sixty three *per cent* mostly described themselves as single, with a small percentage being separated or divorced. Thirteen *per cent* of the women had at least one child, and of those, twenty four *per cent* described themselves as single (N=45).

Careers, not just jobs

Seventy *per cent* of those who were married/partnered were married to a serviceman and ninety *per cent* of those were married to a same service partner. Forty six *per cent* indicated that their husband was the same rank level, forty *per cent* had husbands of a higher rank level. In simple economic terms then, more than half of the married women were earning as much as their husbands or more than their husbands.

Seventy one *per cent* of those who were not married said they intended or expected to marry, and sixty seven *per cent* of those without children, said they intended to have children. Eighteen *per cent* of those without children said they definitely did not intend to have children. Overall then, most servicewomen said they intended to marry and most planned to have children.

Those servicewomen who had decided not to marry, and those who had decided not to have children, were significantly more likely to expect long term careers. There was an age/rank interaction effect operating here,
because, those who were older were less likely to intend to marry and have children, and they had served for longer so were therefore more likely to expect to serve for twenty or more years. Notwithstanding the relationship between family intentions and expected length of service, of those who expected to serve for twenty or more years, sixty per cent intended to have children or were undecided about children (yes=45%; undecided=22%). Of those who expected to have long term military careers most intended to marry and have children or they were undecided.

Marriage and Career Plans

Similar percentages of married and single women indicated they expected to serve for twenty years (m29%;s30%) which suggests that being married did not adversely influence expectations of a longer term career (20yrs). Marriage influenced career plans in that those who were single were more likely to indicate that they expected to serve for between six to ten years (s31%;m21%), while married woman are more likely than single women, to expect to serve between ten to fifteen years (m46%;s33%).

It would seem that those who were single were more likely to have shorter term expectations. It might be the case that those who were single were less firmly committed to a given career and still open to other career options whilst those who were married, given that they were most likely married to a serviceman, had more definite service career plans as a consequence of being married. Single women were more likely than married women to describe their service plans as “undecided”. One women commented “It’s the ones who marry who stay in because they marry servicemen; the single ones leave to get better jobs”.

Children and Career Plans

Serving women with children were significantly more likely than those without children to indicate that they expected to complete twenty or more years of service (c50%;nc33%). Similarly those with children were significantly more likely than those without children to describe their service plans as “serve twenty years” (c34%;nc18%). One young married women made the following comment during her interview “Now that I have a child I have to take my career more seriously. I must provide a secure financial future for my child. You can’t be sure marriages will last these days, and besides a family can’t live on one income anyway.” Similar comments were made by other women with children, which might explain the apparently positive influence of having children on career plans.

Career and Family

Eighty per cent of the women indicated that they intended to work in paid employment more or less continuously throughout their adult lives and most indicated they wanted careers, not just jobs. Overall, eighty six per cent believed, in varying degrees, that it was possible to have both a satisfying career and a family.

Serving women were highly egalitarian or contemporary in their views about the role of women within families. Most servicewomen scored at the highly nontraditional (78%) or contemporary end of a scale measuring family role attitudes: (18%=medium, 4%=low). By comparison, forty eight per cent of the 1984 sample of officers wives in the Jan’s study of male service officers, could be described as contemporary. An example of an item from this scale is “A married women should be able to make long range plans for her career in the same way her husband does”. Respondents could agree or disagree on a seven point scale with the statement.

Managing Career and Family Priorities

To investigate the management of career and family the women were asked to indicate their behaviour given critical family events, such as separations due to postings and pregnancy leading to childbirth. In the event of a husband being posted to a location where there was no posting for the servicewoman, the woman said they would respond as follows: “request leave without pay to accompany their partner” (41%); “remain in their current posting and live separately” (38%); “request discharge” (13%); and
“request discharge with a view to returning later” (3%). In the 1977 RODC study of women Army Officers, they responded to a similar question as follows: “request leave without pay” (37%); “remain in their current job” (10% compared with 38% in 1987); “request discharge” (16%); and “request discharge with a view to returning later” (29%). It would seem then that the servicewoman of today is much more likely to consider separation from husband as an acceptable option and much less likely to view discharge as a viable option, in the event of a posting disruption.

In the event of pregnancy most women said they would return to work (63%), and a further twenty three per cent would consider returning after a period of leave without pay. Those who said they would consider returning mostly said they would base their considerations on the desirability and career value of the posting they were offered on return from leave. Thirty per cent said they would return from leave. Thirty per cent said they would return after short maternity leave. Eleven per cent said they would seek discharge. In 1977 twenty two per cent of the women army officers said they would request discharge in the event of pregnancy. It is not possible to make a direct comparison with this group because the response options in each case were different, but again it would appear that discharge is less likely to be seen as a viable option in the event of pregnancy.

There was no real consensus on the relative importance of career and family. While most could say what their priorities were at a given time they felt the matter was one for an individual woman to decide on, and there was a tolerance for a variety of choices. Comments made during the interviews suggested that priorities could change over time in response to career and family events. Family plans might be delayed to take advantage of a career opportunity like promotion, or family might take priority in response to a career disappointment.

The Career Servicewoman

There have been career servicewomen since the establishment of the nursing and women’s services but Defence Force policy has often assumed that few would want service careers and that women’s behaviour would be driven more by family rather than career considerations. The results from the 1987 fellowship study suggests this is not necessarily the case. The women were asked to select from a list of ten options the reason which would most strongly influence a decision to leave the service permanently. The most frequently selected option was “better career opportunities elsewhere” (23%), followed by “to care for children” (14%). Some of those who chose the “to care for children” option did not necessarily see this as a reason for leaving the services but thought they might have to if they had a child who required special care or they were unable to be posted with their husbands. Overall, career related reasons, accounted for forty six per cent of the responses, and family related reasons accounted for twenty nine per cent of responses.

The above measure was a statistically simple measure of the relative influence of career and family. The overall results from this simple question however were supported by the organisational commitment data. A person who has a high level of organisational commitment wants to remain with the organisation, endorses the values of the organisation, and has an involvement with the organisation which extends beyond simply doing one’s job. The most significant determinant of organisational commitment in servicewomen, was a positive perception of career prospects, that is, promotion and job satisfaction in future jobs. Jans found this in his 1984 study of male service officers so it would appear that the determinants of organisational commitment are similar for servicemen and women.

