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Low-Intensity Conflict

Dear Sir,

I set out to highlight some of the problems an open-ended commitment to air support creates for the Navy and the Army. Norman Ashworth confirms the doctrinal disjunction but is surprisingly indifferent to the difficulties caused the other Services. To my mind, this doctrinal blind spot expresses a much deeper problem.

There is scant comfort in selectively qualifying the level of low-intensity conflict. Have we learned nothing? Our contingents have always had to do more than was expected, even when part of an Allied force. Have we forgotten our men in Korea armed with bolt operated rifles facing the Chinese armies with semi-automatics?

Low-intensity conflict is more than just terrorism and demands a politico military response rather than exclusive police operations. It is limited; geographically, usually in the Third World; in the number of participants and in the scope of the operations. With the profusion of sophisticated weapons in our region, any battle will be fierce.

The real problems of low-intensity conflict develop in situations short of the use of armed force where nations must demonstrate their resolve. The limited scope seldom presents predominant and continuing opportunities for the use of the military at the strategic level. The threat of force is a dangerous ploy, particularly if there is no residual history of resolution in diplomatic, economic or trade disputes.

In any case, limited forces can seldom develop and sustain operations of a sufficient impact at the strategic level. Obviously, there will always be one-off opportunities, but most often there will be a conscious determination to contain the conflict in every parameter. Is there not a stronger case therefore, to maintain a self-contained, well-trained, joint tactical force that is capable of some limited strategic reaction rather than to continue with the illusion of a considerable strategic capability? It would certainly be a more flexible and sensible evidence of the nation's resolve and would ensure sounder battlefield performance.

The improved joint arrangements within the ADF are an enormous step forward, but the arrangements for battle have not changed. The tactical commander is given the mission, and the means, and gets on with it. He will be doomed if he does not have the means to immediately and effectively support the infantry or if he has to await a joint direction on every circumstance.

The U.S. raid to rescue the hostages from Teheran ended in disaster because the top heavy joint force arrangements left no one in sole charge to handle the crisis.

There would be no gain if this discussion was to revert to mere point scoring, but there is a doctrinal blind spot. Let me say there is a strong case, in most circumstances, for the RAAF to assign aircraft solely to close air support and to commit themselves, energetically, to that joint training. The structural inadequacies of the other Services, which is where we began, must also be addressed. Any solution must be able to survive the test of battle.

D. M. Butler
Major General (Rtd.)

The Ready Reserve

Dear Sir,

It was a little disconcerting to read MAJ Scott's analysis in his article The Ready Reserve — A Decentralised Option (ADFJ No. 94). I recognise his analysis had to be limited and his full analysis may have covered other areas in more detail, but it was still disappointing to see the discussion concerned only with the three infantry battalions in a (usual) brigade.

A brigade is, of necessity, much more than three battalions. His consideration is rather akin to considering a warrior as consisting only of his arms and fists. Monty Python aside, this is not true!

Successful operations on the battlefield involve various operating systems such as intelligence, fire support, air defence, mobility/counter-mobility, command and control and logistics, in addition to manoeuvre. MAJ Scott's analysis would have been a little more rigorous had some consideration been given to the advantages and disadvantages accruing to his proposals with respect to the other battlefield operating systems. Habitual relationships and affiliations are crucial, especially at brigade and battalion level. The relationships between supported and supporting units must be affected by decentralising
the three manoeuvre elements of the brigade and 'scattering' the units down the Eastern seaboard cities. I trust readers will keep these facts in mind when considering the brigade decentralisation option.

There are immense inherent advantages to having the brigade support elements in one area with effective command and control available within each supporting unit. Modern manoeuvre commanders must be adept at using all the battlefield operating systems to be successful. The major reason our peacetime exercises often allow infantry battalions to operate by themselves is because they are of short duration and we 'control' the enemy. Reality on the future battlefield, even in low-level conflict, is not likely to comply with these two characteristics.

M.H. Hyde
Lieutenant Colonel

Space Power

Dear Sir,

I read Wing Commander Drover's excellent article on Space Power with much interest, and was struck by how much military and civil benefits overlapped. I appreciate that the article was written for the military reader, but it seems to me that the real value of Space to an economically depressed Australia is in the civilian arena and enhancement of the 'clever country'. Surely the Government needs to formulate a 'coherent national space policy', not just a military policy.

Space development provides a fantastic opportunity for Australia to tap a new area of current technological and industrial expansion. The costs can realistically only be defrayed commercially. At $600 million a shot, there is a lot of money to be both raised and distributed; not only to those who conduct the flight, but also to those who construct the launch vehicle and those who manufacture the high-tech pay loads. The spin-offs for Australian industry are infinite.

There has been much talk about MFPs and Space-Ports, but to date little real action or initiative towards realising the potential the space industry offers. Drover's Third Option must be attractive to a government interested in becoming more involved in our region of the world. The Cape York Space-Port can demonstrate its commercial viability, and the interest shown by countries that already have space programs will assist in technology transfer. This project provides an opportunity to offer a lead to the rapidly developing ASEAN countries, both in the establishment of shared high-tech industrial and development capacity, and the physical enhancements offered by regional satellites.

All the attributes of satellites are as attractive to the geographically dispersed South East Asian (SEA) countries as they are to Australia. Communications are more difficult among the thousands of islands in the region, as is navigation — both coastal and on land, where many areas remain virtually unmapped. Militarily, the establishment of a local theatre GPS must be viable, with over 6 million active and reserve servicemen in SEA (APDR 92, including Indo-China and Taiwan); especially when the US start charging for access to NAVSTAR codes after 1997.

The conflicting demands of population growth, industrial development, agricultural capitalisation and environmental protection need greater management, as illustrated at the 'Earth Summit' recently. Satellite sensors can help in all these, and also offer the best potential for resource exploration, both on land and under the sea. Additionally, in the busy South China Sea area, control of shipping and air traffic, and policing of pirates, drug trafficking and illegal immigration, would all gain from the Surveillance and Search and Rescue enhancements offered by satellites.

At the strategic level, the greater the surveillance and intelligence information that is passed between neighbouring countries, then the greater the security that is engendered, lessening the requirement for conventional forces. This has economic, political and military value in a region where there are still disputes over the sovereignty of some island groups, and China is pursuing a growing maritime role with its pending purchase of an aircraft carrier and new amphibious ships.

From an ADF point of view, perhaps the most important thing is to establish an indigenous Space infrastructure. This industry foundation should be a civilian sector responsibility, built on commercial principles. The development of a military space hierarchy, as well as the military use of space, can flow from this, in line with the 'Total Force' structure. Costs may be able to be defrayed across all users, rather than just the Defence budget; or 'military use of civil space assets' may be the norm rather than just in emergencies.

'The fourth dimension of space' not only offers a viable option to genuinely enhance ADF capabilities (rather than merely replacing new for old), but has real potential for the national development of high-tech research, manufacturing and trade. Can Australia afford to forfeit this opportunity?

R.J. Millington
Major (Instructor)
The Implications of the Move Towards Decision Making by Consensus in the UN Security Council

By Wing Commander Peter May, RAAF, (Ret.)

Introduction

The UN reacted uncharacteristically decisively to the Gulf crisis, on reflection one could question whether the UN has been true to its own Charter and to the cause of peace. Recent events in the Middle East since the UN cease-fire resolution suggest a weakening of the international law principle of state sovereignty in favour of human rights. The intervention by UN military forces in support of Iraq’s Kurdish insurgents has placed new emphasis on the duties and responsibilities of the Security Council and its decision making processes. This article reviews the UN Security Council’s role in the maintenance of international peace and security and, in particular, examines the implications for international relations theory of the changing process of decision making in the Council.

The Functions of the UN

Before examining the internal processes of the Security Council it may be worthwhile considering the organisational environment in which it operates. The UN is sometimes seen to be no more than the institutionalised relationship between states and as having the singular purpose of furthering the interests of individual members. In this view the organisation serves a political purpose only and international law is relegated to being no more than a rationalisation of the status quo. The UN has recently been accused of becoming a tool of US foreign policy in that it simply authorised the US approach to the Gulf crisis and neglected to exercise independent control over subsequent events. A contrasting view suggests that the UN may be an independent actor in the political system and to exercise a separate capacity to act at the international level. If one expected independent UN action it would be the Security Council’s role to decide the policies and to direct the course of events. How would the Security Council function in this decision making role?

International Relations theory identifies the management of the power relationship between states as a fundamental problem. Theorists usually express relationships in terms of a balance of power, collective security or world government. What is the UN’s role in this scheme?

The ‘Balance of Power’ concept does not suggest a major role for the UN as individual states operate autonomously as independent units of power without subordination to central control or coordination. ‘Collective Security’ involves partially centralised management of power which remains diffused among national units. It calls for an international organisation with authority to determine when force should be used and to require member states to collaborate under its direction in enforcement action. ‘World Government’ suggests an institutional system superior to the state and possessing centralised power and control. Is the UN intended to function as the institutional manager of a collective security system or is it established in such a way that it is capable of performing as a type of centralised world government capable of exercising power independently? The answer to this question determines the appropriateness of the Security Council’s decision making regime.

The Security Council: Functions and Powers

The Council’s functions and powers are stated in Articles 24 to 26 of the UN Charter. The Council’s primary function, the maintenance of international peace and security, is intended to be exercised by two means; firstly by ‘pacific settlement of disputes’, and secondly, should that fail, by ‘enforcement action’. The UN has no military body readily at its disposal. It has been proposed that Member States should place elements of their armed forces at the disposal of the Security Council, however, owing to a failure of agreement on how this could be
achieved, no forces have been assigned to the UN as a standing body. Instead, UN peace-keeping operations have depended on individual states consenting to provide the forces for the UN on an ad hoc basis. (Art 43) Under the general provisions of Chapter VII the Security Council has the power to determine action with respect to threats to peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression. Members agree to accept and carry out the Council’s decisions (Art 25). Article 48 requires member to take action as determined by the council and Article 49 requires members to jointly afford mutual assistance in carrying out the measures decided on by the Council.

Conflict management is probably the most obvious function of the UN and is of primary importance to the Security Council. The Council has great freedom in how it approaches dispute settlement as the Charter does not prescribe procedures to be followed and it deals with a wide range of questions. The world is a complex system and international relations are characterised by the diversity of the community it serves. Differences in ideology, religion and culture set people apart and different economic circumstances usually cause a polarisation of views. In order to cope with such diversity the Security Council’s approach needs to be flexible, pragmatic and usually political rather than legal. In theory the Council’s legitimate interest in international conflict should be recognised and respected by all nations and it should be responsive to conflict situations. In practice, however, the Council’s efforts often fail through lack of agreement among members. Positive action often depends on deciding what course would command general support and this is achieved through a consultative process involving intricate diplomacy and efforts to facilitate compromise and arrive at consensus. Public debate in the Security Council is one method of establishing a position. The Council may also use other UN agencies such as the Secretary General, special fact-finding missions, observation teams and peace-keeping forces to establish its interest in a particular issue.

Before considering the decision making process it may be useful to review a few facts about the Council. Although it consists of only fifteen Members it acts on behalf of all the UN Members and has authority to take decisions which bind them all (Articles 25 and 49) and, to some extent, even non-Members (Article 2 (6)). The right of decision is limited by the rule of unanimity, or veto, by which the five permanent members have the right to block non-procedural proposals. The Security Council, unlike other UN organs, such as the General Assembly, must be able to function at all times (Article 28 (1)). It is also pertinent to note that the Council has the right to develop its own rules and procedures (Article 30). The Council, bearing the responsibility for upholding the peace, is expected to be equipped, through agreements with member states, with military forces. In practice the Council has rarely overcome the difficulties which stem from great power rivalry and this has led the General Assembly to assert its competence to take over the role of peace maker.

The Security Council: Decision Making

The basic separation of powers within the UN puts real decision making competence in the Security Council where certain decisions are mandatory for UN members (whereas the General Assembly is limited to making recommendations). Although it is primarily a political body the Security Council is nevertheless bound by legal rules established under the Charter, or more generally as rules of international law. To be effective, however, Council must concern itself with controversial and political issues where strictly impartial, legally correct answers are not readily available and in areas where it is necessary to interpret ambiguous or imprecise legal rules. Here political considerations must be taken into account.

The term ‘decision’ is used in several different senses regarding Security Council action. Article 27 of the Charter requires that each Member shall have one vote and that ‘Decisions of the Security Council on procedural matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine Members.’ The Article goes on to define the requirement for voting on other matters including the requirement for concurring votes of the Permanent Members. According to a report by Secretary General Lie in 1950 the term ’decision of the Security Council’ in Article 27 refers to all types of action, whether under Chapter V on procedure and organisation, or under Chapter VI in relation to the pacific settlement of disputes, or whether it makes ‘recommendations’ or ‘decisions’ under Chapter VII. Here the term is used in the broad sense to cover all types of action by UN organs. In the repertoire of Security Council practice ‘decision’ is defined as a technical term, not in the sense of the Charter, but including all significant steps decided by Council, whether by vote or otherwise. The annual publication Resolutions and Decisions of
The Security Council uses 'decisions' in a narrow sense. Proposals approved by the Council are called 'resolutions'. 'Decisions', whether relating to procedure or substance, are usually taken without vote and include statements of consensus.

The word 'decision' is also used to distinguish Council resolutions which are intended to be mandatory or binding from expressions of opinion or recommendations. Any confusion that stems from the inconsistent use of the term 'decision' is compounded by differing views regarding the Council's power to take decisions which are mandatory or binding under the various Articles and Chapters of the Charter.

Voting is one way for the Security Council to make a decision. Article 27 of the UN Charter, governing voting in the Council, establishes that certain matters cannot pass without the concurring votes of the Permanent Members (the Rule of Unanimity). Other matters, termed 'procedural', may be decided by a vote of any nine members. The crucial determination is whether a particular matter is procedural. The Charter does not adequately define 'procedural matters' and this enables members of the Council to give broad scope to the veto power of the Permanent Members. An analogous situation exists in the General Assembly where a distinction is made between 'important' and other questions. Non-procedural matters in the Council are sometimes referred to as 'substantive' matters, although there appears to be no consistent approach which would establish a procedural-substantive dichotomy. The issue itself, and political considerations, seems to be the determinant. This situation leads to the Security Council voting on whether or not an issue is procedural and in effect provides the Permanent Members with a 'double veto'.

The early history of Security Council decision making is one of failure and deadlock. From the outset the credibility of the five 'Big Power' Permanent Members, and the perpetuation of their legal pre-eminence in Council decision making, must be questioned in the light of their real power and influence. When the UN Charter was drafted the UK and France were emerging economically exhausted from the war and facing the loss of colonial empires, and the Republic of China was contending with an overwhelming civil war. Arguably these nations were hardly 'Great Powers' in real terms at the time the Charter established their privileges in the Security Council. The US and USSR, preoccupied with fundamental ideological differences and set on holding each other at bay with the barely constrained 'Balance of Terror', were not likely to give up their privileged position in favour of a consensual approach to dispute settlement. In more recent times the relative economic strengths of Japan and reunified Germany must bring into question the exclusivity of the current five Permanent Members and their right of veto.

Traditionally the operation of the veto rule has been a feature of the Council's attempts to deal with security issues and, in the absence of effective Security Council action, the General Assembly has taken a more active role in matters of international security. This was the case in 1950 when, as a result of unique circumstances, the UN became enthusiastic for collective security in response to the Korean action and gave support to the Uniting for Peace Resolution. This scheme involved the General Assembly taking over from a veto-bound Security Council and giving effect to collective action. Although the Uniting for Peace plan did not provide for obligatory participation by states in sanctions against the aggressor, and hence was not strictly speaking a collective security system in that it did not provide a reliable response to a member's need for security assistance it was, however, seen as a move towards the transformation of the UN into an agent of universal collective security. The Plan resulted in the UN being caught up in the 'Cold War' conflict between the Superpowers as members took sides in an ideologically divided world. The end of the Korean conflict saw the eventual disentanglement of the UN military forces from the ideological battlefield and left the UN with a new appreciation of the veto arrangement as a mechanism for avoiding it becoming drawn into the Great Power rivalry.

The 'veto rule' could make collective security impossible if the Great Powers are 'divided in their sympathies' and this suggests that the establishment of the UN represents the repudiation of the idea of collective security. On the other hand, in restricting the right of states to resort to force and espousing the principles of collective action, and in providing an arrangement to preside over the use of force (the Security Council), the UN exhibits some of the characteristics of a collective security system, however, it may be argued that the UN is merely a collective security system for minor situations not involving the interests of the great powers.

In recent years the Security Council has become more effective through the adoption of consultative and consensus practices. This has come about partly by the increase in size of membership in 1966 from 11 to 15. The increase has altered the voting balance between permanent and non-permanent members.
and has made it difficult for any group to force a decision. As a result, decision making now is more likely to be achieved through consultation, negotiation and compromise.

If an agreed position can be reached without recourse to voting, that is arriving at a decision through consensus, several advantages are realised. Since it is difficult to have a voting system that recognises the differences in the importance of the nations involved, the consensus approach allows all nations to take part in an egalitarian way which may assure that multilateral negotiations reflect real geopolitical power. This has proved particularly to be the case in the UN's larger bodies such as the General Assembly where the key problem in contemporary international decision making is the divorce of power from voting majorities resulting from the expansion of membership in the international system. Under these circumstances, given the ideological differences, economic disparities, and cultural divisions that exist, majority voting is likely to result in powerful nations becoming alienated minorities.

The UN Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III) is often put forward as a model of multinational negotiations. Prior to UNCLOS consensus was usually pursued informally, however, at UNCLOS procedures were established, and techniques were developed, to achieve the agreements that precede international cooperation. The UNCLOS model is seen as a paradigm for the politics of international interdependence and is considered to be important because it represents an example of the formalisation of the consensus process. The 'Gentleman's Agreement' requires that the Conference should make every effort to reach agreement on substantive matters by way of consensus and there should be no voting on such matters until all efforts at consensus have been exhausted. UNCLOS may well represent a trend in future negotiations and to cement the UN coalition for the Gulf War.

Decision making by consensus has been criticised as being 'no decision', as being the lowest common denominator, and as being devalued through compromise. It is also held that these decisions are generally ambiguous and not suitable for decisions requiring great clarity and involving precise legal consequences for states. Furthermore the quality of decisions made through negotiations could be questioned on the basis of their being tainted by extraneous influences. For example it is claimed that financial inducements were used to ensure the Security Council Resolution against Iraq and to cement the UN coalition for the Gulf Operation. On the other hand, there is the view that the method of consensus, based on a spirit of mutual cooperation, is not only the most appropriate method, but in fact in an organisation requiring unanimity, the only possible one. The consensus method was discussed in the Sixth Committee in 1967 in connection with a 'Report on the Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation Among States'. Some representatives felt that consensus should be an incentive for negotiation and compromise, but not an absolute rule. It should be noted, however, that the consensus methods in the Security Council differ from those in the subsidiary organs of the General Assembly, the most important difference being that in the Council non-procedural decisions, that is substantive decisions, require the concurring votes of the Permanent Members. Under the present set-up in the Council, any decision of importance can only be arrived at through consultation and compromise. Such a decision is likely to have broader support and carry more weight than a majority vote. It is significant that no distinction is made between decisions adopted by a majority vote and those adopted through the consensus process without resolving disputes and avoiding confrontation. There has, for example, been less use of the veto.
voting. Decisions taken by Council in either way have the same legal effect under the Charter. Although not a panacea for conflict resolution, consensus making has added flexibility to the methods by which the decisions of Council are made and has made decisive action more likely.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to describe a growing tendency for the Security Council to make decisions through a process of consensus rather than relying on the formal voting procedure explicitly incorporated in the Charter. It suggests that the Permanent Members have discovered the need to restrain themselves from using their veto power in the interest of making the Council workable. This desire to see the Council as a viable and responsible executive body is undoubtedly made more imperative by the readiness the General Assembly has shown to take up responsibilities shed by the Council at times of stalemate. It does not suggest, however, that the Permanent Members are about to give up their superior power and privilege. Even where restraint is exercised the Permanent Members are unlikely to give up their veto on substantive issues. For the reasons discussed the Security Council may seek to minimise confrontation and the resort to the veto in favour of diplomatic consultation and consensus.

The fact that the power of veto was an essential element in the original notion of a UN enforcement system, and that it remains so today, suggests that the organisation seeks to control the use of force in international relations through a Balance of Power system where stability is dependent upon the unanimous abstention of the Great Powers. The move towards consensus decision making in the Security Council could be interpreted as a move in the direction of Collective Security, or even a scheme for the management of power in the context of World Government, however, as long as the veto exists the Council's primary role will be the maintenance of the Balance of Power system. In the Gulf crisis we saw a quick response by the Security Council to the Iraqi move for increased power, albeit in the disguise of the application of international law, and we heard mention of 'a new world order' and the need to ensure regional security, but the response stopped short of totally destroying the Iraqi regime and the concern for world order has achieved little in the way of support for the oppressed people still trapped behind sovereign borders. It would seem that decision making in the Security Council is still more concerned with the maintenance of a balance of power in the region, and hence the preservation of a viable Iraq, than with any overriding concern for peace and security at the human level.

NOTES

2. Report by UN Secretary General Lie in 'As We Knew Adlai' (1950) pages 122-123.
3. Article 27: Each member of the council has one vote. Decisions on procedural matters are made by an affirmative vote of at least 9 of the 15 members. Decisions on substantive matters require 9 votes including the concuring votes of all 5 permanent members, although if a permanent member does not support a decision but does not wish to block it through a veto, it may abstain. The Charter makes explicit provision for abstention only in the case of Security Council Decisions under Chapter VII and Article 52(3), other requirements of abstention have been interpreted less rigorously (for a more detailed description of Absentions and Abstences refer to Schermers Chapter V).
5. The Uniting for Peace Resolution (1950). The General Assembly...conscius that failure of the Security Council to discharge its responsibilities resolved, because of lack of unanimity of the permanent members, to recommend action for collective use.
6. As argued by Claude in 'The Management of Power in the UN' (page 359).
7. Buzan, 'Negotiating By Consensus: Developments in Technique at the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea'.
8. Sohn, 'Voting Procedures in the UN Conferences for the Codification of International Law'.
9. Vignes, note 7, at 121.
10. As reported, for example, in the 'World Press Review' (March 1991) (page 12). It is claimed that the US put forward $11 billion worth of inducements, that friendly sheikhs gave Russia $3.4 billion in aid to ensure backing for the UN resolution and that Egypt was rewarded for joining the coalition by the writing off of $11 billion debts.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Since his retirement from the RAAF in 1988 Wing Commander May has expressed his interest in international affairs by undertaking a Graduate Diploma Course in International Law at the Australian National University. Wing Commander May's Airforce career included tours of duty in Maritime and Transport squadrons and staff appointments at both Operational and Support Command. He is a graduate of the US Armed Forces Staff College (Class 69) and has completed a Graduate Diploma in Administration at Canberra University. Wing Commander May has previously contributed to the Australian Defence Force Journal.


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The New World Order: Meaning and Effect — Two Years On

By Major G. Wahlert, RACMP

Whosoever desires constant success must change his conduct with the times.

Nicoli Machiavelli, 1531

Introduction

Armed American soldiers patrol Los Angeles, Indonesian troops fire on protesters in Dili, Germany suffers its most serious industrial unrest in over forty years, Korea stubbornly refuses IAEA inspection and is viewed as the most credible threat to the West's security, continued fighting in Bosnia Herzegonia reflects the unrest in many of Europe's new and recreated states, and UN relief agencies report that up to forty million face death from starvation in Africa. Is this what President George Bush envisaged when he first used the phrase 'New World Order' in a speech to the American people explaining the reasons for the conflict with Iraq? Two years later there is still confusion about the meaning and relevance of this phrase, a New World Order.

While it is evident that international circumstances have changed and that a New World Order has emerged, it is not yet clear just whose 'order' it is and the form it is likely to take during the remainder of this decade. This article examines three separate, but connected, aspects of this New World Order in the Asia-Pacific: its military and security dimension, the future of regional conflict and collective security arrangements, and the management of economic issues through to the turn of the century. Its central theme is that rather than providing a system for perpetual peace and harmony the New World Order is likely to present new problems and challenges to the region in coming years.

Models of the New Order

Four models of what the New World Order might involve have been offered. One model is that of the inter-dependent global village, in which conflict and competition would be replaced by harmony and complementarity. Another model is that of Pax Democratica whose proponents believe that the world is now undergoing a democratic revolution and that democracies tend not to fight one another. As this democratic revolution proceeds, they argue, a peaceful world will result. Both models rest on the central faith that the New World Order will see a decline in the efficacy, and therefore the use of, force. That belief has now been seriously undermined by the Gulf War in which military power was spectacularly decisive while the much heralded new economic superpowers — Germany and Japan — appeared feeble and emasculated. As a result two other versions of the New World Order, which allow a role for force, have gained ground.

The prominence of the United Nations in the Gulf War has led to claims that this institution is now reinvigorated as a centre not only for debate but for action in keeping world peace. Such claims support the Collective Security model whose advocates argue that this formerly moribund organisation is no longer hostage to superpower politics or radical rhetoric, that the international community may now organise to deter and punish acts of aggression by collective action. The other model prompted by the afterglow of a 'glorious victory' in the Gulf is that of Pax Americana. This version of the New World Order has gained some support. Indeed there is more than a hint of it in George Bush's depiction of the United States as the country that 'does the hard work of freedom' and in his claim that America's intervention in the Gulf set down new 'ground rules' for the post-Cold War era by assuming the 'burden of leadership.' But is the United States, as the one authentic, all-round superpower, prepared to impose order on a recalcitrant world?

The Military and Security Dimension

The future of the strategic engagement of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region is arguably the single most important security issue for Australia's region today; it is seen as crucial to the maintenance of a 'stable security system in Asia for
the foreseeable future. Will the United States continue to provide the 'balancing wheel' for regional powers? Is the United States likely to have both the will and the capability in the future to match the Pax Americana model? Certainly the future of America's role in the region has the potential to create much anxiety.

America's future role in the region may be dependent on the outcome of a serious internal debate within the United States aimed at identifying America's post-Cold War national security requirements. Such a debate has highlighted three possibilities that have created mixed feelings within the Asia-Pacific. The first relates to the argument that the United States should spend its peace dividend from the Cold War on correcting domestic problems. Proponents of this view argue that the military security threat to the United States has so diminished that a reallocation of resources to other more compelling threats — the environment, economy, education, etc. — is now necessary and are calling for a 'almost complete draw-down of American forces in both Europe and Asia.' This contention has been given new life in the wake of the recent Los Angeles riots. Such an Isolationist stand has caused concerns in the region 'as to the continued stability and peace of the area in the absence of credible American and Soviet restraints on regional dynamics,' and that any resulting vacuum will be filled by regional powers such as China, India and Japan.

A second possibility is presented by the advocates of Pax Americana. Spurred on by President Bush's rhetoric and the United States' spectacular success in the Gulf war, they believe that the United States should use its commanding position in world affairs to its own 'political, moral and economic' advantage. This assertive, if not domineering, position has sounded alarm bells in the region, particularly among the more powerful states of China, India, Malaysia and Indonesia, who are anxious that they may have less say in an American dominated New World Order than they had during the period of superpower rivalry.

The final line of argument is more representative of the Bush administration's position: that is, that a precipitous withdrawal of American forces from the region would endanger regional, if not global, security, in that 'international politics, like nature, bares a vacuum that will be filled by other regional powers should the United States withdraw.' In arguing for the status quo, they accept that some retrenchment of American military power from the region is necessary, even desirable, but argue that sufficient force projection capability must remain to ensure the protection of United States' interests in the region. This is the thesis upon which the hopes of many Asian states are placed.

It is most likely that the internal debate in the United States over the redirection of resources to domestic problems will gain in momentum during the 1990s, leaving the United States with neither the will nor the capacity to sustain the Pax Americana model. Nevertheless should George Bush emerge successful from the coming federal election it is likely that he will remain committed to the Asia-Pacific region. This forecast is in part based on a general acknowledgement of the importance of the region to the United States, not only strategically but also economically. Therefore, it can be expected that the United States will maintain a balanced force projection capability for the region to protect its national interests and maintain an economic, political and military 'balancing wheel' for the region's powers, in particular China, Japan and India. It is also likely that America will continue to play a global leadership role; partly military, but increasingly diplomatic.

Regional Conflict and Collective Security in the New Order

What does the New World Order portend for the future of conflict in the Asia-Pacific region? Is it now more or less likely? The answer to this question rests in part with the perception of the great powers of their level of national interest in regional conflict. For example, there are no obvious Western interests in many Third World conflicts other than the protection of nationals, although the Persian Gulf continues to be a special case due to the imperative of oil. With the East-West conflict itself no longer a factor, the temptation for the United States and other Western states to become directly involved in the 'zero-sum' game has declined. Additionally, according to author and previous adviser to the Reagan Administration, Harry Summers:

A dramatic, radical shift in the world's political geography took place in 1989. With no Cold War, there can be no Third World. Their value as pieces on the strategic and ideological chessboard has significantly depreciated and they can no longer obtain political leverage and resources from both east and the west.

For many states attracting the attention of the international community will be difficult. In a world
in which the superpowers are not regularly involved, many regional conflicts will no longer merit global attention. For example, when in early 1991 Italy tried to arrange an EC policy towards the internal war in Somalia, it was unable to inspire much interest. Additionally, the continuing fighting in Yugoslavia, despite its obvious implications for European stability, and the Arab-Israeli dispute with high profile American diplomatic effort, have remained intractable issues.

In this regard the ability of states within the region to exploit superpower animosity has diminished. China, for example, is now unable to realise any benefit on continuing to play off the ‘strategic triangle’ of Beijing-Moscow-Washington. This is a direct consequence of the end of the ideological dimension of the East-West competition. Conversely the West, or more particularly the United States, no longer has the same degree of interest in the developing world as it did at the height of the Cold War when it countenanced some undemocratic regimes as a bulwark against communism. Many of these regimes would most likely be totally unacceptable to the United States Congress today on human rights grounds alone. In this respect the New World Order has heralded an end to great power clientism, although regional power clientism may still appear strong for some time.

Considering this, and the recent Gulf War experience, how are collective security arrangements expected to work in this New World Order? Will the United States act unilaterally or will the United Nations work as it was intended? The Gulf model has shown us that the days of the United States acting unilaterally as the world’s policeman have gone; it can no longer afford to do so. The Gulf war was the first American operation in its history where substantial assistance was required to help pay for it. Additionally cuts in defence spending will seriously impede the United States’ ability to continue to act as a ‘Globo-Cop’. The Gulf model has also shown that the United Nations can now work as the great powers intended it to — as a condominium of great powers telling lesser states what is acceptable and what is not. But the model provides no guarantee that a collective international response will occur in all cases of aggression, as is evident by events in Yugoslavia. In many ways the Gulf example was unique. In a dispute involving a veto-possessing member of the Security Council, the United Nations will be as ineffectual as ever.

The difficulties in finding a resolution to the Middle East situation, or even convening a conference, are an indication that the ambitions of a New World Order will of necessity be moderated by the overwhelming reality of the disorder that still exists. The probable unwillingness or inability of the United States to serve as policeman for the United Nations will be another reason to modify the language of the perpetual peace in international law. Therefore the inevitable desire to delegate security to regional blocs and to devise architectural solutions to regional conflict. The classic instruments for the creation of stability — alliances, balances of power, security guarantees, arms control, economic assistance, humanitarian aid, bilateral and multilateral negotiations — will be as various and complex as before and at least as necessary as the diplomacy of the United Nations.

It also needs to be remembered that the United Nations does not have a life of its own — it is not the body of world government — and thus the effective use of its machinery continues to depend as always on the willingness of its members. Therefore a major question is, what role will the Western allies and Japan play in this New World Order? In the Gulf, excepting Britain and France, the Allies played relatively minor military roles although the financial contributions pledged by Japan and Germany were quite substantial. Should the Allies prove unwilling to shoulder what the American people perceive to be a fair share of the burden or reluctant to become fully engaged in future crises, there exists a strong potential for other, perhaps more vital, aspects of the alliance to be strained.

The Economic Dimension

As stated by Richard Solomon, United States Assistant Secretary of State:

We are entering a world in which economic strength and technical prowess, not just military capability are the sinews of national power; a world in which geo-economics is a key force shaping geo-politics. Making war will not be the primary basis of national power as we move into the next century. Increasingly the economic dimension of power is becoming the predominant consideration in the international community. Indeed, America’s role in the New World Order may ultimately be determined by economic constraints. This being the case, what are the implications of the rise in prominence of the economic dimension of national power to the management of economic issues in the Asia-Pacific?
The relative peace in the Asia-Pacific has been due to the relative prosperity and development fostered by free-market strategies and export-led growth, in turn abetted by a United States' defence umbrella and free trade opportunities. However, with the United States, Europe and Japan continuing to move towards the creation of trading blocs, prompted by the likelihood of an unsatisfactory settlement of the next round of the GATT talks, increasing protectionism appears an inevitable consequence. This is likely to lead to stagnation in many Asia-Pacific economies with tremendous ramifications for national and regional well-being and security. Thus, the irony is that it will not be the Soviet Union or China that poses the greatest threat to these states in the New World Order but rather the United States, Japan and Europe.

Any discussion of American military commitment to the Asia-Pacific region becomes irrelevant considering that such an economic world order cannot be policed by American military power. Therefore states are now adopting a more comprehensive view of security. Old issues, such as arms trade and NBC proliferation, will continue. However, newer issues — economic viability, the environment, refugees, drugs, religious fundamentalism — have become important to a state's perception of its security. There also will be the challenge of dealing with the problem of NBC weapons in a multipolar society where the security issue is political, economic and social, rather than military in nature.

There is also a cogent argument for 'balance'. Gregory Copley, editor of Defense & Foreign Affairs, asserts that the economic and political power of states will need to be balanced by military power in order to confer major power status on a state. 'Nowhere in modern history has a power survived, prospered and expanded its influence by the concentration on just one aspect of its power base.' In this way he sees the return to a situation that existed several hundreds of years ago in which every state was expected to be able to enforce the security of its trade through military protection and projection. India is a modern example having made significant strides towards achieving international economic and political recognition by concentrating heavily on military projection, while mobilising its economy. Many Asian states appear to recognise the requirement for balanced development with their growing economic prosperity likely to be translated into enhanced military capability. Conversely Japan shows how an inability to balance economic power with a will for military projection can lead to impotence at a crucial stage of affairs.

Copely also acknowledges the dangers inherent in such a situation: economic competition between states takes on a new dimension of risk when military elements are involved.

**Conclusion**

As in previous post-war situations there was an inherent idealism in the proclamation of a New World Order that has subsequently made clarification of the term more difficult. We are left to draw our own conclusions as to the likely shape of this Order. The first is that in formulating post-Cold War military strategy the United States will be faced with the paradox of reconciling commitments and capabilities. This will require both burden sharing and burden shedding as the American people force reductions in military capabilities for economic reasons. However, neither a precipitous withdrawal from the region nor the full realisation of Pax Americana is likely.

Secondly, the energy that the United States spent in focusing so much of its diplomacy on the United Nations during the Gulf war will make this institution more difficult to ignore in the future. Nevertheless the United Nations will remain dependent upon the willingness of its members for the effective operation of its machinery, and on the cooperation of the five permanent members of the Security Council. As such the nature of the relationship between the United Nations and global crisis management is not assured.

Finally, a key to survival in the 1990s will be ‘balance’ in all aspects of state power — an acknowledgement of the comprehensive nature of security in the 1990s. This means the ability to find a proper proportion for all the essential aspects of government and state focus: economic and political stability, manageable and sustainable growth, social freedom and technological creativity.

The global picture over the coming decade will be less clearly defined than it has been in the past four. There will be a greater number of smaller powers each able to exert regional influence. The major global powers, including the United States, can be expected to act only when their interests are threatened and they will almost certainly act in some form of coalition as in the Gulf. The principal lesson from all this is that rather than signalling the end of the problem of security, the New World Order might instead be the beginning of a new and perhaps more complex one.
NOTES

3. These are two models of the New World Order which have been offered in explanation of the concept. See, for example, Owen Harries. 'The New World Order? Take Your Pick,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 September 1991.
6. See, for example, an interview with Dr Alan Tonelson, Economic Strategy Institute, Washington, on ABC Television's program *Lateline*, 22 October 1991.
12. For example, the United States has in the past provided support to Saddam Hussein as a bulwark against Islamic fundamentalism; to the Nicaraguan Contras as an alternative to the Communist Sandinistas; and to the dictatorial regime of Lieutenant Doe in Liberia to counter intrusion from Moscow.
13. It involved clear and unambiguous aggression, by an obligingly stupid dictator who was portrayed as the embodiment of evil. The West's dependence on oil gave it urgency and Saudi Arabia providing the secure launching pad for operations.
15. The United States' export enhancement program (EEP) has been explained by the Bush administration as a direct attack on the continuing unfair trading practices in both Europe and Japan.(Richard Solomon, Assistant Secretary of State, speaking on ABC TV's program *The 7.30 Report*, 9 July 1991.)
18. Military spending in the region is expected to increase by 5% a year. (A-PDR, October 1991, p.21.)
19. This relates to Japan's failure to negotiate a number of contracts in the Middle East due to that region's fear of economic domination from Japan.

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**PURA MILK**

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Introduction

As one era in the international political system ends, and a new uncertain one begins, it would be useful to review the development of the alliance that has dominated Western security considerations since World War II. This alliance — the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) — has proven successful in the purpose for which it was conceived. Not only did it prevent war in Western Europe, but it also contributed to the political and economic circumstances that resulted in the demise of the Warsaw Pact and major reductions in the military power of what was the Soviet Union. The commitment to NATO has dominated the strategic thinking of its members. Similarly, it has shaped the structures and tactical doctrines of the military forces of its members, and indeed of other nations in the Western world. It has also been the principal stimulus for advancing weapon system technology.

Military organisations and doctrines have a tendency to outlive the circumstances for which they were developed. Arguably, the raison d'être for NATO has been removed. How well NATO members and other nations are prepared militarily for contingencies that will emerge in the new era of international politics will be influenced by the way they adapt their force structures and doctrines to the new circumstances. In doing so, they should be aware of the strategic factors that influenced the formation and evolution of NATO, and the circumstances which shaped the evolution of its forces.

This article will review the development of NATO from 1949 to 1990, with specific reference to the military arm of the alliance.

Strategic Foundations of NATO

From 1949 to 1990 the international political system was dominated by the Cold War. The threat of Soviet expansionism and the Western perceptions of, and reaction to, that threat produced a unique strategic balance of power based on two ideological blocs. While the effects of this strategic balance and ideological rivalry were global, it was in Europe that they were most pronounced. The reason for this, of course, is that it was in Europe that the origins of the confrontation lay. The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the sufferings of the Soviets from German expansionism in World Wars I and II produced a powerful mix of ideology and militarism that saw the Soviets determined not only to permanently secure their own borders, but also to extend their ideological influence throughout the world by threat of military force.

The final dispositions of forces in Europe at the end of World War II had a profound effect on the course of the Cold War. The Soviet occupation of large sectors of Eastern Europe and the American and British occupation of Western Europe provided the basis for a dividing line that Winston Churchill was to describe as an 'Iron Curtain'. It was the fear that this curtain would be extended westwards that prompted the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in April 1949 in Washington DC. The Soviets continued to extend their military influence within their Eastern European satellite states and in 1955, as a formal response to the establishment of NATO, created the Warsaw Pact. That pact was to remain in force until 1990 when, with the democratisation of Eastern Europe and re-unification of Germany, its political and geographical foundations were removed.

The main feature of the strategic balance since 1945, and the principal reason that the Cold War did not develop into a 'Hot War', has been the development of nuclear weapons. It was the fear of 'mutually assured destruction' that prevented a war between the Warsaw Pact and NATO. Nuclear, rather than conventional, deterrence underpinned NATO strategy. But the avoidance of war was never certain. Despite the fact that the Soviets indicated
that they would be prepared to use nuclear weapons from the outset of any war, the consequences of their use were so devastating that the notion of a 'nuclear threshold' became fundamental in projecting the course of a war between the Warsaw Pact and NATO. It was conceivable that conventional operations could be conducted below this threshold and, indeed, above it.

The Evolution of NATO

Balancing Nuclear and Conventional Capabilities

A common thread in the evolution of NATO was the quantitative inferiority of its conventional forces compared with those of the Warsaw Pact. The Warsaw Pact always had more conventional forces at its disposal in Europe than NATO. Many of the developments in NATO have been directed at reducing the effects of this imbalance through quantitative and qualitative enhancements. Such efforts have been linked inevitably to the issue of nuclear threshold and the competing influences of developing a credible conventional deterrent but not to the extent that the credibility of the NATO nuclear deterrent was undermined. Too great a conventional capability could have indicated to the Warsaw Pact that NATO was not serious about its nuclear threat.