The servicewoman of the 1990s will most likely intend to work throughout her adult life and she will want a career and not just a job. Most likely she will marry and have children and she will believe it is possible to have a career and a family. Overall, servicewomen mostly held contemporary views about the role of women within families, and those who were married were most likely married to a same service partner. Similar proportions of married and single women planned long term military careers. Serving women with children were more likely than those without children to say they intended to have long term military careers. It appears that good career prospects such as promotion and job satisfaction in future postings are important determinants of organisational commitment in both servicemen and women.
Women in Combat and Combat Related Positions

For the purposes of the 1987 study combat positions or duties were defined as those which involve committing acts of violence against an enemy. Combat related positions were defined as those which involve working in areas where there is a risk of being killed or injured. Fifty seven per cent thought properly trained women should be allowed to serve in combat positions and seventy seven per cent thought women should be allowed to serve in combat related positions. Eighty three per cent thought women should be allowed to train in combat and combat related skills. Forty five per cent said they would be willing to serve in combat positions and sixty one per cent said they would be willing to serve in combat related positions.

A combat index score was calculated for each individual. Those with a high combat index score were more supportive of women being permitted to serve in combat and combat related positions, and more likely to be willing to serve in those positions themselves.

Younger women and those with fewer years of service were more likely to have a high combat index score. Junior officers and private soldiers (and equivalents) were also more likely to have a high combat index score. The rank group most moderate in their views were the senior officers (majors and equivalents). Overall, Air Force women were more likely to have a high combat index score followed by Navy and then Army, but there were no significant differences between officers from the three services.

Those who planned long term careers, and those who showed high organisational commitment were more likely to be combat supportive. Those who showed a high level of general career orientation, that is, those who set career goals, who wanted to improve their skills through training and experience, and valued career advancement, were significantly more likely to be combat supportive. Those who endorsed the military value of “service before self” were also more likely to be combat supportive.

Saying women should “be allowed” to serve in combat and combat related positions is not necessarily saying that women “should go” into these positions. Similarly those who said they would be “willing” to serve in combat or combat related positions were not necessarily saying they “wanted” to serve in these positions. One of the problems which arises when discussing this question is the failure to make clear distinctions between women as “all women”, “most women”, “some women”, “the average woman” and a particular woman. During the interview stage of the study those who were not supportive of women being allowed to serve in combat roles were asked “if a woman is capable of serving in a combat role, and able to satisfy the training requirements, should she be prevented from serving in this role”? When given the opportunity to distinguish between women as “all women” and a particular woman most indicated they could find no reason to prevent such a woman from serving in a combat role.

History suggests that when nations are serious about the business of war, women participate in a much wider range of military activities than in peacetime. Within this century at least, it has been during war that women have participated most fully in the practice of military skills. Under
conditions of grave national threat, as was the case in Russia towards the end of the Second World War, women fought as conventional combatants. Similarly, when the very existence of a nation is at stake, as was the case for Israel prior to 1948, women participated in the full range of military activities. Also when countries are invaded, women fight as members of partisan groups. What makes the present situation unusual is that women are being given the opportunity to serve in combat related positions when we are not even at war.

The U.S. Army commenced a five year study of “The Role of Women in the Army” in 1976 and as part of the study there were two major projects which researched women in combat support and combat service support units. These studies became known as MAX WAC and REF WAC. The Canadian Forces conducted similar research in 1980-81. Both countries found that servicewomen in combat support and combat service support units did not adversely affect the performance and operational effectiveness of the units. Negative attitudes towards women’s military participation and biased perceptions of their performance were identified as significant problems. The MAX WAC studies found that women appeared to do better in units where leadership was supportive of their presence and both countries emphasised the importance of supportive leadership. Women have served in combat support units in the U.S. military for almost a decade. They crewed refuelling flights during the U.S. raid on Libya and during the recent conflict in Panama a U.S. Army policewoman led her unit into combat when she commanded an assault on a Panamanian Defence Forces Position.

Discussion and Conclusions

The results of the 1987 study of servicewomen’s career and family intentions suggest that those coming into the 1990s want real military careers. This is irrespective of whether they are married or not, and whether they have children or not. While many will decide not to marry and/or have children significant numbers will have families and they will also be wanting careers. Approximately one third of those women serving in 1987 intended to have long term service careers.

Those who were more junior and younger (the majority) were more likely to be undecided about service careers or they planned to serve for ten years and then consider their options. Their decisions about a service career will most likely be based on their perceived career prospects.

The determinants of career behaviour in servicewomen appear to be similar to those for men. The more women invest in their service careers the more likely they are to want to remain. Ninety three per cent of those who had served for thirteen or more years intended to serve for at least twenty years. The main determinant of organisational commitment in the women was a positive perception of career prospects. Family factors did not significantly influence organisational commitment relative to factors such as job satisfaction and rank level. The removal of the combat related exclusion policy would seem timely if not a little late for some.

Women in small groups in non-traditional work environments are likely to suffer the problems associated with tokenism. Tokenism refers to the tendency to see the characteristics (strengths and weaknesses) of an individual woman as being representative or typical of all women instead of pertaining to that individual woman. Token judgements are often based on stereotyped beliefs about the nature of women and these in turn are often based on familiar family roles such as “mother”, “wife”, “sister”, and “daughter”. While these role characteristics might be appropriate within a family they are not necessarily functional within a work environment where role characteristics such as superior, subordinate, peer and student are more appropriate. It is desirable to have women in groups to provide support for each other and to maximise the token effect but, due to the relatively small size of the Australian Defence Force, a policy based on viable numbers would be tantamount to an indefinite extension of the exclusion policy and it would further disadvantage talented individual women. There is also a place for the highly motivated and committed individual women who will succeed against all odds.

There are also problems associated with developing gender free selection criteria for trades. Developing valid criteria would be difficult and expensive, and overseas experience would suggest it is highly unlikely that useful criteria could be developed. There has already been a staff effort greatly disproportionate to the numbers of serving women, invested in the
development of employment policies for servicewomen and much of this effort has been wasted on inevitable outcomes. There is no reason to assume that the introduction of women into combat related postings cannot be regulated by normal considerations of recruiting, training and postings. It is not normally the case that an individual who is clearly ill suited to a particular job passes through the training system and into the job. The professional training systems which operate in each service produce individuals capable of performing the job for which they were trained. An individual who is not able to satisfy the training requirements for a particular trade or job is not normally posted into that job. There is no reason to assume that the training system would not operate in this way for servicewomen.

A recent U.S. Army study concluded that quality of supportive leadership was the key factor contributing to performance motivation in soldiers. This is not really news for commanders. Good commanders at all levels know the quality of their leadership will contribute to unit cohesion and unit effectiveness. This information combined with the research finding that women appear to do better in units where commanders are supportive of their presence, suggests that leaders can perhaps be held accountable for the successful introduction of women into new units or trades. Clear statements of support and direction from senior commanders would make commanders at all levels responsible for the effectiveness of those in their command whether they by male or female.

There are as many different types of women as there are different types of men and although some human characteristics appear to be more typically shared by one or other of the sexes, it is of limited practical value to see gender as an overriding variable in relation to work. It is possible for gender to be a background variable and then individual men and women can be judged and managed on their individual merits.