Beginnings

At the time of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949, the blockade of Berlin was still underway. The twelve states which signed the treaty were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States. The American support for and signature of the treaty was a means of reassuring Europeans that the United States would be involved at the start of any new war, rather than, as in the previous two wars, delaying for several years before coming to the aid of the European democracies. The first task for NATO was to build up an adequate system of allied defence, and consultation between the allies was concerned largely with defence matters or subjects with military implications. The political role of the Alliance was to become more significant later. In 1949, the twelve founder members had fewer than 20 divisions, 20 airfields and 1000 aircraft. Maritime power was poor and there was no integrated system of command, control, communications and intelligence.

NATO Command Structure

During the period 1950 to 1952, the three NATO commands — which were to form the basic military structure of the Alliance for the duration of the Cold War — were established. Allied Command Europe (ACE) covered the area extending from the North Cape to the Mediterranean, and from the Atlantic to the eastern border of Turkey, excluding the United Kingdom and Portugal. The Atlantic Command extended from the North Pole to the Tropic of Cancer, and from the coastal waters of North America to those of Europe and Africa, except for the English Channel and the British Isles. The Channel Command covered the English Channel and the southern areas of the North Sea. The primary task of the Allied Commander Atlantic was to ensure the security of the Atlantic by guarding sea lanes and denying their use to maritime forces of the Warsaw Pact. The task of Channel Command was to control and protect shipping in its area of responsibility. The bulk of the responsibility, though, for the conventional defence of Western Europe against Warsaw Pact aggression fell to ACE and its commander — Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR). It is he who was charged with responsibility for the development of NATO defence plans and the operational control of all land, sea and air forces in Europe.
Europe (SHAPE) — SACEUR exercised command over five subordinate elements: Allied Forces Northern Europe, Allied Forces Central Europe, Allied Forces Southern Europe, the UK Air Defence Region and the ACE Mobile Force.

Allied Forces Central Europe

In terms of the conventional threat posed by the Warsaw Pact, it was Allied Forces Central Europe that was of most importance to NATO. This command comprised the Northern Army Group, the Central Army Group, Allied Air Forces Central Europe, 2nd Allied Tactical Air Force and 4th Allied Tactical Air Force. It was these elements, and specifically Northern Army Group (NORTHAG) and Central Army Group (CENTAG), that NATO envisaged since its inception would bear the brunt of a conventional Warsaw Pact attack. Within the Forward Defence strategy adopted by NATO at the outset, each of the national contributors of ground forces to the Central Region (both NORTHAG and CENTAG) were allocated a 'slice' of what was to become known as a 'layer cake' defence to the West of the Inner-German Border (IGB). This arrangement was to give effect in the event of war to Article 5 of the Treaty which said that an armed attack against any one or more of them shall be considered an attack against them all. Significantly, though, NATO's forces were never based permanently in these sectors. For political and economic reasons, NATO forces have remained based generally where they were at the end of World War II. This mal-distribution of forces would have had important implications for the ability of NATO to respond to a short warning Warsaw Pact threat and give practical effect to Forward Defence.

NATO Force Structuring in the 1950s

While the basic organisation of the military arm of NATO remained unchanged from inception, subsequent political and strategic developments would have affected the way it would have functioned in war. The Korean War, for example, reinforced perceptions of the Soviet threat and led to the adoption by NATO of a strategy of Forward Defence. But it was clear at the outset that NATO did not have the conventional forces to give effect to Forward Defence against the quantitatively superior Warsaw Pact. During the 1950s, the United States enjoyed a clear advantage over the Soviets in the development of nuclear weapons. Accordingly, it adopted a strategy of 'Massive Retaliation'in which the role of conventional NATO forces was to be that of a 'tripwire' prior to escalation of general nuclear war. NATO planners at the time spoke of the 'shield' of conventional forces and the 'sword' of nuclear retaliation. There were other developments, too, in the 1950s. At the 1952 meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Lisbon, NATO Defence Ministers adopted an optimistic goal of 50 active divisions, 46 reserve divisions, 4000 aircraft and strong naval forces — all to be implemented within two years. Such ambitious plans were never realised. In the same year, Greece and Turkey were admitted to the Alliance. The other key development in the 1950s was the decision to allow Germany to re-arm, and subsequently to join the Alliance in 1955. This decision was to be an important one, for not only did it bolster NATO's conventional forces, but it facilitated the re-development within NATO of a tactical doctrine for which the Soviets had respect and which was to influence their own. It also placed a more specific emphasis on Forward Defence since it was German territory that was threatened in the first instance.

NATO and Flexible Responses

The 1960s saw another major shift in the evolution of NATO. The development by the Soviets of a nuclear capability that could threaten the United States led to the reassessment of the strategy of 'Massive Retaliation'. From the early 1960s, the United States — under the guidance of Defence Secretary McNamara — perceived a need to raise the nuclear threshold and adopted a strategy of 'Flexible Response' to replace that of 'Massive Retaliation'. The European members of NATO were not keen initially to follow suit because they saw it merely as a ploy to protect the United States from nuclear war in the face of enhanced Soviet capability. McNamara tried to sell the idea on the basis that it was indeed possible to develop a conventional defence against the Warsaw Pact since it consisted largely of 'paper' divisions. The thrust of 'Flexible Response' was to raise the nuclear threshold, to enhance NATO conventional capability and to allow a range of possible responses to Soviet
aggression. In the event, NATO formally adopted 'Flexible Response' in 1967 in Strategic Posture Statement MC 14/3. The Alliance thereby enshrined a doctrine of 'Deterrence', 'Forward Defence' and 'Flexible Response'. The higher risk, but lower cost 'tripwire' role for NATO's conventional forces had been replaced by one of 'intermediate capability'. A further development within NATO in the 1960s was the withdrawal of France in 1966 from the military arm of the Alliance. This was to complicate further the maldistribution of NATO troops, force the move of NATO Headquarters from France to Belgium and divert the NATO Lines of Communication from French channel ports to ports in Belgium and Northern Germany.

**Detente and Other Developments**

The political will and economic resources to give practical effect to MC 14/3 never did emerge completely. The late 1960s and early 1970s saw a new focus on 'Detente'. The Soviet Union had achieved nuclear parity with the United States and was beginning to enhance its conventional capability. The Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions and the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks were seen by NATO as useful ways of reducing imbalance in both areas. While the West had always sought to redress the quantitative imbalance through qualitative means, this received renewed emphasis under the 'Schlesinger Doctrine'. It was recognised that the application of technology and innovation to conventional weapons could enhance NATO conventional capability and raise the nuclear threshold. This trend was to continue in the 1980s with the emergence of precision guided munitions and President Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative. A further milestone during this period was the admission in 1982 of Spain to membership of NATO.

**Weaknesses of NATO**

Doubts clearly remain over whether NATO ever could have given practical effect to its doctrine of 'Forward Defence' and 'Flexible Response'. It is doubtful that it ever did manage to redress the conventional imbalance to a point where it could have posed a credible conventional deterrent and raised the nuclear threshold. It is unlikely that NATO could have responded purely conventionally to a Soviet 'Blitzkrieg' advance in a short warning scenario with any success. The reason for this is that it simply did not have sufficient troops deployed forward, because of maldistribution and heavy reliance on reinforcement. Effective defence would have depended on complex, vulnerable and time-consuming concentration. It would also have been extremely difficult for NATO to achieve coordination of strategy within the democratic membership of its Alliance. Furthermore, compared to the Warsaw Pact, it suffered from the disadvantages of geography and initiative. NATO's ports, airfields, and logistics were extremely vulnerable. It had a huge overhead, massive logistic tail, illogical deployment of national forces, duplication of weapon systems and vulnerable communications. Below Corps level in NATO there was no specific 'ACE' doctrine — only a collection of national doctrines dictated by national traditions, experiences and preferences. Despite substantial attempts during the 1980s to remedy some of these deficiencies through increased emphasis on integration and standardisation, such measures appeared to have limited success.

**Conclusion**

It is a truism that in peacetime the military have the role of preventing conflicts and in war of winning them. While the Cold War and its ideological confrontation can hardly be described as 'peaceful', the substantial forces aligned on either side of the IGB never did come into conflict. The Western aim of containing communism was achieved resoundingly. Clearly, the strategic nuclear balance played the major part in this success — success that not only prevented war, but also resulted in substantial dismantling of the opposing forces. But NATO, too, can claim credit for this success. Despite its weaknesses — and these are weaknesses that most alliances tend to suffer — it did provide a substantial deterrent to Soviet expansionism. Indeed, it is arguable that it has been one of the most successful alliances in history. It also provided both the basis and testing ground for the current high technology weapon systems, force structures and tactical doctrines of NATO members and other nations in the Western World. It is equally true, though, that NATO is an alliance formed for a specific purpose,
and that purpose has now been fulfilled. Force structures and doctrines developed by NATO were developed for quite specific scenarios. How appropriate they are and how successfully they can be applied to a range of other contingencies that may now emerge in the new era of international politics is yet to be seen. Military planners in NATO and other Western countries whose force structures and doctrines have been shaped by the requirements of a conventional war in Western Europe are now understandably devoting considerable effort to the complex problem of deciding what to discard and what to retain.

NOTES

Some General Aspects of Survival, Disaster and Human Factors

By M.J. McCracken, Department of Defence

Introduction

In an article in the Canberra Times entitled 'Crews need an overhaul, owners say', Trygve Meyer, director of the International Association of Independent Tanker Owners (Intertanko), was reported as saying, 'About 85% of tanker accidents are caused by human error, 15% by technical failure ... debate about the design of tankers distracts from the real causes ... it doesn't matter what kind of ship you have if the man on the bridge is drunk'.

In response, Edvin Ramsvik, head of the Norwegian seaman's union stated, '... some of these tankers are too old and badly maintained ... it's the same as an old car, if you don't do enough to maintain it, there's more danger of an accident or an explosion'.

Training and Personnel

In the wake of the latest round of ecological disasters such as the Kharg-5 spill (500,000 barrels of oil) and the Valdez grounding (250,000 barrels), such statements take on added relevance in that neither of the above commentators appears willing or able to come out from behind their respective entrenchments and voice the view shared by many sealers of my acquaintance, namely, that whilst there is no substitute for good training and quality personnel, in many instances, design of plant, working environment, management structures, etc. are in no way conducive to the safe and efficient operation of plant/apparatus by humans. It can be readily demonstrated that potential accidents and disasters are often averted despite such factors, rather than because of them.

Such a lack of efficiency can be directly defined in terms of resource wastage and, in the event of armed conflict, could result in serious repercussions for non-aggressive, medium power countries such as Australia, with a disproportionately small population relative to those of its neighbours, in that it could well find itself heavily outnumbered in terms of both plant and personnel. In such a scenario, the ability to extract maximum efficiency from limited resources would, by definition, become an essential component of survival and it is the purpose of this short article to outline in a general way, some aspects of the argument for moving away from the inefficiencies generated by the blinkered concept of man or machine/system and towards an integrated man and machine/system approach, by focusing on technological advances (and some of our attitudes to them) which have changed the world in which we live to such an extent, that we ignore such debate at our peril.

Today's Technology

If the technology of the Industrial Revolution malfunctioned, such as a spinning mill's steam boiler exploding, the repercussions would essentially be limited to the immediate vicinity. Compare that to a malfunction in today's technology, such as the Chernobyl nuclear power plant incident in May 1986, where quite literally, an entire continent was affected (and will be for perhaps generations to come). The exact causes of Chernobyl may never be fully known but it is entirely possible that the initial malfunction which triggered the chain of events leading to the explosion, could well have been a relatively minor fault such as, for example, an incorrectly overhauled cooling valve (if such a proposition sounds exaggerated, it should be remembered that a major blow-out disaster on a North Sea oil rig was caused by an incorrectly installed safety valve).

The fact that the initial malfunction was not detected/corrected, has led Lapidus, in drawing comparisons between Chernobyl and the shooting down of a Korean passenger airliner, to state, 'Both crises had their origins in technological and organisational shortcomings compounded by human error'. Having had many years experience of working with Soviet design and technology (albeit it
in a marine environment) such conclusions come as no surprise, although after viewing photographs taken of control consoles in the Three Mile Island nuclear complex in the USA — a plant which has had its own share of controversy — it is clear that such shortcomings are not confined to within the borders of the USSR, with the overall ergonomic condition of the consoles being akin to what one may have expected to find on a badly maintained tramp steamer.

### The Human Factor

The cause of many such incidents can be attributed either directly or indirectly to the human factor being relatively ignored at every level (design, manufacture, commissioning, operational, managerial) and is only brought into play during the aftermath of an accident, where the human involvement is often portrayed as though it had occurred in a vacuum and where the purpose of the inquiry often amounts to little more than a scapegoat finding exercise with much rhetoric but little effective action being taken, other than a legislation driven tightening of procedures which serves to tinker with the symptoms of the problem rather than addressing the root cause.

For example, the British inquiry into the *Herald of Free Enterprise* Cross Channel Ferry Disaster in March 1987, revealed that the owners had virtually washed their hands of the affair (an attitude which, it should be said, met with official censure) claiming that the blame lay totally with certain members of the crew in allowing the vehicle deck doors to remain open whilst the vessel was underway. That certain members of the ship's crew were culpable is now clear, however, questions need to be asked as to whether the design of the vessel was adequate to ensure safe compliance with the commercial and organisational pressures put upon it and its crew.

Leaving aside the obvious dangers of the free surface effect on vast expanses of undivided deck and the fact that repeated requests to fit bow door indicator lights on the bridge were ignored, every Ro-Ro officer of my acquaintance has spoken of the operational necessity of opening vehicle deck doors whilst underway, mainly to clear exhaust fumes, otherwise the vessel would fall behind schedule due to increased turnaround time. If a captain failed to maintain schedules he would be fired and replaced with a captain who could.

As the enquiry closed, Ro-Ro's were still operating in such a manner. British trade unions were waging a bitter and emotional industrial battle (which they lost) over the safety implications of P & O's streamlined manning arrangements on Cross Channel ferries and 'Super' Ro-Ro's of two to three times the size of the *Herald of Free Enterprise* were under construction to a largely similar design.

The 1988 shooting down by the 'state of the art' USS *Vincennes* of an Iranian civilian airliner in the Arabian Gulf — almost certainly, because of a breakdown in man/system interface — serves to highlight a number of important ergonomic phenomena. The vessel's electronics apparently could not distinguish as to whether or not the approaching aircraft was an Airbus or an F-14 fighter due, as has been authoritatively suggested, to a combination of over-sophistication on the part of the vessel's Aegis system and its lack of suitability for use in the busy Gulf region. The human coordinators on board the *Vincennes* would have been faced with a proverbial deluge of information and all of such a high level of sophistication, that it was effectively useless.

This illustrates a form of technological determinism in which technology is pursued almost for its own sake and to the point where considerations such as fitness for purpose and the human decision makers for whom it is ostensibly designed to serve, become almost irrelevant; except when things go wrong!

This incident also illustrates the interplay between what could be described as micro ergonomics and wider social forces (macro ergonomics). No one on board the *Vincennes* physically observed the approaching aircraft as it was too far away. As argued above, the information which Captain Rogers had at his disposal was inconclusive due to failures in the micro ergonomic interface, so why then did he open fire? Accepting the obvious fact that he felt that his vessel was under threat, it is certain that key elements in the decision was his immersion in the powder keg atmosphere existing between the USA and Iran at that time (in Bandar Abbas, as I can personally vouch, it was fever pitch almost to the point of irrationality) coupled with the knowledge that the Captain of the ill-fated USS *Stark* was forced to retire for failing to protect his ship in a potentially similar earlier incident.

The power of such forces is well documented and whereas it is not the place of this article to deal with them, it is important to stress that such phenomena are no mere flights of academic fancy as so often portrayed by non-social scientists, but exist at the
very forefront of technology, as demonstrated by the \textit{Vincennes} incident and can have the most profound implications for every aspect of human activity.

For example, the Managing Director of NAB, Nobby Clark, stated (in an evening radio discussion, 9 May 1990) that ‘everyone went a little mad’ — referring to the overwhelmingly powerful influence that peer group pressure and the culture of excess which existed in the economic climate of the late 1980s had, on even erstwhile highly conservative financial institutions and their attitude to debt financing, to the detriment of every man, woman and child in Australia.

From an engineering and manufacturing perspective, anyone with more than a scant knowledge of the history of the Ford Motor Company will be aware of the decisive role societal factors played in the shaping of that company’s evolution; an evolution which fundamentally changed the face of manufacturing and altered forever mankind’s perception of work and recreation.

Further, no thoughtful seafarer needs to be reminded of the enormous power such forces can exert upon individuals and groups within the enclosed confines of a ship, with one recent example being the gun-turret explosion in 1989 onboard the \textit{USS Iowa} in which 47 personnel were killed. The causes of this incident remains a source of heated controversy, but the weight of evidence seems to firmly indicate that yet again, a breakdown in the man/system interface was a major contributor to the accident. Indeed, so many accidents of a somewhat similar type occurred throughout the US fleet during 1989, that in November, an unprecedented three day halt was called of routine sea operations. When it is considered that many of these vessels would almost certainly have had nuclear capability, such a situation can only be viewed with concern.

\section*{Conclusion}

To conclude, this article has merely touched in the most general of ways on some aspects of man/machine/system interfaces and has adopted for illustrative purposes, a broad definition (some would argue too broad) of ergonomics. The potential subject area is vast and can range from the designing of relatively simple appliances such as hand tools to interface considerations of the highest complexity between humans and systems, be they artificial and/or social in origin. Much is readily accessible at very low cost (finding personnel with the requisite multidisciplinary education, i.e. technology/engineering/social sciences coupled with real life experience across a broad range of areas, has been found to be a more serious problem) and has direct, quantifiable implications for efficiency, in many aspects of design, production, training and management. It functions at every level of technology yet has long been seen by many of the technical disciplines as being at best, fanciful and at worst, irrelevant. Many organisations worldwide, however, more noted for their hard-nosed corporate styles than for progressive thinking, are now being forced to take account of such factors through the adoption of, for example, quality circle philosophies and methods, as they attempt to remain in touch with an ever-increasing number of Asian competitors. Advances in such disciplines as the computer sciences is gradually laying to rest the charge of irrelevancy, as can be demonstrated with reference to such incidents as the shooting down of the Korean and Iranian passenger airliners.

Australia’s geopolitical cultural position, large land mass and small population makes it important that every avenue be explored in investigating ways of maximising the efficiency of what is a relatively small defence force. Research into, and where appropriate, adoption of, various aspects of human factors is one such avenue and whereas we may choose to either agree or disagree with certain of the issues raised from any study or debate of this area, what is certain is that we can not afford to ignore it — no potential enemy will.

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Jihad — Its Role in the First One Hundred Years of Islam

By Captain D.K. Connery, RAA

A Misunderstood Concept

The spread of Islam since its revelation in 610 AD has been attributed to many causes. The most outstanding of these, and also the least understood, is Jihad. Jihad is a force that has driven individuals to great achievements, given armies an advantageous cohesion and sense of purpose, and given leaders the courage to send troops off on campaigns of conquest into far-off lands. During the first one hundred years of Islamic history, Muslim armies marched relentlessly forward, using Jihad to make conditions more suitable for the acceptance of Islam.

Jihad is one of the most misinterpreted tenets of Islamic faith. Its true meaning has become blurred by its misuse and universal fear of 'holy war'. The modern, western understanding of Jihad is not unbiased enough to accept the other levels of this idea and see how Muslims apply it to their everyday lives. Nor has it been able to accept that the struggle for the widespread acceptance of the Islamic religion has been a peaceful one. All that Westerners acknowledge is the violent Islamic State, one spread by the sword.

Jihad is an Arabic word meaning 'striving', which is taken to mean 'striving in the way of God'. Ali, the English translator of the Qur'an, further explains that 'Jihad is hard striving, in war and peace, in the cause of Allah'. This allows us to examine Jihad on various levels and to get behind the rhetoric of 'holy war'. Al-Banna, a prominent Muslim scholar, divides Jihad into degrees relating to effort and direction of this striving. He describes the struggle within a believer to accept and submit to Allah as the weakest but first form of Jihad. The next levels relate to passive forms of spreading the message — the pen, mouth or deed — up to the more dangerous act of 'speaking a word of truth to a tyrannical leader'. He places the last form of Jihad, that of fighting for Allah, above the others.

The Muslim Concept of Jihad

Jihad bin Saif (striving through sword) is not a stand alone formula, for it is realised that peoples can never sincerely accept Islam through coercion. Fighting is aimed at creating conditions that will allow peoples to see the merit and value of Islam, which can only be achieved when the 'tyranny' of the old order is abolished. Jihad is not a tool of oppression, but is fought to free people to serve Allah. This freedom then allows preaching and persuasion to work upon the 'liberated' peoples and establish the Islamic shirah (law).

The importance of Allah in Jihad cannot be overstated. The Qur'an says to fight only for Allah as he can detect impure motives (2:224). It is not a fight for wealth or riches, but a fight to 'secure Allah's pleasures'. The motivation of other goals, including glory during lifetime, money, or power, means that the fighter is actually fighting for Satan (4:76). Within Jihad there is a strong spirit of sacrifice, and a belief that a person will achieve paradise if he lays down his life for Allah.

The aim of Jihad is to establish Allah's will. His will, according to Qutb, is to 'remove those political and material powers which stand between the people and Islam'. In order to further explain the reasons for Jihad Qutb states that it also aims to establish god's authority on earth, to arrange human affairs according to the true guidance provided by god, to abolish all satanic forces and satanic systems of life, and to end the lordship of man over man. These aims attempt to give credence to the diverse nature of struggles that have been called Jihad, and exposes a reality of Islamic politics today — that the true meaning of Jihad is often distorted for the purposes of propaganda and political advantage.

Jihad is an obligation for all Muslims, a duty imposed by Allah 'from which there is neither evasion nor escape'. However, the obligation for one to assist and the role one is required to take is dependent upon certain criteria. In some circumstances the obligation can be borne by the
community as a whole rather than by individuals. For example, when the Imam sends troops to Dar-al-Harb (the War Territory, land of unbelievers) to spread Islam, it is the responsibility of the community to provide troops and materiel, not for every individual to participate in the campaign. Jihad is also a communal obligation if the unbelievers declare war on Islam, but stay in their own territory. It becomes the responsibility of every individual when Dar-al-Islam is attacked, when the communal obligation is not fulfilled, or if the Imam orders. Individuals can also take the responsibility if they vow to participate and once they are committed to the front line. If one is obliged to participate in Jihad, it is unlawful for someone to stop you.

The obligation can be met in a number of ways aside from involvement in combat. Women should participate in Jihad by performance of the Hajj. So that not all people are at the front, Jihad can be performed by directly contributing funds or supplies to assist the fight. Likewise, not all are required to participate. The Qur'an specifically excuses the blind, lame and sick. Those who are the main breadwinner for their families are similarly exempted from Jihad in the Hadith. Despite not fighting, Muhammad decreed that these people should also be able to share in the rewards of Jihad. Those without an excuse will not escape punishment.

War in the cause of Islam was the last stage of a practical progression given to Muhammad. He was first allowed only to preach to those Meccans whom would listen. Once his followers grew and the leading tribes began to persecute Muhammad, Islam was forced first underground, and then to migrate to Medina. The invitation to Medina allowed Muhammad to prove the worth of Islam and provide a practical example of its power. However, the new society had trouble absorbing the poor followers of Muhammad — money was necessary for survival.

It is here that the essential difference of the role of Jihad between the Islamic and western scholar arises. The Muslim easily explains the use of Jihad in terms of the holy mission given to Muhammad. It was his duty to stamp out the unbelievers and fight until Allah’s way was dominant — any motive other than this is dismissed because he would not have been fighting for Allah. The first Jihad, the planned attack on the caravan and subsequent battle with the Meccan army at Badr was aimed not at the conversion of the traders, but at pillaging their caravan — a purely economic motive. It was significant to Muslims not only for the great feat of arms in the defeat of the much larger Meccan army, but for its demonstration of the power of Allah and the value of faith. The battle became an inspirational passage in the Qur’an (8:42-42). Hitti points to this battle as a foundation of Islamic power and shows how Jihad was able to raise the credibility of Islam.

Western Interpretation

Western scholars tend to view the need for fighting differently. The attack has led others to see Jihad as having less than pure motives. Bouquet accuses Muhammad of creating ideology to conform with the needs of the day, claiming that Jihad was born out of the need to use force to compel the remainder of Arabs to submit. The need to feed the large numbers of immigrants to Medina is also quoted as a reason for the continuance of the raids that were a valued tradition in pre-Islamic Arabia. The razzia (raid) has been given the status of a national pastime, by some western authors. It had involved a swift ambush of a particular target (usually a caravan or a small village) by superior numbers so to force the victims to flee rather than fight and abandon their goods and animals (and sometimes, their women). In addition, it is thought that these raids were necessary as an outlet for the energy and aggression of Arab men and implies that Muhammad adopted this element of Arabian culture for his own purposes.

The Practical Application of Jihad

Further clashes with the Meccans, including the Battle of the Trench and al-Hudaybiyah helped cement the position of Islam and opened the door for Muhammad’s return to Mecca. Having achieved this most important objective, the razzias continued and carried Islam further afield. This spread was assisted by the treaty and alliance system that Muhammad had created, where tribes accepted Islam in return for peace with the Muslims. Prevented from attacking friends under Islamic law, the raiders had moved as far north as Syria in search of booty before the Prophet’s death in 632 AD.

The ineffectiveness of insincere conversion was demonstrated after the Prophet’s death. Many of the tribes were reluctant to pay tribute to another leader, and began to break away from Islam. This fracturing forced the first Caliph, Abu Bakr, to devote most of his short reign to the Riddah (Succession) Wars. Again the banner of Jihad was unfurled, and resulted in the submission of the majority of Arabia by the end of Abu Bakr’s caliphate. Again it is easy to see how scholars could
draw vastly different conclusions about the role of Jihad.

The invasion and conversion of Syria, Egypt and Persia soon began in earnest. From their haven in Arabia the well organised and religiously-motivated Muslims began a series of conquests that was to extend as far as Spain and the western parts of modern India, into the Sahara and up to the gates of Constantinople over a period of 100 years. Muslims point to the sincerity of the Jihad, demonstrating that it followed the pattern defined by Allah. It was not a conversion by the sword — only rulers and their armies were engaged in battle, so to remove the tyranny and oppression that was preventing people from coming to Allah. Those who did not submit were forced to pay a tax (which was often lower than that exacted by their previous masters). If the conquered were 'People of the Book' (ie, possessing a scripture equivalent to the Qur'an) they were treated most fairly, in accordance with Islamic doctrine. They faced the Jihad of preaching and persuasion which was often successful. Those polytheists that did not convert were usually killed, again in line with the Qur'an (9:5). That Islam was adopted as a faith so easily could well be ascribed to the fairness and civility in which its proponents acted.

Other scholars put forward economic and social explanations for the spread of Islam. Hitti points to the relative weakness of those empires that were being dismantled by the Muslims. The Byzantines and Sasanids had neglected their frontier provinces, imposed heavy taxation, and oppressed different religious groups to the detriment of their position as rulers. The common ethnic background of the Syrians and Arabs made Islam easier to accept, and created a common cause with some tribes. Economic forces also worked to the Muslims advantage. The lower rate of the Muslim Zakat (Alms, tax) was a positive incentive to make peace rather than die for an unpopular Roman ruler. Also, there may have been a need, caused by population pressures and a desire to raid which pushed Islam outside the peninsula. Some point to the call by Abu-Bakr's promise of booty for those who came to the 'Holy War' in Syria as a demonstration of the economic incentives for assisting Allah. The riches of the civilisation of the fertile crescent also provided a strong motivator to those from a barren land.

The progression of the conquest was also less than methodical. The usual pattern was for raiding parties to strike out into the new territories, aiming to secure booty rather than hold ground. Success would then be followed up by an organised campaign. Success was not always reliant upon Allah's intervention at the critical moment. Islam possessed some technological advantages over their adversaries (such as the use of fire in naval campaigns) which were gleaned from their observation of many cultures. The willingness to accept new ideas, and incorporate them into Muslim life gave early Islam a decided advantage over many cultures of the time.

Conclusion

Jihad is not, contrary to popular western belief, solely equivalent to 'Holy War'. It has a special place within Islam and should be understood as having three dimensions — the struggle within oneself, a passive or non-violent face that is the real focus of bringing converts to Islam, and the violent struggle that is deemed necessary to remove the existing challenge to the creation or continuation of Allah's society. A call for Jihad does not mean that every Muslim in the world is going to leave his home and take up the struggle against the unbeliever — another method of service may be more appropriate. A Muslim's obligation to perform Jihad can be determined by reference to the Qur'an and Hadith.

It would be an impossible task to fairly say which explanation — the Islamic or the Western — was closest to being able to best define the role of Islam in the first one hundred years after the death of Muhammad. Ling gets the closest when he describes the answer as 'somewhere in between' that the motivation of the Islamic leader will be determined by his individual belief. Only the Caliph, or the leader who made the decision to fight and so expand Islam would really know what motivated him to go forward. He may have been a devoted Muslim who feared punishment for using violence to gain riches. Or he may have been a pragmatist who saw the need and ability for Islam to grow, and conquest as the best method of achieving this. It is also hard to say whether the individual soldiers who went into battle for Allah were 'correctly' motivated, or fighting for a part of the booty often promised. What cannot be doubted is that Jihad had two roles in the spread. Firstly, Jihad in the sense of fighting for Allah was used to destroy the old regimes and establish the Islamic state. It provided the bridge between the religious teachings and the needs of contemporary politics. The next form of Jihad, persuasion and preaching, then took over in order to convince the peoples of the newly acquired lands to submit to Allah.
NOTES

7. Qutbm, *op cit*.
11. According to some schools of thought, if enough resources are sent to defeat the incursion it can remain a communal obligation. This allows conflicts like border wars to be settled without the whole of Islam becoming involved.
25. Ling, *op cit* p.221.

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Recollections of Cross Channel Duels, Rockets, Pluto, Mulberry and Funny Tanks, 1944-45 (Part 2)

By John P. Buckley, OBE, ED, (RL).

Operations of the 79th Armoured Division August 1944/May 1945

Following the breakout it took only a month or so for the Allies to clear most of France and Belgium, although the Germans wisely left strong garrisons in all of the coastal ports to prevent their use for handling the huge quantities of supplies required to keep the momentum of the Allied drive into Germany. None of the ports were given up without a fierce and bloody battle. In fact Dunkirk held on until the end of the war and it took about two months to clear the entrance to Antwerp.

In the narrative which follows I will be mainly describing the deeds of the 79th Armoured Division in action together with the other formations with which it was associated. For this reason, the Americans will get little mention except where regiments of the 79th co-operated with them in battle.

Until some of the large Normandy ports were captured the headlong thrust into Germany had to be slowed down because of the increased length of the supply line and the stiffening resistance as the Germans neared their homeland. Also it was expected that the autumn and winter gales would reduce the capacity of the Mulberry.

It was important therefore that the Americans capture Brest and the British and Canadian Armies capture Le Havre, Boulogne and Calais. Later it was vital to clear the approaches to Antwerp because from that port supplies would be needed to hit at the industrial heart of Germany — the Ruhr and Baltic ports. The llth British Armoured Division had covered itself with glory in capturing the Antwerp docks in three days after crossing the Seine. Unfortunately, strong German resistance prevented them from capturing the entrances on the Atlantic coast.

The port of Brest was expected to be a hard nut to crack because it was a most important submarine base and heavily defended port. Also it had extensive dockyard and unloading facilities. The garrison had been ordered to fight to the last man.

Action at Brest, 14 September 1944

Generals Bradley and Simpson (IX US Army) requested that Crocodile flame throwers be made available to spearhead the attack on the strong defences which were protected by extensive mine fields and concrete gun emplacements. The Crocodiles performed with great success but many were knocked out in the battle. It was usual for the ‘Crocs’ to move forward supported by direct fire from tanks and guns. Flame was then shot at the concrete casemates. As a result of the action at Brest many members of the 141 RAC regiment were decorated.

This was the first time the ‘funnies’ of the 79th were called on to fight in support of the Americans. The squadron of the 141 RAC were transported over 400 miles to take part in the action. General Simpson was most impressed with the Crocodiles and the other special armour and never hesitated to call for assistance where necessary.

Action at Le Havre

The 1st British Corps (General Crocker) was given the responsibility to capture Le Havre which was well known for its importance for defending the Normandy coastline. It was also a strong base for submarines and motor torpedo boats. Its long range guns had been used for ‘shooting up’ the invasion beach.

General Crocker decided to use the 49th and 51st British Divisions plus 2 tank brigades together with strong support from the 79th Armoured Division. The order of battle was roughly as follows:-
49th Division

56th Brigade — A, B and C (less one Tp) Squadrons, 22 Dragoons — Crabs; A squadron 141 RAC — Crocodiles; 222 Assault Squadron RE (less No 2 Tp) and 617 Assault Squadron RE — AVREs.

146th Brigade — C Squadron 22 Dragoons (less one Tp) — Crabs and No 2 Troop 222 Assault Squadron RE — AVREs.

51st Division

152nd Brigade — B Squadron 1 Lothians & Border Yeomanry — Crabs; C Squadron 141 RAC — Crocodiles and 16 Assault Squadron RE — AVREs.

153rd Brigade — C Squadron 1 Lothians & Border Yeomanry — Crabs and 284 Assault Squadron RE AVREs.

Several hundred heavy bombers were also used to soften up the fortress. Brigadier Duncan had charge of the 79th ‘funnies’ which were all used with success. The flails, bridge and fascine layers, flame throwers and armoured personnel carriers were used in every stage of the battle.

Faced with armoured assault tanks, some of the surprised Germans surrendered at the sight of the terrifying equipment, especially the flame throwers.

The battle lasted about 2 days. 12,000 Germans surrendered. About 50 British were killed. So much for the success of the ‘funnies’.

Churchill, Alan Brooke, Montgomery and Hobart could be proud of their faith in the new armoured assault tanks and their tactical success in operations. However, there was a price to pay because many tanks were destroyed in coping with extensive minefields, obstacles including the deep earthenworks, concrete tank traps and demolitions.

The Capture of Boulogne

Boulogne was very strongly fortified and as usual with all German defences, minefields were everywhere. In some instances even 300 lb naval shells were used as mines on roadways leading to the inner defences. They also used very large quantities of wire and anti-parachute devices. Covering most approaches were elaborate concrete forts and deep anti-tank ditches.

The initial attack was mounted by the 3rd Canadian Division with 8th and 9th Brigades. It was not an immediate success. Then, three columns of assault special tanks were used each consisting of Crabs (flails), Crocodiles, AVREs and infantry in armoured carriers (Kangaroos). Normal gun tanks were also included. Each column was commanded by a lieutenant colonel from the 79th Armoured Division.

Hobart spoke to the members of the Columns before their dash at the enemy. He always enjoyed talking to the troops and some of his jokes quickly spread through the division and beyond. A book could be written about his stories.

In the battle, Crabs had plenty of work to do and many were knocked out by anti-tank guns. Several were blown up by well placed mines. Fascines were used to cross narrow streams and several Small Box Girder bridges were also used. Other AVREs were busy ‘petarding’ concrete block houses. Crocodiles were very active and some were destroyed by accurate gun fire. A Crocodile on fire was a sight to behold.

Progress towards the centre of the city was made more difficult when the Germans destroyed all of the bridges. The battle for Boulogne developed into a desperate and bloody struggle. The Germans held on to their honeycombed concrete emplacements with great determination but had no counter to those petards, Crocodiles and gun tanks.

It took the 3rd Division plus many special assault tanks four days before the Germans produced the white flag. Many of the special assault tanks were destroyed and many needed extensive repair to get them into action again but another important coastal fortress had been captured.

The 3rd Division and the 79th Armoured Division learned many lessons from the attack on Boulogne. This enabled them to adopt a firm method of attack for future engagements. The next battle for Cape Gris Nez and Calais was to be equally difficult. The Germans knew the psychological value of being able to shell Dover. They were determined to put up a strong fight.

Battle for Calais and Cape Gris Nez

Later in this story I shall give more detail of the shelling of Dover from Cape Gris Nez. The Canadians were very keen to destroy the large
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In the 1990s the Royal Australian Air Force faces major changes and challenges arising from the need to maintain and enhance its operational capabilities with fewer resources. Air Power may have been accorded a pre-eminent role in the defence of Australia due to geostrategic circumstances, but the RAAF has to learn to do more with less. By working smarter, not harder, it should still be possible to retain a qualitative edge.

But other countries — Australia's natural partners in preserving the security of the Asia-Pacific region — are confronted with the same challenge. While Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia all have advanced aerospace systems in their defence acquisition programs, they also face significant budgetary pressures. So what are the prospects for regional co-operation in air power?

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coastal guns which they knew had attacked the 'White Cliffs' for years. The attack was to use the three Brigades of the 3rd Division.

In support were five squadrons of Flails (22 Dragoons and Lothians and Border Yeomanry); Crocodiles (141 RAC Regiment) and AVREs (about one regiment RE).

As was to be expected, these prize coastal guns of the Germans were well sited and protected from attack from every direction. All of the special tanks were required at some stage or other in the attack. Even 'snakes' (congers) were used.

The obstacles included streams, cratered steep slopes and every road seemed to be mined, as were the fields. Later when I inspected the gun position, the roads and fields were covered with brewed up tanks and vehicles. I was glad to get away from the gun positions. The Germans were masters at setting minefields. They had to be blasted out of the casemates with petards, flame throwers and beehive mines.

Calais fell on 30th September. The coast of France was clear from Brest to Calais and the English Channel was now open. The submarine pens, the motor torpedo boats anchorages and the gun fire from Cape Gris Nez were no longer a danger to the Allies particularly Great Britain.

Without the 79th Armoured Division the land assault on the channel ports would have been a long and exhausting fight. Furthermore, the casualties would have been significant.

During September, the 79th Division had the following tank casualties: 8 Crabs, 7 Crocodiles, 25 AVREs and 3 LVTs. Needless to say many more were severely damaged but were repaired by the ever efficient REME soldiers and lived to fight another day.

It was a fine gesture by the Lothians and Border Yeomanry to send the German flag from Cape Gris Nez to the Mayor of Dover. After all, the citizens of that city had to put up with the shell fire from the enemy for over four years.

The Canadian Army had played a vital role in clearing many of the channel ports.

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Opening the Entrance to Antwerp

Antwerp was one of the most important ports in North-West Europe and it was necessary to have the use of its docks to keep the rapidly advancing Armies supplied with the heavy tonnages of warlike stores and equipment.

Although the city and the docks had been captured on 5 September by the 11th Armoured Division in a brilliant dash from Normandy (GOC Major General 'Pip' Roberts aged 37, the youngest general in the Army) the approaches to the harbour through the estuary of the Scheldt were still held by the Germans and they were determined to keep them.

Hitler had instructed the defenders to hold on and fight to the death to deny the Allied Armies the use of the Antwerp docks which were about 70 miles upstream from the key German defences at the opening of the estuary.

The 'Buffalo' (tracked amphibian) was to be used extensively in these operations. Five squadrons of Assault RE had been equipped with the Buffalos for use in future amphibious operations for major river crossings into Germany. 5 Regiment Assault RE had over 100 Buffalos. 40 DUKWs were also available.

The 3rd Canadian Division together with the strong support of the 79th Armoured Division Assault REs commenced operations on 8th October 1944.

Soon AVREs, Crocodiles and Crabs were used in the action at Breskens which was taken on 22nd October. It was hard going for the Canadian Army as the Germans held on with grim determination. Without the performance of the 'funnies' casualties would have been heavier.

Soon the 52nd Division had to be brought in to help. In support of its 15th Brigade, it had 154 Buffalos and 18 Sherman DD tanks. Later, roughly the same support was given to the 157th Brigade. The battle was soon over, but the last remaining stronghold at Walcheren was yet to be overpowered.

The island was strongly defended by a mixed force of German Navy, Army and Airforce service-men. The commander realised that if Walcheren fell then Antwerp docks would be quickly available to the Allies.

General Simonds, acting GOC 1st Canadian Army, decided to call in the RAF to breach the seaward dykes of the saucer shaped island. The RN and the Commandos were brought in to assist the attack. A heavy naval bombardment and RAF bombing attack softened up the defences. (George Dalton, now at Anzac House, Melbourne was in the attack). The special assault tanks were used extensively and with good effect.

Walcheren was captured on 8th November. It had taken a month to subdue the determined German defenders. Casualties were light, but of the 104 Buffalos used in the last week, 27 were written
off and none of the remainder were mechanically fit. The Buffalo had proved itself as the only vehicle able to be used in sodden ground (under sea level) and still able to swim rivers and relatively flat seas and climb steep banks. Six out of ten flails and six out of eight AVREs were drowned or destroyed.

The RN commenced mine sweeping the Scheldt and cleared Antwerp docks for use by 28th November 1944. This enabled the supply from Antwerp of the British troops for their future operations across the four main rivers (Maas, Rhine, Weser and Elbe).

The tank casualties of the 79th Armoured Division in October and November 1944 were: Crabs 14, Crocodiles 10, AVREs 20 and Buffalos 30. By this time the 79th was always included in any early planning for a battle involving river, canal or estuary crossing.

Operations in December-January 1944-45

Hobart was kept very busy during this period setting up Special Schools for training of Special Assault crews for the difficult river crossings about to commence. The crossing of a large river like the Rhine would pose problems not unlike those on 'D' Day.