NOTES

2. Ibid, page 5.
3. Ibid, page 27.

The research was conducted by the author of this paper, Major Kathryn Quinn, at the Canberra College of Advanced Education under supervision of Dr N.A. Jans.
6. Armstrong, D.J. LTCOL. (1977). Survey of Opinions and Attitudes for the RODC: Results from the Female Officer Sample. Research Note 19/77, 1 Psychological Research Unit. Canberra, ACT.

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Empowering People in the Face of Change — A First Step

By Squadron Leader, John F. Lutton, RAAF

In 1953 I realized that the straight line leads to the downfall of mankind. But the straight line has become an absolute tyranny. The straight line is something cowardly drawn with a rule, without thought or feeling; it is the line which does not exist in nature. And that line is the rotten foundation of our doomed civilization. Even if there are places where it is recognised that this line is rapidly leading to perdition, its course continues to be plotted ... Any design undertaken with the straight line will he stillborn. Today we are witnessing the triumph of rationalist know-how and yet, at the same time, we find ourselves confronted with emptiness. An aesthetic void, desert of uniformity, criminal sterility, loss of creative power. Even creativity is prefabricated. We have become impotent. We are no longer able to create. That is our real illiteracy.1

Introduction

Since becoming a member of the directing staff of the Basic Staff School at RAAF College at the beginning of 1990, I have been inspired and stimulated by the students that pass through the school. The students, Flight Lieutenants of many years experience, or, in some cases junior Squadron Leaders, bring a wealth of experience, knowledge and fresh ideas, and exchange these vigorously with each other and the staff. These people are the future senior leaders and managers of the Air Force.

Yet, I sense that the students feel they are unable to impact the Air Force, or if any impact is made, it is done with difficulty, much effort, and resistance being encountered. As a result, they begrudgingly accept the way things are, or resign, leaving the service in their prime of productivity, or they become 'resigned': cynical and sceptical. I am convinced that most people in the Air Force, at all levels, are of the quality and calibre of the students I see go through Basic Staff School. Yet, why do so many people feel they are unable to make a difference in the Air Force?

There has been change, which allows people more opportunity to make a difference. For example, the Air Force has introduced Total Quality Management, or RAAFQ as it is called. RAAFQ provides structures and techniques which allow individuals to redesign the processes in their jobs in order to better meet the needs of their 'customers'. Two examples are a more efficient counter service in an orderly room, and reducing the throughput time in the workshop of a repairable aircraft spare. The basic tenet of RAAFQ is that all individuals have ideas, skills and specialised knowledge to contribute to improving their jobs, and therefore the 'product' of their jobs. The individual is important to the group, the organisation, and the product. Personal development of the individual is a key focus. So in parallel with the introduction of RAAFQ, the RAAF has adopted the 'Investment in Excellence' (IIE) programme. This programme is now being widely used, especially in training establishments, and is designed to allow individuals to see for themselves that they are worthwhile human beings, able to make a contribution, and not just 'LACs', 'clerks', 'fitters', 'Pilot Officers', 'ADMINOS', and so on. The individuals develop self-esteem and pride in who they are as 'whole' persons.

RAAFQ and IIE are still in the initial phases, and these programmes have yet to reach 'critical mass' where they become part of the fabric of the way we do our business, rather than just another 'add-on'. With continued commitment from the top and at all levels (and this commitment is absolutely vital), I am sure RAAFQ and IIE will have their impact and benefits will flow to the RAAF and its members in the long term. Yet both RAAFQ and IIE have their detractors and are treated with cynicism on a large scale. Consequently, many people are unwilling to accept these changes.

Once RAAFQ and IIE become part of the fabric, will that be enough? In a rapidly changing, dynamic, fast paced and increasingly uncertain world, no organisation, including the Air Force, can any longer afford to adapt to change.
incrementally and reactively, where people resist changes. Organisations will need to transform themselves continually, and the people in those organisations will need to be agents for change, positively welcoming and encouraging change, and exploiting the opportunities that these changes will bring. Many people will react to these statements. Impossible, they will say. Continual transformation — that is a recipe for confusion and instability! You cannot change people — human beings have always been unwilling to accept change, wanting certainty and predictability in their lives. But I say we have restricted our vision and we do not even realize that we have. We cannot see what is possible beyond what we know. We have drawn boxes around ourselves that limit our thinking, boxes drawn with straight lines ...

**Aim — An Enquiry into what is Possible**

I am not going to provide answers to how we can manage change without people resisting. I am not going to provide any recipes for ‘implementing change without tears’. Rather, I want to enquire into what is possible, and ask more questions, rather than converging onto a single answer. I want to provoke thought and discussion. I want you, the reader to be impacted by what I say, to generate your own enquiry.

My aim is to impact the way we think about change, to break through the boxes we have drawn around ourselves. If you find you react to some of the things I say, I request that in that instant of reaction, you step outside your feelings for one moment, and ask ‘what is possible?’ In that instant, creativity may occur: an insight, a flash of inspiration, a sudden leap, a breakthrough. For this to occur, you often need to go through stages of confusion and bewilderment, and sometimes upset and reaction.

**Why Have I Bothered Writing This?**

As I said at the start, we have an organisation full of high quality and capable people, and yet many of them are disempowered and resigned in their jobs. This limits productivity and output, and people are less fulfilled. This is wasteful, both for the organisation and its people. Can we do it better?

In addition, the world of today is quite different to the world of the past. The impact of ever more powerful computer technology and communications technology is having a fundamental effect on our culture, society and workplaces. Other technologies, such as bio-technology and genetic engineering are also having a dramatic impact. More complex financial structures, the globalization of individual economies into a world economy, changing resource availability, burgeoning third world debt, trade imbalances, and the fall of communism, are causing profound changes in political, social and economic structures. The rapidly increasing human population, 90% of which is occurring in the Third World, is a fundamental driver of change. Of course, the impact of human activity on the very viability of the earth's ecosystem — pollution, global warming, deforestation, ozone depletion, and so on — is causing fundamental shifts from capital depletion (non-renewable resource use) to a sustainable approach (greater use of renewable resources). I have no doubt that all organisations, including the Air Force will be profoundly and fundamentally affected by all these issues, directly or indirectly. Why not be ready for them, at least in recognising there will be ongoing and rapid change?

The rate of change is increasing. There is increasing complexity in all human structures. We can no longer rely on the ways of the past to handle the future. This is not to say we abandon all that we have acquired and understood and used effectively to date. We need to acknowledge and indeed honour our past and what we have. However, if we are to make a difference to the way things are now, we must invent a new future, which may include some of the things we already know. However, fundamentally the source of the new future will be from what we do not already know.