At the same time the 'funnies' were being called on to assist in many small scale and medium attacks after Arnhem.

I consider that by now the reader will have some appreciation of the use and the success of the assault tanks of the 79th Armoured Division. On 'D' Day and beyond they had played a key role in overcoming most of the strong German defences. In doing so they had most successfully kept casualties to a minimum. References to the part played by the Division in North-West Europe are very limited in history books — if it is mentioned at all.

In the following pages I do not intend to go into any great detail of the activities of the Division except where some very important battles occur such as the river crossings.

In the middle of winter (16th December 1944), Rundstedt launched his large scale counter offensive through the Ardennes. In doing so, he achieved complete surprise. For a time the situation looked grim. I was attached to the 79th Division HQ at the time.

Montgomery was given command of the Allied Armies including the IX and most of the 1st American to crush the 5th and 6th SS Panzer Armies. Monty's counter measures were effective and outstanding. By the middle of January the Germans were defeated. The 'funnies', except for the APCs, played little part in the 'Bulge'.

However, no time was lost in following up the Germans in order to clear the area between the Maas and the Rhine. In this the 30th British Corps and the IX US Army were to play the major role. The 30th Corps formations had to overcome the main part of the Siegfried Line and part of the Reichwald. For the time the 30th Corps operated under 1st Canadian Army.

The following table sets out the formations taking part and the support provided by the 79th Armoured Division:

- 15th (Scottish) Division — 22 Dragoons; B & C Squadrons 141 RAC; 81 and 284 Assault Squadrons RE; 49 and 1 Canadian Armoured Carrier Regiments.
- 51st (Highland) Division — B Squadron Lothians & Border Yeomanry; A Squadron 1 Fyfe & Forfar Yeomanry; 222 Assault Squadron RE.
- 53rd (Welsh) Division — B & C Squadrons Westminster Dragoons; A Squadron 141 RAC; 82 Assault Squadron RE.
- 2nd Canadian Division — Troop C Squadron 1 Lothians & Border Yeomanry; 617 Assault Squadron RE.
- 3rd Canadian Division — 5 Assault Regiment (less 26 Sqn) & 11 Royal Tanks (less C Sqn), Buffalos; 617 Assault Squadron RE; C Squadron 1 Lothians & Border Yeomanry (less Troop), Buffalos; 617 Assault Squadron RE.

As usual the 'funnies' were the spearhead of the attack in most of the battles. By now the procedures for attacking strong points including dense minefields, anti-tank ditches, steel and concrete obstacles were well known. It was also a prerequisite before any operation that the 79th squadrons practised with the units they were to support. Use was also made of the Canal Defence Light tanks for artificial moonlight which was most successful.

Following a series of strongly contested battles, the Allied formations in early March reached the Rhine. Preparations were being made to cross into the German heart land.

Assault tank casualties for the 79th Armoured Division for December '44, January and February 1945 were: Crabs 40, Crocodiles 15, AVREs 3, Buffalos 15 and Kangaroos 9.

General Miles Dempsey, Commander Second British Army was given the responsibility for crossing the Rhine. Hobart was given the task, with GOC
Second British Army plan for Rhine Crossing.

The Rhine Crossing, March 1945, showing 79th Arm. Div. Units.
12th British Corps (General Ritchie), to work out a suitable technique in which his Buffalos and DD tanks were to play an important role for the crossing. It would be expected that the Germans would fight hard to stop the assault.

### Crossing the Rhine — 23 March 1945

Colonel Drew was appointed to supervise all the trials and training of the crews. At this stage additional tank units were added to the Division. It is no surprise to learn that at this time the 79th Armoured Division was the largest division in the British Army. Its strength was 21,430 all ranks and 1566 tanks.

The strategy was for the Allied Armies to make a massive attack to crush the Rhine defences and penetrate deep into Germany to meet the Russians. (It will be recalled that a small US bridgehead had been established at Remagen).

Generals Ritchie and Hobart decided that they would use the same assault technique as used on 'D' Day, i.e. the 132 DD tanks would swim the Rhine and clear the far bank. Other armour and special devices were then to follow. 400 Buffalos were to ferry infantry across as early as possible. Class 50/60 rafts were built and manned by Assault RE squadrons until floating bridges could be put in place. It was known that the German defences were not reinforced concrete emplacements so there was no need for Crocodiles or Petards in the initial stage.

The attack was to take place on a two corps front (12th and 30th Corps). The allocation of the 79th Armoured Division units was as follows (note the number of raft units):

#### Second Army — 12th Corps — Richie

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Buffalos</th>
<th>Rafts</th>
<th>Crocodiles</th>
<th>Flails</th>
<th>CDL</th>
<th>Assault RE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15th (Scottish) Division</td>
<td>11th Royal Tanks East Riding Yeomanry</td>
<td>16, 222 and 81 Assault Squadrons RE</td>
<td>7th Royal Tanks</td>
<td>Westminster Dragoons</td>
<td>1/2 Squadron 49 APC Regiment</td>
<td>82 Assault Squadron. (Normal tasks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Commando Brigade</td>
<td>Buffalos</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>77th Assault Squadron RE.</td>
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#### 30th Corps

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Buffalos</th>
<th>Rafts</th>
<th>Crocodiles</th>
<th>Flails</th>
<th>CDL</th>
<th>Assault RE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51st (Highland) Division</td>
<td>4th Royal Tanks Northamptonshire Yeomanry</td>
<td>617, 79 and 284 Assault Squadrons RE</td>
<td>C Squadron 141 RAC</td>
<td>B Squadron 22nd Dragoons</td>
<td>1/2 B Squadron 49 APC Regiment</td>
<td>26 Assault Squadron. (Normal tasks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 Division</td>
<td>Crocodiles</td>
<td>B Squadron 141 RAC</td>
<td>Kangaroos</td>
<td>B Squadron Canadian Carrier Regiment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Canadian Division</td>
<td>Crocodiles</td>
<td>C Squadron 1st Fyfe &amp; Forfar Yeomanry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corps Reserve</td>
<td>Crocodiles</td>
<td>A Squadron 141 RAC</td>
<td>Flails</td>
<td>22nd Dragoons (less B Squadron)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 1X US Army — 16th US Corps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buffalos</th>
<th>Crocodiles</th>
<th>Flails</th>
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</thead>
</table>

On 23rd March a heavy bombing attack was unleashed on the German defences and assembly areas. This was followed by a terrifying artillery programme. 1,700 guns were used commencing at 2100 hours. The crossing for the vehicles in the dark and smoke provided some navigation problems, but Rhys-Jones with usual brilliance was able to devise a system which worked. I don't think I have ever encountered a more versatile practical engineer-cum-scientist. He could turn thoughts into working pieces of mechanism in a very short time.

Before the crossing took place Hobart had been honoured by the Americans. General Bradley invested him with Commander of the USA Legion of Merit for his outstanding help to the American formations from 'D' Day onwards. 'Hobo's contribution to the defeat of the German Army was acknowledged by all the people who mattered. I
wonder what Maitland Wilson, Wavell, Gordon-Finlayson and his other detractors thought at this time?

When I congratulated General Hobart on the award my comment was answered with the remark 'It's my soldiers they are honouring and they deserve it all. They have been the spearhead of the major battles and have set a tradition which will go down the years for the glory of the tanks and their crews'. At this stage of his career 'Hobo' could walk with kings and not lose the common touch.

The crossing of the Rhine was proceeding according to plan. The RE ferries were in the forefront with the DDs and Buffalos. The two Corps front was to be assisted by a massive air armada of the 18th Airborne Corps which was successful. 1250 gliders were used plus 550 aircraft for dropping the parachutists.

Following the opening of the attack across the river, the build-up of soldiers, vehicles and stores was rapid. The bridgehead was quickly expanded and forces rapidly followed up the retreating Germans.

On 26th March, B Squadron of the 11th Royal Tanks had the honour of carrying (in a Buffalo) the Prime Minister, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Montgomery, General Sir Miles Dempsey, Lt General Ritchie and 'Hobo'. They made the journey across the Rhine and return.

The story goes that Churchill spent some time talking to the Buffalo crew after the journey. Apparently he had been quite excited going across the famous river. Monty said to the crew 'Why don't you ask him for a cigar?' One was handed over — no doubt it is in the Royal Tank Museum. Hobart's nickname for Churchill was 'The Bulldog'. 'The Bulldog' was obviously proud of the man he brought back from the 'scrapheap'; so also was Field Marshal Alan Brooke. 'Hobo' was now in all his glory.

For the first time, the newspapers and the BBC heard of the 79th Armoured Division and its famous GOC. Thereafter they looked for the Division and gave it appropriate publicity.

In just over two weeks the 2nd British Army was about to capture Bremen on the Weser River. The American 1Xth Army was supported in its rapid advance through the Ruhr by Crabs and Crocodiles.

After the crossing of the Rhine, it was clear that the control and administration of the German forces was starting to falter. Strong pockets of defenders were encountered and these were assailed by flails, AVREs and Crocodiles in support of infantry with excellent results.

During the month of March 1945 Special Assault vehicle casualties were:- 1 Flail, 3 Crocodiles, 26 DD tanks, 13 Buffalos, 7 Kangaroos and 2 CDLs (artificial moonlight).

**Attack on Bremen**

The fortress-like defence of Bremen took some time to conquer. It provided plenty of scope for the AVREs, Crocodiles and Flails which were in great demand. The Flails were also used as gun tanks, and the Petards against the many road blocks and reinforced concrete strong points.

By this time the RE Assault Tank Squadrons had also been trained in Centaur dozers which were to be used most extensively for clearing roads, docks and areas. I distinctly remember the dozers being used for weeks after an engagement to remove rubble to enable passage to the docks.

The defenders of Bremen were almost as fanatical as the Japanese were in New Guinea. The last two strongholds, the dockyards and the town park were subjected to plenty of flame and the whole city was occupied on 28th April, 1945.

In the meantime, 8th Corps had reached the Elbe River and preparations were being made for a swift crossing to prevent the expected hordes of German refugees trying to escape from the Russians into the British Area.

**Crossing the Elbe River, 29th April 1945**

Surprisingly the Elbe was a large river almost as wide as the Rhine with a tall forest area on the far bank. The attack commenced at 0200 hours after a very heavy RAF bombing.

The 15th (Scottish) Division with 1 Commando Brigade were to take the lead in the Buffalos of the 11th RTR. DD tanks were also used in the engagement.

18th American Airborne Corps under Lieutenant General Ridgeway also spearheaded a second crossing point. They were assisted by the Buffalos of 4 RTR.

Artificial moonlight was provided for the British and Americans by the CDL tanks of the 79th Armoured Division. After a short pitched battle on
the bridgehead the 11th Armoured Division broke through to reach the Baltic Sea on 2 May 1945. The war in Europe was drawing to a close.

During April 1945 Assault tank casualties were:- 4 flails, 5 Crocodiles, 6 Buffalos, 2 AVREs and 2 Kangaroos. By VE Day, 79th Tank casualties lost in battle in the 11 months of war reached 380.

## Belsen

Before closing with the last remaining battle for the British Army at Hamburg, I would like to mention that, following the capture on 15th April of the infamous Belsen Concentration Camp by the British, it was the job of the 79th Armoured Division to help bury the dead and destroy the gas chambers, gallows, watch towers and other facilities of this hell on earth. It was a ghastly task for soldiers.

Before its capture, typhus had broken out and 10,000 unburied dead were found. It seems incredible but the Germans never destroyed or used the shoes or boots of the prisoners. A mound of old boots 20 feet high and 150 feet long was conspicuous. Little Anna Frank died there in March 1945 from the deadly typhus.

Belsen was only about 20 miles away from Montgomery's last Tactical HQs at Luneberg Heath. The Tactical HQs of the 79th Armoured Division was 2 miles away from Luneberg.

General Hobart suggested that I might care to visit the remains of Belsen, but I had no desire to see the stark proof of man's inhumanity to man.

## Surrender of Hamburg 2 May 1945

Hamburg was the last of the major cities captured by the British before the German surrender. It had been heavily bombed on numerous occasions. It was a ruined city but the Germans fought with fanatacism until finally the 7th Armoured Division moved in together with APCs of the 79th Division.

By 1800 hours on 4th May surrender terms were signed for the whole of the land, sea and air forces in North-West Germany. The signing took place in a tent at Montgomery's Tactical HQs. This was followed on 6th May 1945 for the total and unconditional surrender of all the German Armed Forces to the Allied Forces of Britain, America and Soviet Russia. The war in Europe was over.

### 79th Armoured Division Officers for Australia

Land Force HQ in Australia had directed me to discuss with the GOC 79th Armoured Division the possibility of obtaining some key officers from the Division for short attachments in the AIF. For this reason I left London shortly after VE day to travel to Luneberg to talk to General Sir Percy Hobart.

I went by road from Brussels via the Ruhr. I was amazed at the destruction of the industrial cities, Duisberg, Krefeld, Dusseldorf, Essen etc. The main damage had been done by air bombing.

On the way I called on a Dutch family at Eindhoven where I had been accommodated whilst serving with the 79th Division HQs. It was usual for some officers to sleep at private homes but meals were taken in the GOC's mess. There were three young children in the family and the parents had trouble getting them to bed until that soldier who came from the country with all the Koala bears and Kangaroos came home. The children were always up early in the morning to see me go to work.

My accommodation was excellent. I had a large upstairs bedroom and a bed with crisp white sheets instead of that well worn sleeping bag. However, my hours with the family were most irregular as I was out with the Regiments most of the time. The family were most kind and considerate — not easy to come by in a country ravaged by war. I shall always remember them.

As I got close to the Ruhr and beyond, most of the road bridges and rail bridges had been destroyed. Some were replaced by the Royal Engineers, but as we got closer to the newly captured towns short of the Elbe, travel was difficult trying to find a crossing place over the many rivers in the area. It was early summer and I was glad to get to Tac HQ of the 79th Armoured Division where I knew the GOC and all of the senior staff.

Sir Percy was always straight to the point. When I told him I was there to seek senior officers for attachment to the Australian Army (earlier he had made Major Dick Baron available with satisfactory results) he said 'Whom do you want?'. I said 'The GSO 1 Joe Lever, the GSO 1 (Tech) Jim Rhys-Jones and three Squadron Commanders (Flails, Crocodiles and AVREs)'.

General Hobart thought for a while, fixed a steely glare at me and said, 'You wouldn't like the whole of the bloody division would you?' Before I could answer, he said 'You could not possibly get two
better officers than Lever and Rhys-Jones. They can select the Squadron Commanders and all can go as soon as I can replace them. 'Hobo' will always be one of my favourite generals.

I wonder how many GOCs would let their two top staff officers go to Australia at this time. The war in Europe was only over 2 or 3 days. Hobart suggested I remain for a week or so to go over the battlefields from the Rhine crossing to the Elbe crossing and the principal cities captured (particularly Bremen and Hamburg). Next morning I set out for Hamburg which was a frightful mess. Dozers were still trying to clear roadways to the submarine pens and production facilities. I saw 10 or more submarines which had been destroyed by bombing during manufacture at the Blohm and Voss plant. The whole dockyard area was almost obliterated. I have never seen a city so wrecked. Even though it had surrendered several days ago, I could still see some ruins still smouldering. For a while I was sorry — then I recalled those dreadful bombing and V bomb attacks on London where the brunt was taken by the women and children.

Much of the population of Hamburg were homeless but they were scrounging for materials to provide shelter. There was an endless procession of displaced persons clogging up every road as they set out to return to France, Poland, Holland and countless other countries. They carried their possessions on bicycles, wheelbarrows and on their backs. I observed later, the same congestion on roads for hundreds of miles in Germany. An endless stream of humanity, civilians and soldiers.

The visit to the 79th Armoured was most successful. Soon Joe Lever, Jim Rhys-Jones and the others would be on their way to Australia, but for me it was a sad occasion because I had so much enjoyed my many attachments to the Division where I was always well treated as a welcome equal. Furthermore, I had learnt so much about modern warfare from the master 'armoured crusader' — a unique man who had done a unique job.

I was touched when I was given a German officer's dirk as a momento of my association with the Division. Recently I decided to present it to Bruce Ruxton, the State President of the RSL in Victoria — it is now mounted on the wall in his office and will be well looked after.

Some readers may possibly think, when reading my recollections of Major General Sir Percy Hobart and his famous 79th Armoured Division, that I have overstated the importance played by the Division in the struggle for Europe. I have set out to give my account of the important battles in which it participated and how it influenced the results of those battles.

However, my opinion is based on personal experience. It was an honour and privilege to see so much of the Division in its preparations for playing the key role in the invasion on the beaches of Normandy, also its subsequent victorious progress across France, Belgium, Holland and Germany.

Let me now quote in full the Foreword to the 'Story of the 79th Armoured Division' written by Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery, C-in-C 21 Army Group. (The book was written by Major John Borthwick (now Sir John Borthwick, Bart.) during June 1945, as a private contribution. 15,000 copies were printed and distributed at John's expense. Only three copies are held in Australia (Sir John Young, Rhys-Jones and Ted Horne, ex-Principal Attendant to the Victorian Premier, a member of 79th Armoured Division 1944-45). (When my copy was stolen, Ted gave me a photocopy of his).

I have been asked to write a foreword to this record of the part played by the 79th Armoured Division in the historic campaign in North-West Europe in 1944-45.

The Division has been, and is, unique among all the divisions in the Allied Armies.

In modern war we have learnt that much highly specialised equipment is necessary in order to compete with the varying conditions of summer and winter, water obstacles, mud, snow and so on: the great essential being to maintain the tempo of the operations, without pauses in which the enemy could recover his balance.

All of this equipment was centralised in the 79 Armoured Divisions; and there the technique of its use in the tactical battle was studied and developed.

The special equipment of the Division was in great demand. Units of the Division took part in every action from the landing in Normandy on 6 June 1944 till we reached the Baltic on 2 May 1945; the Division was employed by me in support of every Army that came under my command; its troops were frequently the only British troops employed in close support of American Armies.

The Division is composed of units and equipment which have no parallel in any other Army in the world, and the skilful use of this equipment enabled us to obtain surprise in the tactical battle.

Throughout, the Division remained directly under my command and its employment was always a matter of personal interest and concern to me.

Success in war has to be planned. The 79
Armoured Division did not grow up in any haphazard manner. It was the result of much careful thought and study, and much hard work, on the part of every officer and man in the Division while the Division was preparing in England for its great task in North-West Europe.

This preliminary work was good and sound. The record of the Division is unique and its contribution to the winning of the campaign in North-West Europe has been incalculable.

For this the Division owes much to its fine commander, Major-General Hobart, whose great enthusiasm and sound judgement forged this weapon: now so well proved in battle.

The Division will live on, but in a different form. The smaller our Army in peace-time the greater the need for a strong and robust organisation devoted to research and experiment; in the British Army the nucleus of this organisation may well be the 79 Armoured Division.

B.L. Montgomery
Field Marshal
Germany C-in-C
July, 1945
21 Army Group

Field Marshal Montgomery’s words say what I was trying to describe in my recollections. Who could gain say what Monty has said? After all, he was never known to be too generous in giving praise unless it was warranted.

Readers may be interested to know that shortly after the end of the war ‘Hobo’ reached age 60. The 79th Armoured Division was disbanded at the end of August 1945.

A nucleus was kept to function as The Specialised Armour Development Establishment (SADE) at Woolbridge in Suffolk. General Hobart was commanding. During his time at SADE he continued with his never ending energy and enthusiasm. He retired on 31 March 1946. He was then the oldest major general in the British Army.

For a time he worked with Sir Miles Thomas, head of the Nuffield Company then he became Lieutenant Governor of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. He enjoyed his talks and work for the famous pensioners.

It gave him great joy to be made a Colonel Commandant of the Royal Tank Regiment. He was also pleased to see some of the officers he had trained become most successful in the Army. Carver became Field Marshal Lord Carver, Jolly and Crocker became full generals, while many others became lieutenant or major generals. The Hobart tradition would live on.

On 16 July 1947, I was invited to accompany the then Chief of the General Staff to farewell Field Marshal Montgomery at Mascot Airport, after his visit to Australia (June/July 1947). During conversation I told the Field Marshal that I had served under Sir Percy Hobart for periods during 1944-45. I requested Viscount Montgomery to pass on my best wishes to Sir Percy. Several weeks later I received a very nice letter from General Hobart. It was our last contact. He died of cancer at Farnham in February 1957. In true ‘Hobo’ form he fought his illness to the end.

On the 46th anniversary of the disbanding of the Division, I salute it and its unique GOC Sir Percy Hobart.