There is an urgency in what I say. Maybe we are like a frog who, if thrown into a pot of very hot water will immediately jump out. That is, we can react to sudden, short, sharp changes which have a very short time frame, or have an adverse effect, for example, crisis situations — floods, cyclones, earthquakes, wars. On the other hand, put the frog into cold water, and he becomes very comfortable. Slowly heat up the water, and the frog acclimatises to the changing temperature and he stays put. He does not sense
the change and he remains unconcerned. As the water gets hotter he still thinks he is comfortable, oblivious, 'blind' to the imminent danger of boiling water, until he gets boiled alive. How hot is the 'water' we are in now? How fast is it heating up?

The Straight Line ...

In our Western culture with its Judeo-Christian ethic, and an emphasis on a rationalist, scientific approach, our way of thinking, our philosophies have for many hundreds of years been influenced by Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), and more notably Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), who built on the work of Galilei. Newton, amongst many other achievements, discovered the basic laws of motion (which are the foundation of classical mechanics), developed the mathematics of calculus, and proposed a dynamical theory of gravitation. Newton's work laid the foundation for so much scientific and mathematical work and discovery which followed, which subsequently contributed fundamentally to the way our culture and society are today. The 'Newtonian' approach has worked remarkably well. We now take for granted the scientific applications and the technology we use on a daily basis: the telephone, electricity, the car, flying to the Moon, medicines, the way we produce food, and build our dwellings, and many more. Our culture: music, art, literature, cinema, television, newspapers, fashion, and so on, have been able to flourish on the scientific and technological base that has itself blossomed, especially in the last 150 years, using the Newtonian approach. Our culture to a very large measure has enmeshed the Newtonian approach in our thinking. The following quotation by Pierre Simon de Laplace, one of the most influential mathematicians of the 18th century, eloquently describes the Newtonian approach and gives a sense of why this approach has become so pervasive:

An intellect which at any given moment knew all the forces that animate Nature and the mutual positions of the beings that comprise it, if this intellect were vast enough to submit its data to analysis, could condense into a single formula the movement of the greatest bodies of the universe and that of the lightest atom: for such an intellect nothing could be uncertain; and the future just like the past would be present before its eyes.

This statement encapsulates the idea that if we were able to understand everything, then we would be able to predict everything into the future with certainty, and the only reason we have uncertainty and unpredictability now is that we have not yet gained sufficient knowledge. This view models the universe as an intricate piece of clockwork, and our world, and all of us on it are but cogs and wheels with precise movements. All we need to do is figure out the mechanism of this clockwork universe. The Newtonian approach implies everything is deterministic, and that errors and random effects that constantly occur when using the Newtonian approach are simply due to our lack of precision in measuring, and lack of understanding. In order to gain more understanding, we reduce the universe into smaller and smaller parcels and study them and theorize about them in isolation from one another. This reductionist approach has contributed greatly to our knowledge over the centuries, and is a cornerstone of scientific reasoning.

Newton's work owed much to Galileo Galilei. It was largely written in the language of classical Greek geometry — the work of Euclid, based on straight lines, triangles, and circles. Galileo believed that the universe could be explained in terms of Euclidean geometry:

Philosophy is written in this grand book — I mean the Universe — which stands continuously open to our gaze, but it cannot be understood unless one first learns to comprehend the language in which it is written. It is written in the language of mathematics, and its characters are triangles, circles and other geometric figures, without which it is humanly impossible to understand a single word of it; without these one is wandering about in a dark labyrinth.

So our thinking is based on simple geometry — the geometry of the straight line.

...And Its Tyranny

We use the deterministic, reductionist approach in many parts of our lives, especially, in our organisations and work places. We divide
our lives and the world around us into departments, compartments, divisions, separate entities. We largely assume that the separate entities behave in isolation, or if there is relationship it is very simple. We model systems in a linear fashion wherever possible. Even if there is a non-linear relationship we make assumptions to make it linear. We are always trying to find out more about something because we assume that if we know more we will understand its behaviour better, and be able to predict better. We make decisions based on as much knowledge as we can obtain, because we assume the more knowledge we have the better decision we will make. We get anxious if knowledge is sketchy, there is uncertainty, and we are unable to control. We categorise people by their sex, age, race, educational qualifications, rank, wealth and so on so that we can control and predict their behaviour.

Notice that, although this approach works most of the time, and produces results, we sense that something is missing. Things are not complete:

- Where does creativity fit into this? Many people, especially the ‘rational and logical’ managers in large organisations like the Air Force, regard creative activity as aberrant behaviour, not part of the normal deterministic approach. Sometimes, to be ‘in’ with the latest management thinking, people use creative processes as an ‘add-on’, something apart from the normal approach, something that can be turned on and off as required. Creativity is not in the ‘fabric’ of their thinking. It is ‘prefabricated’.

- There is an ‘us and them’ attitude between many rational, logical people (and their organisations) and many creative people (and their organisations). Many rationalists cannot see the point of having creative and artistic activities, especially when they are funded by governments. Many creative and artistic people have no interest or inclination in finding out what other organisations do and the contributions made to society by these organisations. Similarly many science and engineering students, ‘imbued’ with the rationalist deterministic way of thinking, have disdain for the arts and the social subjects they have to do as part of their curriculum to ‘broaden their education’. In addition, many arts and liberal studies students have a disdain for the technical and scientific, and thus acquire limited or distorted views on the role of science and technology in society.

- Many non-scientific and non-technical people have a distrust of large organisations, especially scientific and technology based organisations. The rational and logical scientists, engineers and managers in these organisations tend to keep themselves apart, as elite groups. Structures, including specialised language, are used to exclude so-called ‘ordinary’ people.

- The way people are at work often contrasts with the way they are during recreation and holidays. In their own time, many people are very efficient and effective in performing a range of often complex and difficult tasks, quickly and correctly. Most people run families successfully, buy houses, build houses, pay mortgages, plan trips, handle financial affairs, and so on. On the other hand, at work, many of the same people have significantly reduced efficiency, lower quality results, and lower productivity.

- Despite instantaneous communication and a wealth of access to information, many people are becoming increasingly isolated and alienated socially and in the workplace. Many people have become the servants of systems and technology rather than being supported by these systems and by technology.

The rationalist, deterministic approach has served us well, but it is insufficient. We have relied on it too heavily. There is more to being human than thinking based on the straight line. With the present state of the world, the nation, the Air Force, we need to go beyond the rationalist deterministic approach and include in the fabric of our culture new creative approaches. We must fundamentally alter the core of our culture to break the tyranny of the straight line.

**Unravelling at the Edges**

**The New Physics:** At the end of the last century, and the first half of this century, the tight fabric of the Newtonian approach began to unravel. The age of the new physics had begun. Through the work of Max Planck, Neil Bohr and others, quantum mechanics came into being, and Albert Einstein developed his theory of relativity. Quantum mechanics eliminated the Newtonian
concept of a controllable measurement process — there will always be uncertainty when taking any measurement; and relativity eliminated the Newtonian illusion of absolute space and time. These theories, and their applied offspring (such as nuclear power, nuclear weapons, lasers) have remained in the realm of the specialist scientist, mathematician and engineer, therefore they have not directly impacted the thinking of the ordinary person. Only now some of the paradigm shifts in thinking associated with the new physics are influencing thinking in our culture. There is fertile material here with which to take our thinking beyond the rational deterministic approach [2,3].

Chaos Theory: During the last twenty years, the Newtonian fabric has further unravelled. From the work of many independent researchers, including Lorenz, Feigenbaum and Mandelbrot, their thoughts, ideas and insights have coalesced into a new theory called ‘chaos’4. Chaos theory attacks the deterministic predictability that Laplace espoused. The theory states that the apparently random, complex behaviour of many systems can arise from precise, deterministic laws. Simple laws may not always produce simple behaviour. Thus it is not, as Laplace would have it, our inability to measure precisely, or our lack of knowledge, that makes us unable to predict with certainty. It is inherent in the laws and the equations themselves. This implies that no matter how accurately we measure, or how much knowledge we gain, for some systems we will never be able to predict the outcome. On the other hand, some systems, which have complicated behaviour (beyond the ability of the reductionist approach to analyse) may according to chaos theory, be behaving simple laws, for example, turbulence in fluids. Chaos theory has caught the imagination of scientist, mathematician and layperson alike. It has a universal appeal, finding applications across a wide number of disciplines. It is already providing major insights into the behaviour of complex systems such as the weather, animal populations, neural networks, crystal formation, galactic clustering of stars, the human heart beat, variations in economic indicators and stock prices, and many more areas. Perhaps some complex human systems, such as social interactions, organisational behaviour, and motivation are chaotic systems based on simple deterministic laws. These areas are currently being researched.

Many argue that after quantum mechanics and the theory of relativity, chaos theory will be the third revolution in the physical sciences this century. We are in the midst of that revolution now. Furthermore, the impact of chaos theory will be felt more quickly because it affects the things we see and touch, objects at a human scale, unlike the first two theories. Whether chaos theory gains the eminence of quantum mechanics and relativity only time will tell. Chaos theory is making claims about the universal behaviour of complexity. It has confronted the trend in science of evermore specialised fields of study, and provides a way of looking at complex systems as a whole, as opposed to the reductionist approach of looking at constituent parts in isolation.

One might say ‘Newton is dead, long live Newton’. The Newtonian approach of rational, deterministic reductionist thinking has been well and truly dethroned, however not banished. It has its place, not at the expense of other approaches that have been and can be created from the new physics and chaos theory, but along with them. The new physics and chaos theory provide insights into new ways of thinking which fit naturally with human intuition, are holistic in approach, and allow for creativity. The new physics and chaos theory reflect nature, and so the new thinking that is arising will allow human beings to consider themselves as an integral part of nature, and not separate and apart.

**Beyond the Straight Line**

Let us now shift our thinking beyond the paradigm of the Newtonian approach. Let us imagine ways of thinking which have creativity as an ongoing and integral activity, deeply woven into the daily fabric of our lives. Let us view the world around us, not as a collection of separate parts, but as a complex web of interconnected and integrally related activities. Let us be empowered in the face of ongoing change. Indeed, let us be agents of change. Why not be like this? There is nothing stopping us except the straight lines we box our minds in, and who knows, we might make a difference in the way our lives, our organisations, and indeed our world work.

What might these ways of thinking look like? Most of these ways have yet to be invented, but we do have some already available to us. Let
Children: Notice the way children are. They are curious, adventurous, always inventing new ways to play, making up stories, boisterous, loud, full of vitality and vigour, always jumping out of bed as soon as the sun rises, unafraid, willing to take risks, eager to learn, sponges soaking up the world around them, uninhibited in making new friends, direct in their speaking by saying what they really think. Children are joyous to be alive. They do not have distinctions in their thinking about what is creative, and what is rational. They do not have that knowledge, at least not until they become adolescents, by which time the education system and their parents have inculcated them with the cultural norms, including the rationalist, deterministic ethos. The adolescents are on their way to becoming ‘sophisticated’, ‘civilised’ adults, and in the process, they surrender part of their vitality and joy of living. We call it ‘growing up’ and ‘maturing’. We could do no worse than emulate our children’s thinking.

Scientific Discovery: Science and engineering have for so long espoused the rationalist, deterministic approach, yet the creative process has been absolutely vital for breakthroughs to occur. The perception of science, engineering and technology has been of the orderly and logical discovery of ideas in an evolutionary and continuous fashion. However, read any history of science or technology, and the biographies of key figures in those fields, and you discover that science, engineering and technology have progressed through a continual sequence of breakthroughs, failures, breakdowns, and blind alleys. The people in those fields displayed emotions and passion, joy and despair that any other human being experiences (especially at the creative moments), where usually just prior to the breakthrough, there was utter confusion. Why then do science, engineering and technology have an image that suppresses the human factor, denies vitality and diversity, displays a blandness, dullness and sterility, promotes a separateness with the ‘experts’ on one side and lay people on the other? Maybe this image is this way because there are groups in society that have wanted to maintain positions of power for their own interests, and they have manipulated science and technology to build and maintain power structures, and exercise control. This very image is now a threat to those power structures, and is harming science and technology as well. Young people are increasingly turning away from careers in science and technology, and more and more lay people have a distrust of science and technology. Let us abandon that image. Instead, let us acknowledge science, engineering and technology for what they really are, namely creative human endeavours, full of richness and diversity, producing knowledge, processes and objects that are integrally woven into our daily lives. Let us have true scientific thinking (not the image of it), the thinking that is present at the moment of discovery.