31 August 1991

CROSS CHANNEL COAST ARTILLERY DUELS

British large-scale coastal artillery batteries were mainly centred at Dover and the adjacent areas. The purpose of these batteries was:

(a) To act as a deterrent for the passage of enemy shipping through the English channel;
(b) To deal with any ‘hit and run’ attacks from enemy warships or from an invasion fleet; and
(c) To engage enemy artillery batteries sited on the opposite side of the Channel, namely in the vicinity of Calais. The most important German guns were sited on Cape Gris Nez on the French coast.

On a clear day it was possible with instruments, to see the opposite shore from the Dover Fire Command in Dover Castle and its battery observation posts which were scattered along the white cliffs, some of which were located underground with a view from the face of the cliffs. It was also possible at times to see the flash of projectiles being fired from the opposite shore. It was then an easy matter to calculate the time of flight and the expected time of arrival of the huge shells. It was an anxious period wondering where the shells would land.

I had always been most interested in the installation of the large 9.2 inch coastal gun batteries in Australia, particularly at North Head and Cape Banks in Sydney and at Port Kembla. These were small compared with the 15 inch guns at Dover. When I was posted to London in 1944, I made fairly frequent visits to Dover Fire Command in the hope of seeing a cross Channel duel between the very large guns, some of which were capable of exceeding 25 miles range.
On my visit to Dover in early September 1944, I arrived in the city (accompanied by Major E.M. Price-Holmes, Military Assistant to the Director of Royal Artillery at the War Office, Major General Otto Lund) just in time to hear the alert sound for enemy artillery attack. We hurried to Fire Command HQ and were taken to a Battery Observation Post where we had a dress circle view of the cross channel engagement. Several German shells landed in the civilian area of Dover and caused considerable damage; likewise two shells landed on a 3.2 inch gun battery leaving the guns beyond repair. We saw one shell land on a small ship in the harbour. One minute the ship was there; the next, it was a mass of flying debris, dust and flame. The people of Dover went on with their normal activities whilst the pandemonium continued. True British courage and spirit.

Many of the British shells were falling short into the water on the Cape Gris Nez coast (the huge British guns were worn and needed new ordnance). It was indeed fortunate that the ‘breakout’ had occurred at Falaise and soon 21 Army Group were to capture all the channel ports in the Calais area.

Within 28 days of watching the engagement at Dover, I was on the other side of the Channel inspecting the guns at Cape Gris Nez. The whole German fortress was surrounded by saturated minefields and although heavy bomber raids had been flown day after day, no bombs had penetrated into the gun chambers.

Without doubt, the Cape Gris Nez guns (about 15 inch) were the best I have ever seen. They were manufactured by Krupp in 1942 and contained every development in gun and fire control technology. They could be traversed to fire seawards and landwards (not like the guns at Singapore).

An underground railway line led into the emplacements. The roads leading to the batteries were littered with tanks and vehicles which had been destroyed by large land mines. The Germans were masters at setting up minefields and anti-parachute devices. It was an eerie experience walking around the gun emplacements — one was ever conscious of booby traps and mines. The British and Canadian Armies had captured the guns and moved on to capture more, so the Gris Nez batteries were deserted. It was an un-nerving experience to be there with only one other person. It was like being in a strange cemetery with the smell of death in the air.

In the battle for Gris Nez, the flame throwing tanks, the flailing mine destroying tanks and the Armoured Vehicle Royal Engineers (AVRE) carrying flying ‘dustbin’ mortar bombs had played havoc with the German defenders and they made haste to surrender after they had destroyed the breech blocks of the huge guns. In particular, they disliked the flame throwers aimed at their concrete emplacements and had no desire to be incinerated. The assault tanks of the 79th Armoured Division were performing with great success. Obviously the Germans were amazed at the special tanks which in most cases were in advance of the infantry.

In passing, it is of interest that no other nation had developed such an imposing collection of fortress destruction apparatus. Even up to ‘D’ Day the Americans were not convinced of their capability but they soon became used to the importance of keeping casualties down by using the assault equipment of the 79th Armoured Division in many of their operations. Some were slow to learn.

It was a very strange feeling to be standing in a German Battery Observation Post on Cape Gris Nez and looking back across the channel to Dover. Much had happened in those few weeks since I had my view of the distant Gris Nez from Dover.

I noted that whilst the German forts were almost impregnable from the sea, they mainly relied on massive mine fields, anti-parachute devices and a few smaller calibre guns for defence from land.

Two British divisions, together with special armour, captured Le Havre in two days. It took the two Canadian brigades six days to capture Boulogne and Calais. Lieutenant General H.G.C. Simonds, the GOC II Canadian Corps (a most ambitious, resourceful, reserved and perfectionist soldier) had been promoted Corps Commander at the age of 41, in January 1944. He provided dynamic leadership.

I don't think General H. Crerar, First Canadian Army, ever got the credit for its excellent performance in capturing Le Havre, Boulogne, Calais, Dieppe and Ostend. Dunkirk was the only fortress to hold out. Crerar had six British and Canadian divisions under command. As usual, the Americans were getting most of the publicity further east. By 1 October, Crerar had captured most of his objectives at a cost of 1,500 Canadian and British casualties. The special assault armour had kept casualties to a minimum. 30,000 German prisoners were taken.

However, the facilities of the Channel ports had been mostly destroyed and it was months before some of them could be used.

After leaving Cape Gris Nez, I spent the next night with a Canadian Counter Intelligence Unit at St Omer. They had found a German reserve of French champagne and were not too keen on giving me accommodation. After much pleading they relented. There was plenty of champagne but only
Cape Gris Nez Battery.
Above: Author examines shells.
Unusual for guns of this size to be cartridge case obturation.

Gun shelters at Cape Gris Nez. No bombs had penetrated.
cold tinned sausages to eat. I spent some hours watching the distant attack on Dunkirk which was lit up by the massive bombardment — yet the German defenders held on. Before leaving I promised the OC that I would not tell anyone about his two rooms full of champagne. I kept my promise!

I remember the pleasure it gave me to see those German guns rendered useless at Cape Gris Nez. The guns had killed British people and had destroyed so much of parts of Dover. The German soldiers who had operated them were now behind barbed wire in British prisoner-of-war camps or working at Mulberry harbour. I also remember those capable Canadian soldiers of the First Canadian Army, the Cinderella of Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force. They got as much publicity as the AIF got in the Middle East and the South-West Pacific Area — precious little.

I also had the opportunity to be with the Canadian Army Group Royal Artillery for several days near the Leopold Canal. They were equipped with 7.2 inch howitzers and 155mm guns. I enjoyed this period very much and left full of admiration for the efficiency and fighting ability of the Canadians. Their capture of those Channel ports with minimum casualties is something to remember. It also made it more difficult for the Germans to send their V bombs to London and it was no longer possible for German artillery shells to land on English soil.

I also watched a super heavy regiment shelling Flushing some 15 miles away. The guns (about 10 inch) were deployed in an apple orchard and every time a gun was fired, it rained apples. Within a 100 yards of the orchard was a boy’s school and on the road outside was a small aeroplane which was used to direct the gun fire at Flushing. A barricade was put on the edge of the road to stop the boys from getting too close to the aeroplane. The photograph shows the boys watching the plane about to take off to observe the fall of shot. War was very close to even school children.

Before returning to London, I had the opportunity to visit Paris which had been liberated. It was rapidly getting back to normal. Shortly before leaving London for Europe, I had received news that our son had been born in Melbourne (I was not to see him until he was in his second year). I bought some baby clothes in Paris — there was plenty for selection — which were safely taken to Australia by an English officer from the 79th Armoured Division.

An Australian brigadier who was on a short visit to North-West Europe bought a hat from Schiaparelli. It was in a large hat bag which created much interest wherever we went.

My last sight of him was walking up the steps of a military aircraft at Lyneham, still clutching the hat bag on his way to the battlefields of Italy and later Burma.

Before returning to Australia in October 1945, I paid a sentimental visit to Dover Fire Command to have a final look across the English Channel to Cape Gris Nez. Much had happened in that 12 months. Even the war in the Pacific was over. The White Cliffs of Dover will always mean very much to me.

The V Bomb Bombardment of England 1944-45

I arrived in London in February 1944, when the German Air Force was still carrying out night raids on the city.

What with the noise and vibration of the anti-aircraft guns scattered throughout London, many in small parks, just up the street and the racket of exploding German bombs, London was a nerve wracking and dangerous place.

The night sky was lit up with flame and fire from exploding bombs, flashes from nearby guns and the continuous movement of searchlight beams traversing the sky in search of German bombers.

Now and again a loud thud or vibration could be heard as a bomb landed or a piece of anti-aircraft shell fell back to earth. Anyone who claimed that they were not frightened by the racket — which sometimes went on for hours — then a short respite; then it started all over again mostly until daylight — was not telling the truth.

The monotonous wails of the anti-aircraft sirens were London’s signature tune. I always remember my first night time trip to my accommodation on the underground railway. After going down on the escalator, I stepped on to the platform and to my amazement, all the space was taken up with mothers and children with just a narrow gap for the passengers to get on and off the trains.

The people came to the underground stations every night. They queued up just before dark and remained until dawn. I was filled with admiration for those civilians in London who courageously faced the danger and suffering of war, waged by a lunatic in Germany. Maybe whilst those people sheltered in air raid shelters or the underground stations, their homes were being destroyed by invading bombs.

I have never seen better behaved children as those in the shelters. They were obviously under great
Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery examining the first V2 which did not explode on impact. Photo taken at TAC HQ 79th Armoured Div near Antwerp. Other officers are: Major General Sir Percy Hobart, GOC; Colonel Charles King, CREME; Lt Col L. Rhys-Jones, GSO(T).

The only photo ever taken of Monty in a squatting position.

An Observation Plane taking off to direct fire over Flushing 15 miles away. Boys from school on other side of road.
stress, yet they huddled together without a murmur clinging closely to mum. It made strong men feel weak at the plight of those innocent people, many whose fathers, sons or brothers were fighting in far distant battlefields.

How these people were able to rest in shelters is almost unbelievable; remember, a train was coming into, or departing from the station every few minutes and deep underground in those tunnels, the noise seemed to be greatly magnified. Over 100,000 mothers and children were evacuated from London during this attack but some refused to go.

Soon the orthodox bombing raids stopped only to be replaced by a more fiendish weapon, the V1 pilotless aircraft. The weapon was navigated by a gyroscope for direction, but its range was set by a cutoff device for fuel. When the fuel was cut off the bomb took a glide path to earth and blew up on impact. The pulse jet engine was mounted above the fuselage. The V1 was launched from a sloping ramp usually hidden in a forest in France or Belgium.

On a clear day, the V1 could be seen and the noise of the pulse jet could be heard from a considerable distance. At night, the flame from the exhaust could be seen. People soon learned to listen for the sound of the motor — when it stopped, it was time to decide whether to seek shelter or not.

The bombardment of London started on 13th June 1944 just one week after the invasion of Europe commenced. Field Marshal Milch, the German planner for the use of the weapon, had expected 500 V1s per day to be landed in London. It was thought that the destruction would cause the British to capitulate; but the Germans under-estimated the courage and guts of the British people.

The V1s came over day and night. The air raid alarms seemed to be starting and stopping all the time. At night, it was particularly trying because one had to get out of bed in case a near explosion caused the windows to be blown in. Many people were killed or badly wounded by flying glass. In the end it was better to drag a mattress out into the corridor and try to sleep there. It was fortunate that the successful invasion of Normandy gave a boost to the morale of the people before the V1 attacks commenced.

The large number of anti-aircraft gun sites in metropolitan London was causing problems and was significantly adding to the noise and racket. The Commander-in-Chief AA Command, General Sir Frederick Pile, decided to deploy the gun and rocket sites in Kent so that they could attack the V1s in the open areas. Hopefully the V1s would be shot down before reaching London.

Nevertheless, significant numbers of the menace were able to get through the RAF defences, the balloon barrage and the AA guns.

The V1 was a highly lethal weapon, its warhead contained over 2,000 lbs of high explosive. Over 10,000 were launched at England. The RAF shot down about 1,600. A few brave pilots tried to get their wing tips underneath the wing of the V1 and gently edge it over, thus forcing the bomb to crash. Group Captain Keith Hampshire was one of the Australian pilots skilled at this activity.

Over 6,000 people were killed and 18,000 badly injured by this destructive weapon. The damage to property had to be seen to be believed. One bomb landed on the Guard’s Chapel whilst a service was in progress. Over 100 were killed or maimed.

I distinctly remember when a V1 landed outside Australia House on 30th June 1944. The explosion lifted a London double-decker bus over the six floors of Australia House into an adjacent street. Over 100 people were killed and hundreds more seriously injured. Inside, many more were casualties. The Chief Medical Officer was sitting on a toilet when a large piece of flying glass took a large sliver of flesh from his backside.

Even in a moment of danger and catastrophe there can be a touch of humour. One senior officer had just raised himself from the toilet and pulled the chain. At that very moment, all hell was let loose as everything about him disintegrated including the fragile door. He found himself looking at the frightened customers of the Boomerang Club Cafe just across the floor. In return, the customers were amazed to see the Lieutenant Colonel with his trousers around his ankles looking so perplexed by the commotion. Later he stated that his first reaction was that the toilet apparatus had been booby trapped.

I was sitting at my desk writing a report on the Mulberry Harbour. My office was on the top floor and had been known as the studio. It had a large glass window and glass ceiling. I was conscious of the explosion when the window was blown in, but I do not remember being propelled through the air to hit a wall which caused injuries which were finally responsible for my being medically boarded out of the Public Service 18 years ago.

The injured inside Australia House were treated by Major Stanley Goulston MC (he won the MC at Tobruk). Stan was a most dedicated and able doctor. He gave wonderful service to the wounded that day and after. We were not surprised when after the war he went on to become a leading physician in
Sydney and was for a time, President of the Royal Australian College of Physicians.

Sometime after this incident, I was invited to see an AA regiment in action in Kent against the V1s. On arrival I was introduced to the officers who included Captain Mary Churchill — a gun instrument control officer. Later, Sir Frederick Pile arrived escorting Cardinal Spellman (Roman Catholic Archbishop of New York) who was visiting England and Europe to see his flock.

I shall always remember the Cardinal's reaction when he saw his first V1 shot down. He jumped up and down with excitement shouting 'Boy-oh-Boy, what a show'. It sounded most unusual to hear a prelate in such glee in that American accent. He was a very charming, natural person and as he said, 'I have come all the way from New York to see my boys'. The gunners shot down a good bag of V1s that day, so did the RAF pilots. Was it Divine intervention? Everyone went away most satisfied with the efficiency and ability of the Army and the Air Force, especially the Cardinal.

Later, when the Channel ports had been liberated, I had the pleasure of seeing the remains of some of the V1 launching sites in a forest near Abbeville, France. One of the sites or what was left of it is shown in the photograph. The Germans had been able to continue their bombardment from new launching places further north. Slowly but surely, the extra range required caused the V1s to be used against the Allies in Europe. Antwerp in Belgium became a prime target. The Ford Motor Car factory, taken over by the British for the repair of their vehicles and tanks was a target, so also were the extensive dock areas and the huge Allied stores or ammunition and other military supplies.

Over 5,500 V1s were aimed at north-west Belgium and south-west Holland of which 1,214 landed in Antwerp.

The V1 was replaced by a supersonic V2 rocket designed by Werner Von Braun who later was captured with some of his key staff and tons of drawings. They were taken to America where he became the space rocket expert.

The V2 bombardment of London started on 8 September 1944. Mysterious explosions were heard and put down to gas incidents. The government did not make any announcement until much later.

Briefly, the V2 had a much greater range than the V1. It was a supersonic missile which meant that it was not heard until after it landed. It caused unrest in the community because there was no indication of its presence before it struck. More importantly, there was no defence against it once it had been launched.

Colonel John Wilton from AAS Washington (later General Sir John) arrived in London and after settling him in the hotel, we were having a quiet drink when all of a sudden the front of the hotel started to disintegrate. A V2 had landed 500 yards up the street. John was not impressed with his welcome in London.

The V2 attacks continued until March 1945. During that time nearly 3,000 people were killed and 6,500 seriously injured. Damage to property and facilities were very serious.

North-west Belgium and south-west Holland were also attacked by the V2s and over 2,000 landed in these countries.

The total V1 output was 1,500 per month and in the same period 500 V2s were produced.

To all intents and purposes the V2 bomb attacks finished about 27th March 1945 although a few V1s were launched by German aircraft. The last was shot down on 29th March 1945.

VE Day was the end of the attacks and the beautiful lights of London came on again. I salute the wonderful people of London who put up with so much for so long. They most certainly belonged to the Bulldog breed.

The photograph shows the first V2 which failed to explode near Antwerp. Field Marshal Montgomery is kneeling to examine the missile. Also watching are Major General Sir Percy Hobart, Colonel Charles King and Lt Col J. Rhys-Jones of the famous 79th Armoured Division. The rocket had landed near the Division's HQ which was nearly always reasonably close to Monty's Tactical HQ. It was most fortunate that neither Monty's or 'Hobo's' Headquarters were hit by the V weapons as they were a prime target area.

In October 1944, I was glad to get away from London to get to 79th Armoured Division HQ near Antwerp, as I thought it would be more quiet there at night time but the noise was worse and so was the danger from the rockets.

*Editor's Note:*
*The third and final part of Colonel John Buckley's article Recollections of Cross Channel Duels, Rockets, Pluto, Mulberry and Funny Tanks will appear in the November/December issue of the Australian Defence Force Journal.*
Return to Greece

*Return to Greece* is an *Australian Defence Force Journal* production highlighting the 50th Anniversary of the Australian Defence Force's participation in the Allied struggle of the Greek Campaign of World War II.

In 1941, Greece fought for survival against the might of Germany. The Greeks, aided by Australian, New Zealand and British forces fought to ward off the invasion of their homeland. *Return to Greece* tells of these battles and of the Allied evacuation.

*Return to Greece* revisits the sites of the battlefields through a selection of 50 water colours and drawings. The book takes the reader on a journey with the veterans of the Greek Campaign through the country where they fought valiantly with their Greek comrades in defence of democracy. It illustrates the pride and professionalism of today's Australian Defence Force personnel as they pay tribute to the memory of those who fought with such bravery and self sacrifice in the cause of freedom in the dark days of 1941.

This book will rekindle memories for those who took part in the campaign of 1941 and also for those who participated in the return pilgrimage in 1991.

*Return to Greece* is illustrated by Defence artist, Jeff Isaacs with text by Michael Tracey.

*Return to Greece* is available from the *Australian Defence Force Journal* at a cost of $20.00.
Why Would You Want To Be A Defence Attache?

By Brigadier G.J. Murphy

... they were starting to speak frankly.

It was late in the evening, they were alone in the mess and they were starting to speak frankly.

'Well, why would you want to be a defence attache instead of a real soldier?'

'That's not the choice, Fred. You usually can't be a good attache without being competent in the operational side of your service first. I volunteered for an attache posting mainly because it is an interesting and important job and because it offered a chance to travel with my family. Blokes who are ambitious also argue that it makes you a better officer — they say you get some insights into strategic questions and you see how others overseas tackle their defence problems. But I'm not sure about that.'

'Surely it isn't good for your children to be stuck into foreign schools — it's bad enough for them to be shuttled around the different schools in Australia.'

'Some children respond better to the stimulus of different schooling than others, but generally you take your children with you overseas when the schools are good and you put them into boarding schools in Australia, assisted financially by the government, when they are not. I was able to take mine with me on both of my attache postings because the schools concerned were international schools, running on the American system, and their facilities and staff were excellent — at least as good as anything my children had experienced in Australia. Neither of my kids seemed to suffer educationally from their trips overseas and they gained a lot in general knowledge, confidence and maturity.'

'OK, I'll accept that. But why would you want to spend your time in endless cocktail parties?'

'Well, you do get to attend a great variety of ceremonial and social functions, parades, formal openings and closings, dinners, vin d'honneurs and, yes, cocktail parties. They can be boring sometimes, but you have to go, if only to make sure that the Defence Department and the Australian Defence Force is represented. After all, the nation hosting the function expects the occasion which it marks to be shown respect. But, all in all, attending such affairs is a small part of your duties.'

'Well, what do you actually do?'

'The emphasis depends on the actual post. But one task is always with you — you always have to understand the country you're in and then make sure that those concerned in Australia are aware of and understand everything that happens there to do with defence matters. That's your contribution to ensuring that our policies are directed towards the real situation in that overseas country. That applies even when you are posted in countries which are our close allies and where most things are reported on TV or in the daily newspaper. You still need to know what is going on, so that you can explain what various developments mean for the Department and the ADF.'

'You are certainly not a spy.'
'Do you mean you are a spy?'