The Attraction of Uncertainty: Watch people at sporting matches — like football, tennis, and golf. Why do people eagerly go along to those activities, which when one examines them closely, are full of rules, instructions, people in charge, people doing what they are told, and where there is a well established and detailed structure? And yet, the same people, by and large are less enthusiastic when they are at their workplaces, which are also areas full of rules, instructions, people in charge, people doing what they are told, and where there is a lot of well established and detailed structure. What is the difference? At sporting matches it is the very structure that allows for uncertainty and unpredictability, not knowing what the outcome is going to be. The very detailed and intricate rules, the control being exerted by the umpires and referees, the very ordered progression, allow for disorder, confusion and chaos. And it is the disorder, the confusion, the chaos, the uncertainty, the not knowing, that excites and attracts the people. Each moment is created anew. Each moment brings forth new possibility. Compare that with watching replays on television. They are not nearly as exciting. The outcome is entirely predictable. It is totally based in the past. Yet the actions on the television replay are a faithful reproduction of the live actions. Also notice that at sporting matches the majority of people are well behaved and conformist, yet individually they are fully self-expressed and alive. People are well disciplined, yet they are who they really want to be. In the workplace many of the same people resist conforming, often showing a lack of discipline, and insisting on showing ‘individuality’, which often is a facade behind which the true nature of the person is hidden. Why are our workplaces not like football matches? The way we run our workplaces is so geared towards eliminating uncertainty, increasing our knowl-
People in Teams: Again in the sporting context, look at how successful teams work. A good team is clear on what its objectives are. The captain and coach are committed to the players. They are rigorous, intrusive and unreasonable with the players, often haranguing and berating them, not to belittle them or put them down, but to break them through what is stopping them. The players are often uncomfortable — lots of practice, in the cold, doing the same things over and over, yet a passion and a bonding builds up amongst the players, and the players willingly give help and support to each other. No matter how good individual players are, the team does not work without the captain and coach being rigorous, intrusive, and unreasonable, without openly listening to the players and giving them responsibility, and also being compassionate, trusting, and committed to the team’s objectives. Such teams are vital, expressive and alive with passion. Such teams attract and enrol others in their goals. Why not have teams in the workplace, with captains and coaches? Some workplaces already have teams in different parts of their organisations, quite successfully. The team approach confronts the comfortable, cosy existence of many workplaces, however it provides the possibility of people becoming more committed, expressive and alive.

Ownership of the Whole: People want to be involved in ‘the whole’. They want ownership of, and to have identity with ‘the whole’. People do not like just being part of the process, isolated from other people and other parts of the process. People tend to group together, in families, clubs, sports teams, social activities, and so on. These groupings allow people to be their whole selves, acknowledging and honouring each other and supporting each other. These groupings generally have goals, missions, objectives, or targets. Quite often these groupings compete with each other. Yet in so many of our workplaces, we isolate people, we do not keep them informed, we do not trust them, we do not acknowledge their contribution, we do not show them basic courtesies, we treat them as ‘numbers’. Usually, in organisations, informal groupings and networks build up anyway, despite the official structure, and much of the effective business of the organisation is done using the informal groupings and networks because the official structure is too ponderous. Let us structure our workplaces to have the informal groupings as an integral part of the structure, instead of being disregarded.

Case Study: United States Air Force Tactical Air Command: The idea of teams and ownership of the whole does work and not just in private enterprise organisations. In an example that many in the RAAF could relate to, General Bill Creech took over command of the United States Air Force Tactical Air Command (TAC) from 1978 to 1983. In that time he turned around the performance of TAC from a sortie rate (the key measure of aircraft operations) that had been decreasing 7.8 percent per annum in the ten years prior to 1978, to a sortie rate that increased at 11.2 percent per annum compound between 1978 and 1983. This was done in an environment (immediate post Vietnam) of an ever tightening budget, fewer spare parts, reducing numbers of personnel and decreasing experience levels of personnel. Sounds very familiar! What did he do? In essence he made heroes of everyone in TAC, not just the high profile pilots, but supply clerks, delivery van drivers, the cooks and the bottle washers. He focused on the people in TAC, not the aircraft or organisational structures, and in so doing, the organisation was restructured so that it supported individuals to achieve the mission of TAC rather than individuals serving an organisation. How did he do it? He shifted from the highly centralised and specialised, input driven structure he had inherited, to an output focused organisation. He focused on the results. Management focus was shifted from the higher level (input-based) wing to the lower level output oriented squadron. Each squadron was made as far as possible self sufficient, able to do its own scheduling, having its own computer systems, its own maintenance facilities and stores. The focus was on the flight line and having aircraft on line for tasking. Centralized maintenance facilities and stores depots were broken up. Squadrons were allowed to foster individual identities, from colourful aircraft tail markings, through to squadron patches. Squadrons competed with each other at all levels, not only in flying operations, but among the maintenance and support elements. There were trophies, parades and banquets, all officially sanctioned, honouring the results and the people producing the results. Good facilities were provided for all. Not only did the aircrew have well equipped crew rooms but the other people, like the maintainers and
suppliers, were able to design their own places, use artwork, photographs, charts, trophies, to have a place they owned. People were able to identify with the whole, with the squadron. There was the diversity of all the specialists forming as teams in the squadron, aligned with the goals of the squadron. This contrasted with the old organisation which had all the same type of specialist isolated working on individual parts, for example, hydraulic technicians working in a remote depot only on flight controls. In the new organisation, each member of the squadron had ownership of each aircraft in the squadron.

**People as Heroes:** General Creech achieved remarkable results in a complex and diverse $35 billion worldwide organisation, in less than two years from implementation. He focused on people and honoured them as heroes. What can we do in the RAAF? There have been some steps in the right direction, like the break up of Operational Command into Force Element Groups, however what about Logistics Command, and Air Force Office? Ask most people in the Air Force where they would rather be — in the squadrons. Where do they not want to be — in Logistics Command or Air Force Office.

There are many other situations which can provide insight into different ways of thinking. Just open your mind and ask: 'What is possible?'

**Leadership**

The key to change is leadership. A leader creates a vision. The vision is vital. To make a difference, to effect change, the vision needs to be beyond what people already know how to do, to seem impossible, to be unreasonable, to stretch them and make them uncomfortable, to put them at risk. The leader takes a stand in that vision. In taking that stand, especially in the face of not knowing what to do or how to do it, the leader inspires the followers and together they create the structures needed to achieve the vision. In other words, the leader allows for creativity, transformation, ongoing restructuring and rebuilding, and operating beyond the straight line. People work together, synergistically, and activities become aligned on the vision, as a whole, rather than a sum of disparate parts. If the vision is not clear, and beyond what people already know, there will be no change, and people will react and resist any imposed change instead of embracing it. To be a leader, to make a difference, requires creativity. To be creative requires leadership. Leadership itself is thus a creative process.

Leadership is empowering people, and a leader in empowering the followers allows them to become leaders. Thus a leader gives power away, and in so doing becomes empowered. Do we have structures that allow people in leadership positions to be truly leaders, to give up their power? Or do we have structures that cause people to amass power, or become driven by the circumstances (for example, insufficient resources, manpower, funds), thus disempowering those they lead and themselves?

We need to redesign our structures so that leaders can show up as leaders, so that creative thinking is ongoingly present, so that we can embrace change, and design change to meet our goals and objectives. Some ideas on how to redesign our structures were presented earlier. In order to redesign our structures we need leadership now. So let us all be leaders, empowering each other and especially those in senior positions. To do that, we need to break through the boxes on our thinking, the boxes we have inherited from our culture based on the straight line. It starts with you and me.

**Other Openings**

As I said in the aim, I do not intend to provide a single answer, but rather enquire, and open more questions. There is an ever increasing diversity of literature and information in this area, and for the interested reader, I have provided some (not exhaustive) recommendations in the notes. Notes 7 through to 10 examine the causes of change, the rate of change and the impact of change. Notes 11 through 15 provide good sources of alternative and creative thinking.

**Conclusion**

My aim has been to impact the way we think about change, and to demonstrate that we have limited the way we think to a deterministic,
reductionist, logical, rational approach. This way of thinking has served us well. However, it is insufficient, especially in the rapidly changing world of today. We need to break through the boxes that our culture has imposed upon our thinking and allow ourselves to be creative ongoingly. We need to acknowledge that human beings are naturally creative thinkers. In our organisations, we need to design structures that allow human beings the full opportunity to be expressive, and to contribute ideas. We need to acknowledge that the worth of every human being is possible. I have taken a first step. The next step is up to you. I invite you to use what I have written here as a foundation. Creativity is, in essence, something out of nothing. And the cause in the something from nothing is what you think and say. You are the source of creativity. Be ongoingly creative and embrace change.

Every moment of your life is infinitely creative and the universe is endlessly bountiful

Just put forth a clear enough request and everything your heart desires must come to you

Shakti Gawain
Creative Visualisation

NOTES
3. Capra, Fritjof, 1982, The Turning Point: Science Society and The Rising Culture, Schuster & Schuster. Fritjof Capra, author of 'The Tao of Physics', in his later book, The Turning Point, published in 1982, examines the impact of Newtonian thinking on our society and culture, and how this thinking has brought us perilously close to destruction. He argues that Newtonian thinking is obsolete, and looks forward to a new vision more consistent with the findings of the new physics, a holistic, systems based approach which can be extended to all parts of contemporary life.
5. For some recent background on the British situation (the Australian situation is similar), see: Turney, Jon, 1990, Where are the New Scientists?, New Scientist, v125, n1711, pp 17-22; Gold, Karen, 1990, How to Get on in Science, New Scientist, v125, n1711, pp 23-25; and Pritchard, Robert, 1990, Your work in Their Hands, New Scientist, v125, n1716, pp 50-51.
8. Coombs, H.C., 1990, The Return to Scarcity, Cambridge University Press; H.C. Coombs, long time senior public servant and former Governor of the Reserve Bank, focuses on the economic and political trends in a rapidly changing world, and the impact of the need to change the way we relate to the environment.
11. Kee, Yong-Tau, 1987, Powerful Management Decision-Making: Janusian Thinking, Pitman; Dr Kee, currently visitor in administrative studies at Monash University focuses on decision making methods for considering all available possibilities, emphasising creativity and synthesis. Dr Kee is regularly consulted by the Air Force in seminars and in supply management training.
12. de Bono, Edward, 1990, I am Right, You are Wrong, Viking: Edward de Bono, the founder of lateral thinking, challenges the traditional Western way of thinking, with a more natural way based on how humans actually perceive. This way of thinking has creativity and originality as the natural way we think.
[4.] Lynch, Dudley and Kordis, Paul L., 1988. *Strategy of the Dolphin: Scoring a Win in a Chaotic World*. Fawcett Columbine: Dudley Lynch and Paul L. Kordis argue that you do not have to be a 'shark' to be ambitious and successful, or be a 'carp' to stay as the victim of circumstance and be always reacting. You adopt 'dolphin' thinking: flexible, responsive, accepting, which allows you to be creative, breakthrough obsolete thinking, and to act upon your own compelling visions. You can still win, but not at the expense of others.

[15.] Dunphy, Dexter and Stace Doug, 1990, *Under New Management: Australian Organisations in Transition*. McGraw-Hill: Professor Dexter Dunphy, from the Australian Graduate School of Management, and Dr Doug Stace, a Sydney based consultant, provide a provocative and challenging enquiry into successful change strategies, and the 'trannformational managers' who are leading the changes. The book is based on three years research into leading Australian service sector corporations, and provides numerous case studies.


Squadron Leader John Lutton joined the RAAF in 1976 in the third year of mechanical engineering at the University of NSW. After graduation in 1978, he became a maintenance officer at No 5 Squadron at Fairbairn (Iroquois helicopters), and in 1980, he moved to No 486 Maintenance Squadron at Richmond (C130 and Boeing 707 aircraft).

In December 1982, he moved to Headquarters Support Command as the C130 Airframe systems Engineer. After one year in a Support Group in 1986, he moved to Repair and Overhaul Division. He became involved in developing new approaches and procedures for setting up 'performance based' maintenance contracts, in line with policy to move to a more commercial orientation with industry.

In December 1989, he moved to RAAF College at Point Cook as a member of directing staff at the Basic Staff School. Squadron Leader Lutton undertook the Management Development Programme at the Australian Management College Mt Eliza in July 1987. In addition to his Bachelor of Engineering, he has a Graduate Diploma in Computer Engineering and is currently completing a Masters degree in Systems Engineering Management. He has an interest in the impact and management of 'change' in large organisations.

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**Book Reviews**


Reviewed by Ric Tanner, Department of Defence.

Being able to read about world events that have occurred in recent times is what originally invoked my interest in this book. Events such as the US invasion of Grenada, the raid on Libya, the Falklands campaign, Iran and the hostages, Lebanon, and the Persian Gulf tanker escorts. The book, related by a former Secretary of State for Defense, gives an insight into the workings of the US Government by focusing on US involvement in international crises that occurred during the Reagan Administration.

Caspar Weinberger, as US Secretary of State for Defense for seven years of the Reagan Administration, was instrumental in achieving a build-up of the US Armed Forces, formulating changes to US Nuclear strategy, the development of NATO policy and the initial development of a space-based defensive system—the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). This book, based on personal participation, is his account of these and other security and defence-related issues and events that occurred in the period January 1981-November 1987.

Weinberger first worked with Ronald Reagan in 1966, again in 1967 and then as the Californian Director of Finance during Reagan’s Governorship. Understandably, the author conveys a great affinity towards Ronald Reagan; he regards Reagan as a person of warmth, friendliness and genuineness with a desire to accomplish and the skill to achieve, a voluminous and rapid reader with a phenomenal memory, and a person with an uncanny ability to identify and communicate. A natural leader. This is a somewhat different portrayal to some of the tabloid descriptions of the former President.

Throughout the book the author gives an insight into the behind-the-scenes workings of an US Administration, its dealings with government instrumentalities and departments, and with foreign governments. This was particularly evident in the chapters relating to the Falklands conflict, the US recognition of the Peoples Republic of China, defence relations with Japan and the escorting of ships transiting the Persian Gulf. As related by Weinberger, the concurrent nature of many of the events or crises and the decisions concerning them,
broadens one's perspective of government and, in particular, the role of senior ministers and advisors to the US President.