'No. You are certainly not a spy. You become thoroughly familiar with the host country by various means, but you use only open sources and you don’t do anything illegal or dishonest. In fact, you could do great harm if you tried that. But you read widely, including all the newspapers, you listen to radio, you watch television, you listen to a wide variety of people, you talk things over with experts and you try to make sense of all the impressions you gain. Many things you pass on through your Foreign Affairs colleagues but you report directly on more specialised subjects to a Defence clientele, mostly in Canberra. I found it fascinating to learn about another culture to the point where I could begin to understand what they really meant. Of course, the more I discovered, the more I could see there was to learn, but there was an intellectual challenge in both finding out and understanding what was happening and in communicating that accurately and persuasively to Australia.'

'But didn’t your hosts resent you doing that?'

'Generally, no. They would have resented it if we had used illegal means, of course, and they wouldn’t hesitate to expel attaches caught spying. All countries place restrictions on what attaches can do in the way of travel and visits, just as we do, but they also recognise that attaches perform a useful function in explaining host-country policies to their own country. I have often approached the host-country military authorities directly to give me a briefing, or to tell me what various developments mean and they’ve usually been glad to oblige. In that way, they get their ‘official version’ across to us. The alternative, after all, is for our policy makers to rely on the news media and, while journalists are excellent in their field, their coverage of defence matters is not always what you need as a basis for decisions. Nor is it meant to be.'

'So, you’re a sort of specialised foreign correspondent?'

'I suppose we do perform a similar function, but it is only part of our duties. The news media often ‘scoop’ us on major events, probably because of the vast resources they can deploy. We don’t even try to compete with them — nor should we — and we use their product unashamedly, though we still have to say what the turn of events means. But there’s a lot more to attach work than that. In general terms, you try to further the objectives of Australian Defence Policy. For example, you put into effect any major Defence initiatives between Australia and your host country.'

'Whatever do you mean by ‘Defence initiatives’?

'It means you help arrange visits of important military figures to Australia and of our leaders to your host country. You supervise any Defence Cooperation projects. In all of this, you are trying to improve defence relations with the host country and between the armed forces. You smooth the way for the sale of Australian defence products to your host country. You help to arrange military exercises and negotiate landing rights for aircraft in transit. You arrange ship visits; from their berthing, provisions and fuelling, to formal visits to host-country naval establishments, to sporting events and tours by the ship’s company. Defence initiatives can encompass many things, big and small.'

'Wait a minute, you’ve mentioned my own field. I’ve taken a ship into a number of foreign ports and I don’t remember having had a visit arranged by an attaché from the Army.'

'That would mean that the attaché where you went happened to be Navy; or that he was supported by a Naval officer; or perhaps there was a naval officer attached for that visit from the Fleet, which happens when the defence attaché needs supplementation. Ship visits were hard work but I found no great difficulties.'

\[Image of a ship with the words 'the ship asked for a 'fifty foot catamaran'...']

The first thing I had to master, though, was naval terminology. When the ship asked for a ‘fifty foot catamaran’, I didn’t know they wanted a fifty-foot balk of timber which stops the vessel rubbing against the wharf.'
'I thought everyone knew that! But what else do you do? So far, you've filled in about half your time, I'd say.'

'You also have to travel. No country can be covered only from its capital city. It isn't always easy or comfortable, but you have to get around and see things for yourself. You visit defence and industrial establishments, when you are allowed to, and you talk to as many local officials as you can. On the way, you often see some wonderful tourist sights — after all, officials of the host country would be offended if you didn't show an interest in their scenic wonders. Some of the best trips I have ever had were official visits to isolated areas in the countries where I was posted. But I'd like to think that my reports from those areas made the expense worthwhile.

'. . . whatever you do must be done through the bureaucratic maze of your host country.'

'When you are back in town again there are always problems to sort out. Like all officers, an attache spends a lot of time fixing problems. Perhaps there has been a misunderstanding and the ambassador wants you to explain to the host defence authorities some new Australian defence policy or initiative. There might be a visa problem for someone going on a Defence course to Australia. You might need to persuade the host country to reschedule a certain visit for dates which are convenient. You might find yourself trying to extract a piece of defence cooperation equipment from the local customs officials. And, whatever you do, must be done through the bureaucratic maze of your host country. Sometimes that can be infuriating; sometimes it is hilarious. But you know more about your hosts when it is over.'

'You mentioned the ambassador. What is your relationship with him?'

'You represent the Secretary and CDF, but you work under the general supervision and control of the Head of Mission. He is concerned with coordinating the whole mission, of which you are an important part. You are his adviser on defence matters and must keep him and his staff informed of developments in your host country. The boundary between military and political subjects can be blurred at times — major military events always have political consequences — so you must work closely with the political experts from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. It is not always easy to reconcile the needs of both departments, but with goodwill and commonsense you can work well together. The main thing is to recognise that you each have complementary skills and roles which are important. And to compete is stupid.'

'You mentioned that you function as an adviser. When are you described as a 'Defence Adviser'?'

'I'm sorry, I should have explained. You are called a 'Defence Adviser' in Commonwealth countries and a 'Defence Attache' in the rest, but your duties are roughly the same. Similarly, you serve a 'High Commissioner' in Commonwealth countries, but he's called an 'Ambassador' elsewhere. I am skating lightly over the subject in that explanation and I'm assuming you know all about a Naval Attache and Naval Adviser too, which change in the same way, but it covers what you need to know.'

'It helps if she has a sense of humour . . .'

'How does your wife feel about it all?'

'Well, she was a bit apprehensive about our first attache posting, which happened to be to India, but we were told a good deal about what to expect during the Attache Course, which we both attended just before departure. In the event, she loved every
minute of the posting and we made friends there we'll value all our lives. She also played her part there very well.'

'What do you mean by that?'

'In a representational posting you and your spouse function more as a team than at any other time throughout your service. She is not just important — she's vital. She manages the household and arranges the social functions in such a way that they are pleasant occasions which people like to attend. If she can help break down the barriers of culture and get people to relax in your home, she's made a huge contribution to your task. My wife often became friendly with the wife of an important official which helped me meet him and get along with him. It helps if she has a sense of humour, as controlling household staff and running a house in a different way isn't always easy. It helps if she's tolerant, as you can't always give her fair warning about the social demands which will be placed on you both. And if she is also blessed with a sense of adventure, willing to share with you the difficulties and joys of travel, you have a jewel beyond price.'

'You've been using blatantly sexist language. What if the spouse is a man?'

'I used those terms because you asked about my wife. I don't know of an Australian servicewoman taking her spouse overseas but it will happen, no doubt. My guess is that the principles will be the same. There was a US couple I served with, where the wife was the Acting Naval Attache and he controlled the house and entertainment. It seemed to work quite well.'

'Well, I'm reluctant to volunteer for attache duty because it would probably damage my career.'

'I know what you mean. If you have to learn one of the more difficult languages it can take several years to get to the point where you are comfortable in the tongue. In addition, they like to send you to the country concerned, perhaps to its staff college, before you have to function as the attache there. In that way, you become familiar with their ways and make a lot of contacts too. Then, when you return, it makes sense to post you where your knowledge can be useful, which could mean another couple of years on staff jobs in Canberra. All this sounds like a huge slice out of your service career and likely to rule you out for higher ranks.

'But it doesn't work out like that. Not many of the foreign languages require that much study. Most of the posts use English as the main language and, in some others, learning the language can be relatively easy. Quite a number of officers who have served in foreign language posts have made one and two-star rank and several have reached three-star level after serving as attaches in countries where English is the main medium. There is probably a beneficial effect from serving overseas; not to mention the time you might spend in the policy and analytical areas of Defence, of course. You can also make a name for yourself by demonstrating competence in your overseas post — you'd be surprised how many senior people read your reports. Overall, the figures suggest that attaches are generally promoted to one and two-star levels at a higher rate than the officer corps as a whole. It is a reasonable conclusion that your career rarely suffers from a representational posting and it can be your most rewarding job.'

'Obviously, you have to do well when you are posted overseas, though that applies to any posting, I suppose. How do you get yourself prepared to be an attache?'

'We are much better at that nowadays. The Services now begin training a pool of officers in various foreign languages early in their careers — that means they can achieve a high level of fluency, because you learn languages best when you are young. The Services note which officers say they'd like a representational posting and whether their reporting officers consider they are suitable. In this way, they begin to prepare a group of competent generalists as candidates — usually, but by no means exclusively, from those officers concerned with tactical operations. From these, only the most...
suitable are selected for further training in what the Services call their Strategic Intelligence/Attache Sub-Stream. Preparation can include postings to areas such as International Policy Division in Defence, or relevant areas in the Headquarters of the Defence Force, or perhaps to the Defence Intelligence Organisation. You might even be attached for a year to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. In these postings you become familiar with Australian Defence policy and with what is expected of an attache. Those who want to do really well overseas can become familiar with the country by private or sponsored study — reading widely and perhaps attending seminars, lectures or courses at public educational facilities, including our universities. And I’ve mentioned that the Services often send people on postings to the country in which they will later serve as attaches. Then there is a selection system which chooses people for specific posts. All of this effort directed towards the preparation of attaches shows the importance that CDF and Secretary attach to the attache function."

‘You always were persuasive. I think I’ll discuss that attache posting they offered me with my wife. You make it sound interesting and fun.’

‘It can be fun, but it’s always interesting and worthwhile. You might work harder than you ever have before, but it could also be the best job you’ve had.’

Brigadier G.J. Murphy, AM (Ret.) served, inter alia, on the Australian Army Staff in London 1973-74, as Defence Adviser, New Delhi 1979-80 and as Defence Attache, Jakarta 1984-85. In other postings he was concerned with the selection, management and tasking of defence attaches. He returned to serve as Project Officer, Attache Management in Headquarters ADF for a limited period 1990-91.

The illustrations are by Mr Jeff Isaacs, Defence Artist, Public Information Branch, Defence.

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Gama River, Milne Bay, 31st August 1942 — The Importance of a Tight Methodology when Writing Military History

By Alex Graeme-Evans

Several years ago at an Australian War Memorial Military History conference, I can well remember a lady academic disputing with a distinguished AIF infantry commander some factual issue as to what actually occurred on a given day, when in fact the veteran had been there and she had not: as though censored 'Letters Home' written at the time should be given more historical weight as to accuracy of events, than the inferred failing memory of a then aged 75-year-old veteran.

After the unique experience of having had the honour to write the two Volume history of the 2/12th Battalion AIF over a period of some six years, I learnt not to under-estimate the power of memory possessed by each and every soldier whose mind has been cauterised by the experience of having survived close-quarter fighting on a battlefield.

Hence, provided the historian charged with the task of reconstructing a battlefield event, does put in place a tight methodology as to how facts are obtained, and screened for accuracy and authenticity, then the memories of the men who took part, prove to be a veritable King Solomon's Mine, and rightly so.

Too often to be noticeable in the 1960s and 1970s and even early 80s, it does appear that a trend existed for historians to rely primarily on essentially 'literature or record searches' of army establishments, libraries and archives to complete their set task as against making a genuine effort, no matter how difficult, cumbersome or inconvenient, to get back to the primary resource material generators themselves — the men.

Thankfully a reverse trend does now appear to be emerging as we move towards the 21st century: a belated recognition that the 'verbals' of the men (and especially those with good memories but a marked reluctance to put pen to paper), are as important a source of colour and verve for the canvas of facts being presented in the text, as are those already formally recorded through more regularised institutional or official channels.

Certainly in this day and age we are all slaves of time, and the historian is ensnared in such an environment as any other person. Accordingly, the temptation to simply 're-hash' earlier works on the given subject, and simply add a few new facts and photographs that have since come to light is quite great.

Such practices however are not the answer, and where possible to be avoided for it is correct to observe that military historians have imposed on them by society an especially high 'duty of care', so that future generations may have the opportunity to gauge in as objective a light as possible, the heroism, discipline and experiences of their forbears on the battlefield.

With this important ethical point in mind, I have chosen to provide a simple illustration as to why it is so important to have a tight methodology in place when seeking to write about events which occurred more than several decades ago.

The chosen topic, is the heretofore little known ambush action which occurred at a place called Gama River, Milne Bay, on the evening of the 31st August 1942.

Why Gama River?

Such a choice in early 1992 would appear not only appropriate and topical (given that the 50th anniversary of the Battle for Milne Bay is looming large on our celebratory calendar later this year), but also events which occurred there that late afternoon and through the night should stand as a historical beacon, the power of which — because of poor or tired research by past historians — has never been fully revealed.

Strong words, but justifiable. The writing of history is certainly one of selection and emphasis, and it is naive therefore for anyone to seriously contend that any history can be strictly objective in absolute terms. For this reason a certain license is tolerated.

However, in the case of the reporting of the action at Gama River, Milne Bay on the 31st August 1942,
the deliberate public misinformation put forward shortly after the action, and perpetuated post-war (even as late as a book published in August last year), must surely upset the bones of the men who actually fought there that night and still remain on foreign soil.

Fortuitously, because Of Storms and Rainbows (being the history of the 2/12th Battalion) was built up on the formula of a very tight methodology and authentication process and has had wide cross-sectional support from its members, we are able technically to bridge the time-gap through a detailed inventory of eyewitness reports collected, and reconstruct the events surrounding the successful ambush and ensuing night action in very close detail.

Why this action at Gama River stands out to my mind as a beacon, is that it served to highlight the close of the first successful day of the making of the Legend that is now referred to as the Battle for Milne Bay. On that day, the 31st August 1942 at 0900 hours the 18th Brigade AIF, with the 2/12th as its vanguard commenced its drive along the shores of Milne Bay, and in close-quarter fighting over a period of a week out-soldiered the Japanese invasion force; inflicting such devastating casualties in their relentless drive that the enemy Area Commander chose in the end to evacuate, as against re-contest the battleground.

This relentless advance, without reverses, by the battle-experienced 18th, lies at the seat of the Milne Bay Legend and when the successful outcome was publicised shortly afterwards, prompted the general uplifting of morale amongst Allied troops throughout the Pacific region.

It was most heartening news at the time even though General MacArthur as Supreme Allied Commander of Pacific Land Forces was not prepared to accept it for what it was, as demonstrating quite vividly to the world at large that the Japanese soldier, albeit ruthless and barbaric, was not the invincible jungle-fighter as previously pre-supposed. Within this 'web' of Legend created, I believe the Gama River sub-action on that first day of the advance shines especially bright. Why? Because it symbolises in most dramatic form the high level of training and battle preparedness achieved by infantry units of the 2nd AIF by mid-1942.

Such professionalism was earned the hard way, through battle-worn combat experience. Just as the German Army had learnt through its involvement in the Spanish Civil War in the late 1930s that 88 mm guns (originally designed as anti-aircraft guns) were even more devastating as anti-tank guns, and that canons as against machine-guns were a more effective combat weapon in the wings of their fighter aircraft, so too the 2nd AIF had streamlined its infantry minor tactics procedures from taking part in the British Empire Middle Eastern campaigns.

Its men after close to three years full time military service, and several years overseas in war zones, were now 'old soldiers', and whilst now with the rank and file of the infantry battalions in their early 20s were, with the exigencies of war, matured beyond their years.

Hence it was no accident that these lead elements of the 2nd AIF which returned to Australia in early 1942, was one of the nation's most prized assets, a lean and combat-hardened fighting machine, with its ranks weeded out of those who had realised themselves that they were not suited to frontline battlefield conditions.

It was only a mere few weeks before the battle that one of these brigades, the 18th Brigade AIF, had arrived at Milne Bay, where the 7th Brigade Militia had been working hard to assist in the construction of the airfields there.

Yet, despite this short acclimatisation (and the fact that they were wearing light brown ‘western desert’ uniforms which were quite out of place in the dark green of the New Guinea jungle) this battle experienced AIF Brigade was to serve as Major General Clowes Milne Force Commander's 'avenging sword': to rid the bay of the pugnacious Japanese Invasion Force by means of a straight-out advance and destroy mission.

Certainly in the days previous to the 31st August, the Kittyhawks of No. 75 and 76 Squadrons RAAF had done stirling work making life 'hell' for any Japanese found exposed under the jungle canopy during the day, and the militia units had held their in their defensive perimeters around the strategically important base areas, and provided intelligence with their probing patrols. But the real test — as the ever telling casualty rates corroborate in sanguine terms — had yet to come: the closing with and driving out of the bay, the landed Japanese Invasion force.

Hard Worn Experience

Such professionalism was earned the hard way, through battle-worn combat experience. Just as the
The Day Arrives

So it was on the morning of the 31st August 1942 that D Company of the 2/12th under the command of Captain Geoff Swan of Carrick Tasmania formed up on the edge of the uncompleted No. 3 airstrip, and commenced that famous 18th Brigade advance which resulted in Milne Bay becoming the legend it is today.

The objective of the first day's advance was K.B. Mission, and the line of the advance was along a government track which ran fairly close to the shoreline, with jungle vegetation on either side. Gama River is a principal feature that crossed that government track as it wound its way between No. 3 strip and K.B. Mission.

Gama River Ambush

It was on the western bank of the Gama River beside the ford that the rear companies of the 2/12th (B, C, and elements of HQ Coy) were instructed to night harbour. They did so, and carried out their well practised drill of securing their perimeter, clearing fire lanes and posting OP sentries as the afternoon drew to a close. C Coy was responsible for the northern perimeter that abutted the track, B Coy the eastern perimeter on the western bank of the Gama River, HQ Coy the western perimeter, and to the south there was the sea — see sketch map (page 57).

There was a period of quietness just prior to dusk (which was in marked contrast to the flowing adrenalin and havoc of combat earlier in the day), then suddenly on the western perimeter a large group of individuals in the order of 200-300 persons were observed moving in an easterly direction along the track.

The first soldier (Private 'Pug' Geason) to observe them thought they might be natives, and sought a view from another soldier (Private Merv McGillvery) up a tree. This soldier quickly identified them to be not natives but the enemy, coming from an unexpected quarter, and the word was then quickly passed on.

These some 300 Japanese Marines were not in battle formation, but bunched up, talking amongst themselves, and many with their rifles slung over their shoulders, quite contrary to the inferences raised by the Official Historian Dudley McCarthy at page 178 in his work entitled South-West Pacific Area — First Year and Gavin Long in his work entitled The Six Years War at page 213.

In less than four minutes — as best can be judged — these 2/12th companies with due speed and in comparative silence that comes from hard worn practice, effectively re-aligned the fields of fire of their main weapons, and then with the enemy fully entrapped effected a most devastating ambush which left 115 Japanese marines dead on the road the next morning, and in all probability — as the lores of combat consider — an equal number wounded and removed from the scene by their comrades.

'Never in my six years of service did I see such discipline as I did close to dusk at Gama River that night, even down to the most junior Private. With such short notice to effect the ambush, there was no time for the usual 'O' groups and orders from officers. The men just acted instinctively, as they had been trained to do, with the Privates, Corporals and Sergeants fully conversant with their respective tasks doing them quickly and silently. All then waited until the Japs were exposed to their maximum, and then everyone seemed to fire at once.'

Sergeant Tom Macauley
Acting CSM C Coy 2/12th Bn
Gama River 31/8/42

Naturally the battalion had its own casualties, and unfortunately a high proportion of these were sentries on the opposite side of the track, who due to shortness of time were unable to be withdrawn within the main defence perimeter in time.

In my view, I consider this sub-action (often passed over in half a sentence by modern historians), to be one of the finest tributes possible to the degree of professionalism reached by the infantry battalions of the 2nd AIF by late 1942.

Sadly, not only did the Australian Government's Official Historian McCarthy, make an error in his writings and attribute the main weight of the action to another unit, but also because of hidden political agendas (which I will not go into here), even the journalists of the time were forced by the authorities to re-write what occurred. Paradoxically direct evidence on this point still exists.

What is equally regrettable is that even as late as August last year we have had modern histories published, seeking to be authoritative on the subject, yet falling into the same 'heffalump' trap of not doing their primary research properly before rushing into print.
Note of Caution

This last comment in turn brings me back to the main purpose of the article, which is to caution future budding military historians amongst the ranks of your readers, to observe the golden rule — wherever possible go back to the primary sources, do not simply re-hash other people’s work and add a few new pictures that have come to light.

You best serve the community of readers and students of military history by satisfying yourself that the facts presented to you are correct. Seek out if at all possible the oral as well as the institutionalised written sources.

Furthermore, so that your audience may fully appreciate the subject matter on which you have chosen to write, you must make it live, ensure that it has in some way relevance to the readers’ own lives, and where instructive constantly draw analogies between yesterday and today’s events.

If we are to learn from the mistakes and successes of the past, histories have to be written with vibrancy and relevance.

Who was there?

To further develop the significance of the Gama River action, it is pertinent that a certain mist of misinformation which shrouds this pearl of 2nd AIF achievement at Gama River on the 31st August 1942, is clearly dispelled.