Several different perspectives of events such as the US hostages in Iran are given. In the case of the hostages, I was expecting more details of the military operations mounted to rescue them; instead the author discusses the actions of Robert McFarlane (National Security Advisor at the time) and some of his staff and their eventual arms to Iran dealings. Surprisingly, he pulls no punches in relating his distrust of McFarlane.

Other chapters, such as the one dealing with the US exertions into Grenada, the attempted assassination of the President and the US peacekeeping force in Lebanon, highlight some shortfalls, at the time of these events, of some aspects of the US Government. For instance, Weinberger tells of some confusion as to the chain of leadership occasioned by the attempted assassination of President Reagan and the absence, from Washington, of the Vice President.

In conclusion, I would recommend this book to those with an interest in recent history. I found the author's style to be quite natural, easy to follow and not long-winded as you might expect from a politician. He does convey a strong determination to succeed, is very praiseworthy of his fellow compatriots in government for their achievements and assistance, and is striking in his distrust and dislike of those who do not follow the rules of Government.

Overall a book that readily flowed from one chapter to another with no plot to keep in mind; one with which you could match the characters with real life (especially media reporting of the events covered); and one which gives an insight into the life of a US Secretary of State for Defense.

RAILROAD TO BURMA: by James Boyle. Allen and Unwin Australia; North Sydney 1990. Price $24.95

Reviewed by LTCOL R.E. Bradford, Australian Defence Force Academy

If you are interested in modern military history and expect Railroad to Burma to be a slick well written history book, then you will be sadly disappointed. The book is disjointed, not overly well written and at times stilted in presentation. However if you are after a personalised account which details aspects of life as a prisoner of war under the Japanese, then you need search no further. In recreating his incarceration under the Japanese, James Boyle has come up with a book which allows the reader to live some of those horrific times, and it is in this light that I feel his book is a great success.

James Boyle was not greatly different from the remainder of the Australians captured by the Japanese on the capitulation of Singapore early in 1943. He was a driver and judging by the lack of detail provided in the book, he did not suffer any unusual experiences during the Malayan Campaign. However once captured he decided to maintain a diary, forbidden of course by the Japanese, and was able to continue to compile the diary using his own form of shorthand for the duration of his captivity. Through a stroke of good fortune he was able to find his diary, after cessation of hostilities, which he had previously buried in one of his previous camp sites.

His book provides an excellent social study of the effects of captivity, especially the horrific times suffered by all who, under conditions worse than slave labour, were forced to participate in the construction of the Burma Railroad. Because of his diary, he is able to detail a day-by-day account of the long hours of work, the starvation diet, the ravages caused by cholera, dystentry and malaria, and the inhumane treatment often handed out by the Japanese to the prisoners. He does not only concentrate on these horrors of captivity, but also covers the bravery and non-stop humane efforts of many fellow prisoners who fought to help their mates in their time of need. The personalised style of writing and involvement of the author in the activities highlighted, add to the interest of the book.

Specific elements of the book are worthy of special mention. The account of the movement of F Force by rail and by forced march is most enthralling and indeed terrifying. His detailing of the everyday terrible conditions of life in the construction camps on the railroad could only be related in such a realistic fashion by one who endured them. His tributes to the dedication of medical staff, such as Major Bruce Hunt, who struggled tirelessly for the sick and injured is also most enlightening.

Whilst the background of this book is war, it is not a military history but more of a social work which details the actions of people under severe stressful conditions. Shortcomings in writing style and a few other minor irritants are easily hidden by the graphical nature of the content and the compassionate telling of the story. I recommend the book to all who appreciate accounts of extraordinary endurance and spirit under terrible conditions.
How good is the Soviet Army? Certainly it is large. With a tank inventory in excess of 55,000 vehicles, more than 200 divisions, and quantitative superiority over NATO in nearly every type of conventional weapon, it is an imposing force. So begins the introduction to Steven Zaloga’s excellent work on Soviet tactics and equipment in a fictional war against N10 forces set in Europe in the early 1990s. As with all works of this nature (Tom Clancy’s Red Storm Rising or General Sir John Hackett’s Third World War) they can be quickly overtaken by changing world events. Notwithstanding this, Zaloga’s book is an important addition to the perennial debate—how good is the Soviet Army?

This book examines the combat power of the Soviet Union in a unique fashion. While chapter one is devoted to the Soviet invasion plan for Western Europe, based on a ‘German Crisis’, and can no longer be considered current, the remaining chapters are devoted to a particular aspect of the modern Soviet Armed Forces: motor rifle, tank, spetsnaz, attack helicopters, artillery, fighter aircraft, and chemical warfare. Each chapter begins with a fictional scenario of this element preparing for and engaging in combat in the first week of a conventional war against NATO forces. These fictional scenarios are then complemented by an analytic essay about current and future trends in that branch of the Soviet armed forces.

Zaloga does not attempt to judge the outcome. By focusing on the Soviet side he provides a valuable insight into their current tactical doctrine, from squad to battalion level, the equipment currently fielded in Europe (Soviet terms are used in favour of NATO code names and expressions), and attempts to describe how the Soviet army would be likely to fight. For readers unaccustomed to these terms, full explanatory notes are provided. Each chapter is complemented by a detailed bibliography which provides a good starting point for those interested in pursuing further reading about the contemporary Soviet armed forces. By placing the reader in the shoes of the Soviet conducting a conventional war against NATO forces, Zaloga has successfully delivered a different perspective of the military balance in Europe today.

THE GLASS CANNON, by Peter Pinney, University of Queensland Press, Price: $14.95

This is the second book in the trilogy of Johnno’s War Diaries, written by Peter Pinney. The Glass Cannon is based on the diaries of Johnno who saw service in Bougainville as a member of the 2/8th Commando Squadron from 1944 to 1945.

The book provides a personal insight into ordinary peoples lives. It does this very well and the selection of characters provides a contrast of personalities, each of whom saw the war through different perspectives.

It traces Johnno’s service in Bougainville with a mixture of humour, savagery and compassion which makes the book so lifelike, that at times you are in the jungle along with Johnno.

This second volume commences with Johnno’s arrival in Bougainville, followed by his adventures, or misadventures with his unit. At times the reader is led through the darker side of the war when it became a case of ‘us or them’ as one of the characters puts it, and at other times we see the comradeship and humour which typified the Australian soldier. The book concludes towards the end of the campaign, opening the way for the third volume.

The Glass Cannon takes off slowly, however it builds into a fast paced account of the Bougainville campaign, told not as a unit history, but as the limited experiences of one man.

Peter Pinney has written a picturesque, clear and concise narrative. I would have no hesitation in recommending this book to any reader interested in military history, particularly the New Guinea campaign.
Have a nice flight

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