The mist is composed of the suggestion that it was firstly not an ambush at all, and that secondly some elements of the militia were actively involved in the action.

On the first point apart from the earlier comments of the CSM of C Company that day (refer map opposite) I leave it to Infantryman Private Fred Voss of the same Company (and who was actually lying close to the road frontage in the middle of the ambush site, and if not the first to commence firing was a very close second), to express his view in that traditional blunt manner for which the Australian ‘Aussie digger’ has been made famous through the course of two World Wars, Korea, and no doubt Vietnam.

‘To suggest that the action at Gama River was not an ambush is the most absurd thing I have ever heard concerning this part of the fighting. The 2/12th as a well drilled and battle-hardened unit was ready for anything that day, and once the approach of a group of enemy were detected, with us already deployed into our night perimeter positions, we went into ambush mode.

Any basic army recruit would know that a group of infantry firing from concealed positions onto a target group of unsuspecting enemy walking along a jungle track (whether it took five minutes or two hours to set up) is regarded in military terms to be an ambush. If he did not, he’d be laughed out of the classroom.

Aren’t researchers who choose to write or compile military history accounts meant to have at least some basic understanding of the infantry minor tactics of the day?!

The recollections of one of B Company’s Section leaders, Cpl A. A. McKenzie (who can still to this day pinpoint and name where he positioned each man of his section that night on the western bank and in the river bed of the Gama River that night) is also pertinent:

‘I did not position the Bren as that was done by either Lt Hart or Sgt Andrews . . . they [the Bren Gunner and his No. 2] were approx 40 to 45 yards SE down the river course which was dry and I was a further 5 yards down from their position with my ‘subby’ with 50 round drum . . .

With our gaining the information that a body of enemy were approaching from W instead of E, my section had to mostly reverse fire-power. Somebody was sitting on our shoulder that night, that’s for sure and we had very very little time to change positions — by sign language mostly . . .

I still sweat when I think how everything went like clockwork. I reckon I had the best section in the Company. They worked as a team and very rarely had a grouch. Pity they are not around today . . .’

As to the second point, as Association Historian of the 2/12th I can authoritatively state (after a detailed survey being conducted last year of all known survivors of the Gama River action which fortuitously prompted accounts from most of the company CSMs, ‘I’ Section staff and Section Corporals responsible for the various perimeter sectors that night), that a compilation of these eyewitness recollections confirm the only militia present in the battalion’s perimeter were in all probability:

(a) One man that came into B Company’s lines and stayed the night with them. The rest of his sub unit were on the eastern bank of the Gama,
BATTLE AT GAMARIVER, MILNE BAY
31st August 1942

DIAGRAM NOTES
1. Dispositions of the sub-force of the 2/12 Bn AIF on the western bank of the Gama River 31st August 1942 as compiled by eye witness accounts of the men who were there when the ambush was sprung.

2. The entrapped enemy subsequently counter-attacked in an attempt to extricate themselves on three separate occasions in the course of the night.

3. Diagram is not to scale.
outside of the night harbour position. This was noted by the Acting CSM Queenslander Sgt George Harper, who was wounded in the course of the action, but kept at his post.

(b) Six or seven from a lead platoon of militia caught out on the road close to the ambush site when the fire-fight started and sought refuge by coming through the outer perimeter, and were instructed to move back to a position in reserve between B and C Coy HQs.

'Shortly after the battle commenced about six or seven Militia men came through our front line. In the confusion an order was given to 'Cease Fire'. I don't know who gave the order, whether it was the Militia or the Japs, but there did seem to be a lull in our firing. I immediately yelled at the top of my voice 'Cease Fire be . . .! Get stuck into the bastards'. I believe Sergeant George Lucas also countermanded the Order in similar terms . . .

Up to the time of my wounding I did not see any Militia take part in the fighting and as CSM of the Company found it quite fantastic to read in a recent publication the suggestion that these six or seven militia in the middle of the night amidst the confusion of battle, amongst strange men in a strange place they had not seen in daylight, be ordered to fix bayonets in the dark of the night and guard either my company's or B company's HQ.

It was in any event Lt Vic Walton and Sergeant Doug Scott's 14 Pi's responsibility to be in reserve and guard the HQ. The last I saw of the militia, was their prompt movement to the rear and to sensibly lie in the prone position as most of us were, given that live ammunition was going off in all directions.

While we were happy to help the Militia at any time their entrance through our front line at the start of the battle was more a hindrance than a help.'

Sergeant Doug Scott also of Queensland (who helped Sergeant Macauley move to the rear when he was wounded and then in part took over his CSM duties), had cause on several occasions to pass through the Company HQ area in the balance of the night, and did not observe the presence at all of any militia personnel in the area. Both men were subsequently promoted out of the ranks and received officer commissions.

Private Roy Beasley was the B Company Runner, and part of his dangerous duties that night was to convey messages between B and C Company headquarters. The only militia he observed was the small group laying prone in the reserve area between B and C Coy HQs.

In respect to the Western Perimeter of the Night Harbour, Commando Platoon Section Leader Private Paul Hope has this to say:

'I cannot recall the presence of any Militia inside our perimeter either before the action or during the night when the enemy counter-attacked on several occasions.

I did see them early the next morning not inside our perimeter, but across the Gama River on the eastern bank when I moved through our lines looking for a dixie into which I could hold hot water for a brew for my section.

Militia troops were readily identifiable at that time since they wore the old cavalry type leather boot leggings to their knees, whilst the AIF were equipped with gaiters.'

(c) A small group of about six Militia, without rifles, reported in late in the night to a forward OP of the Battalion across the river on the eastern bank. Lofty Cox, a member of 10 Pl B Company manning that OP recalls;

'During the night after the firing had died, voices were heard coming from the bay to my right. Words were bandied between us such as 'Are you there Mac', 'Yes lam Mac' and so on until we were satisfied they were Australians. They were located in the salt water.

About six young lads of the Militia then came into our section very relieved to be among friends. They were unarmed.'

This OP, as is shown on the map opposite was outside the main perimeter of the night harbour and took no meaningful part in the main action being waged across the river on the western side in the course of the night.

The main fire-fight in the course of the night is also delineated on the map and shows where, entrapped, the balance of the Japanese battle group force counter-attacked on no less than three occasions.

Complications

The Japanese Marines used at times 'Allied' anti-tank sticky bombs they had obtained from a neatly piled cache beside a bogged Allied truck, located several hundred metres back along the track they had just travelled!
As has been mentioned earlier by the CSM of C Company Sergeant Macauley, what complicated the start of the action when the impromptu ambush was sprung by members of the 2/12th that night, was a company of the 9th Militia had overshot their appointed night harbour location late in the afternoon.

Destined for the small hamlet called Rabbi, this Militia company had missed the turning off the main track to the left prior to the Gama River ford crossing, and were in the process of retracing their steps when they were caught out on the government track just as the ambush was sprung by members of the 2/12th.

In all probability it was members from this 9th Militia company who made up the some 7 or 8 militia personnel that came inside the main defense perimeter of the 2/12th that night at the several locales indicated on the map. The entries in their Battalion War diary for the night appears to corroborate this lack of knowledge as to where exactly they were located for it states they were ‘attacked by Japanese at Rabbi’. In fact they never reached Rabbi that evening, but were mainly propped on the eastern bank of the Gama River, as observed there by countless eyewitnesses from the 2/12th the next morning.

Further the reference to being ‘attacked by Japanese’ could well refer to their lead platoon (on retracing its steps across the ford) coming into close encounter with the ambush sprung by the 2/12th, and that from their perspective the Japanese caught on the road on seeking to break out would in essence be firing in their direction also.

As to any suggestions that militia personnel may have subsequently become involved Corporal A.A. McKenzie of B Company makes the following comments:

‘Absolute hallucinations . . . I had instructed my section [located in the creek bed] to shoot anything they could not identify in a prone position . . . when the ambush was sprung my section was positioned to cover both directions.’

Hence it is suggested earlier assertions by many and various historians — who did not bother to go back to primary source material — and made statements varying from perhaps one/two platoons, to one (or even in one instance the claim of two companies(!)) of militia being involved in the action, are not substantiated by fact: either in the various War Diaries of the battalions in the area which make no mention of such an occurrence, nor is it supported by the very men who effected the ambush.

Certainly Major General Clowes in his subsequent Secret Report to Higher Command on the Battle
written shortly after the action in paragraph 22 refers to the involvement of 2 platoons of Militia, but in essence there were the balance of the Militia company which prudently went to ground on the eastern bank of the river once the firing commenced, and were not directly involved as such in the ambush, nor the fierce counter-attacks flung by the desperate entrapped Japanese against the outer perimeter of the 2 12th’s night harbour there.

In Conclusion

It is hoped that this short article has been of use to readers of the *Australian Defence Force Journal*. It is designed to impress on those wishing to enter the interesting field of researching and writing military history, that such a task is not to be taken on lightly.

Further, if the chosen subject is that of an Infantry battalion’s battle experiences, then there is this especial ‘duty of care’ to be scrupulously as authentic in your facts as you can make them. One of the most telling reasons for this, is to be fully aware at all times that for every casualty there are relatives, who may subsequently read with great intensity every word you write concerning the sad fate of their loved ones.

Close attention must be paid to your system of authenticating the veracity of the recollections and the accuracy of the facts gathered. The setting up of an Editorial Board comprising of men who took part in those operations (to not only encourage the coming forth of recollections from the men, but also to advise you if perhaps ‘embroidery’ has insidiously crept in with the passing of the years on the recounting of certain events), would appear to be in most instances, essential.

In short, just as road-builders will tell you that the three cardinal rules for road-making are drainage, drainage, and more drainage, so too with the military historian there are parallels. They are, tight methodology, tight methodology, tight methodology!

If readers appetites are aroused to learn more about the Battle of Milne Bay in general, they are most welcome to do so and are referred to pages 29-176 of *Of Storms and Rainbows — Volume II*.

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Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel R.E. Bradford

One would expect that almost 50 years after the completion of World War II that almost everything that could be said about that conflict had been said. The official histories have all been well and truly published, the strategies and tactics of the armies/corps/divisions covered (and often recovered) and the tales of individual dedication and indeed heroism passed onto future generations. What more could be written? I could be excused therefore in harbouring doubts before commencing to read yet another unit history.

The Purple Devils, however, quickly wiped those doubts from my mind. This book was not written in order that the members of the unit could remember their war experiences although it surely would do so. It was written for their grandchildren, other descendants and interested parties, and as such took a personalised rather than tactical or a detached historical approach to telling their story. In taking this personal approach, the author has been able to involve the reader in all the activities of war at the personal level, avoiding the trap of unduly concentrating on the heroic aspects (which are in the book but purely as part of the overall narrative) and by doing so, unwittingly glorifying that brutal often uncivilised beast called war.

Australia raised 12 Independent Companies (later renamed Commando Squadrons) during the course of World War II. The 2/6 was raised in May 1942 and established by utilising volunteers from many branches of the Service. By early August of that year the unit was in New Guinea, and within a short time in action supporting operations on the Kokoda Trail. The unit's roles included flank protection for the front line units fighting the Japanese and long range patrols sent out in an attempt to reconnoitre the viability of many of the tracks on the flanks of Kokoda.

The truism that war is 95% boredom followed by 5% sheer terror is well supported by this book. The unit found itself, often in small sized patrols, scrambling over half formed tracks or struggling through tall kunai grass more often than not out of contact with friend or foe. Patrol bases were set up in isolated locations with patrols radiating out in an attempt to carry out their particular task. When least expected short sharp contacts would occur, often in the most trying circumstances. Larger scale battles at unit level such as Kaiapit in the Markham campaign did occur and are well covered in the book, but it is the small scale isolated activities of the unit which tells their particular story best.

In avoiding the historical approach to the unit's history, Trigellis-Smith has been able to concentrate on the people in the unit, and often quotes direct from unit reports and the memories of the soldiers. The devotion to duty displayed by these often under-nourished (the early attempts of aerial resupply are well covered) and neglected men and their attempts to survive in such a hostile environment is simply but graphically told and provides a lasting impression of war as they waged it. I thoroughly enjoyed the book because of this direct informative style and the personalised way the information was conveyed to the reader. The inclusion of rough but easily followed maps more than simply supported the narrative.


Reviewed by Major J.A. Harriott, School of Armour

Entitled A Fatal Rivalry I expected an open, informative critique by a retired officer with the benefit of first hand experience of the Defence committee system. Instead this book is a parochial view of how the defence of Australia can best be served by the RAAF. It presents the RAAF solution to Strategic Policy and argues the RAAF equipment requirements to satisfy the 1987 Defence White Paper. This argument is presented without regard for the Navy or Army requirements.

The book is easy to read and some parts are interesting despite the bias and emotion. The first half of the book presents a history of Australian
defence participation. It concludes that Australia’s role until 1969 was seen as merely a contributor to the larger forces of allies and was therefore not designed for any particular concept of operations.

In 1975 the policy of structuring the ADF specifically for the defence of Australia saw the three Armed Services scramble to devise an operational concept. However, the differences within the Department of Defence were more fundamental than devising an operational concept and the view adopted by the civilian element was that no threat existed within 15 years. Inevitably the civilian view held and a core force policy became the basis of building and equipping the ADF.

Over the past ten years the ‘creative tension’ within the Department of Defence has seen billions of dollars spent on acquiring equipment that was not germane to any particular plan for the defence of Australia. It is the author’s opinion that given the small population of Australia and the massive area, manpower intensive military operations should be avoided. The Air Force concept of operations is based on preventing an enemy landing by maximising the use of modern weapons systems with ‘high firepower and high manoeuvre’. The concise application of the adjective ‘high’ is not clear. The author concludes that this is the correct policy and should be retained, although there is little analysis of any argument.

He believes that the replacement syndrome, where obsolescent equipment is replaced without regard to its continuing relevance, runs rampant. The only possible reason being that it caters to the defence industry and to jobs. He did not apply this example to the replacement of the Mirage by the F/A-18.

The use of tanks, the ratio of Regular Army to the AReS and the acquisition of expensive surface combatant ships of little practical use in the defence of Australia are other issues which the author presents without any mention of similar problems associated with the RAAF. This is illustrated by the captions to prints on pages 44 and 46 where he questions the relevance of tanks but describes a picture of the range of armaments available to F-111C as ‘Two young men with massive firepower’. The technical credibility of the book is further tarnished by the statement that the ‘big gun’ on the tank has a range to 24,000 metres. This is approximately three times the effective range of any main armament ammunition.

To a reader familiar with current defence strategies, the first 2/3rds of the book is a parochial view of the conclusions of the Dibb Review and Defence of Australia — 1987. It isn’t until the author discusses the carrier debate and the role of battlefield helicopters in Chapters 8 and 9 that the reader receives any hint of the claims ‘to expose a view of vested interests, failures and cover-ups’. Subsequent chapters present the author’s views on such subjects as Women, Discipline and Command and Control but most of the information presented represents personal opinion which has rapidly been dated by recent events.

Throughout the book the author relies on presenting information without then debating its validity to draw clearly reasoned conclusions/deductions. His thesis that the obvious forces for Australia’s defence are the submarines of the RAN and the combat triad of the RAAF (the Orions, the F/A-18s and the F-111Cs), detracts from the validity of any persuasive argument.

In conclusion he states: ‘The overall imperative is good leadership; leadership that is motivated to provide for the effective defence of Australia rather than by self-interest or the narrow interest of a particular arm of the ADF.’ This statement of the obvious is the culmination of shallow argument and does not stimulate the attention and thought on defence matters as was the intention of the author. I found the book unconvincing because it lacked persuasive argument from which to derive firm non-parochial conclusions.


Reviewed by Major Bryce Reeves, RA Inf

Peter Calvocoressi’s ultimate position is that only by strengthening the rule of international law can the instances of war be reduced. It is important to emphasise this as a final point as he makes many deductions, conclusions and assertions throughout his work; all interesting, most supportable, but many of which are difficult to weave into a single general theory or coherent statement on international relations. One can make no judgements on the intentions of the author or the effect he desired to achieve, as we are denied any such definitive statement by him. The absence of a preface or an introduction mitigates against the provision of a framework provided by the author against which the book can be evaluated. This is, in the final analysis, a book of informed opinion and hope, supported by both an examination of certain historical trends and personal assertion. This is not to say the work has no utility. It has; but as a book
Calvocoressi provides a readable, informed examination of a possibility, a possibility that does not deny the existence of a longer term goal — the eradication of war — but attenuates its achievement by an acceptance of the need for evolution into a situation in which it can be achieved. In this he exhibits a Kantian view of world society.

... pacifism seeks to change human nature and that cannot be done within a political timescale ... In the foreseeable future human nature has to be taken as virtually static so that the political problem consists, not in changing it as the pacifist would do, but in accepting and constraining it. (p112)

In reaching his conclusions, Calvocoressi traces four threads through what is essentially an historical analysis. These are the primacy of individual morality and individual responsibility for the actions of the state, the development of the Just War doctrine as an abdication by the Christian Church of its pacifist foundations, the limited influence of pacifism when exercised by individuals against its considerable political influence when exercised by pragmatic groups, and, finally, the place of law in conflict resolution.

Calvocoressi’s pacifist reference point is the Christian position. He can be excused from excluding a consideration of the impact of other traditions, such as the military or secular writers like Vattel, as he is concerned to demonstrate the formation of pacifist groups and, in his view, their general impotence. However, it is his strict interpretation of the narrow pacifist beginnings of the Christian church that result in the first challenge. He ignores both the realism of Christ’s message and the social context in which the early Christians, a small sect, could concentrate on the pacifist element of Christ’s teachings to the apparent exclusion of all else.

It is irrelevant whether or not It is to their [the early Christian fathers] meticulous pedantry as well as fierce obturacy that we owe the preservation of pacifism, the praise of peace, which they inherited in the Christian message. and therefore one may question the reason for making such an assertion. The same can be asked of statements like ... Kruschev’s insane attempt to place missiles in the American hemisphere (for which he paid with his dismissal) (p121). The answer is, of course, that these are opinions, emotive and at times crusading, perhaps not relevant to the conclusions reached, but consistent with the personal statement made throughout this book. In the final analysis though, this does not detract from the central theme of this section which is that In this transition from pacifism to Just War the fourth century AD was pivotal. (p19) He then develops this idea towards the conclusion that the church developed the doctrine of Just War to accommodate the state and then lost control when its doctrine was seized upon by ... independent monarchs, a new breed of statesman serving the monarch and the embryonic (sic) art of diplomacy ... (p31) This is eminently supportable although it does tend to ignore the constraints on the Church throughout the development of the international society from Roman Empire to one of independent sovereign states.

His intention in tracing this evolution is, apparently, to be able to charge the church in the modern world with the responsibility for holding in visible trust the long term aim of eradicating war. He desires the church to ... renounce war unequivocally (p125). This then ensures the continued relevance of the individual pacifist who ... proclaims the supreme value of peace although he cannot ensure it (p112) and justifies his past actions. Having done this, Calvocoressi can turn to more practical views regarding a working system to prevent war.

His emphasis on the individual and an individual morality that holds ... that killing and war ... are wrong (p3) reflects that of Walzer,1 and it is here perhaps that he is on his firmest theoretical ground. He develops this theme into a statement that individuals are responsible for the actions of states as There has to be a human agent and the agent who can start a war may prevent one (p177). Although he contradicts himself later by saying ... the central issue is the behaviour of states ... (p183), his thesis is consistent with that of Holmes2 and leads on to his postulation that committed and responsible peace groups can influence the individual perceptions and actions of statesmen. Peace groups, ... whose function is to constrain or propel statesman ... (p113) provide a conduit for popular pressure and responsible popular protest. A group, acting on the morality of the individuals who comprise it, can influence statesman who must also act in accordance with the principles of individual morality. This influence becomes important given the tendency of statesmen to both exist for their in-trays and see the future as a distraction (p158).

Having achieved a condition in which individuals acting with the force of group commitment are propelling statesman to act in terms of individual morality, against a pacifist reference point provided by the church’s complete disavowal of the utility of...
war, Calvocoressi then turns to providing an international framework within which action can be taken to prevent war. He sees the United Nations as this vehicle, using international law.

The attraction of the UN for Calvocoressi is that the rule of international law is now embodied in its Charter and various organs. Its critical elements are its encapsulation of the abrogation by states of their right to war except in self defence and its potential, as yet unrealised, for propelling the world towards a true community. His treatment of the evolution of international organisations into the UN is perfunctory but accurate. His treatment of international law in regards to war is perfunctory, confusing and the weakest element of the work.

Having established the continued relevance of international law, despite the fact that its... shackles... are more obtrusive than its benefits... (p129), he asserts that a workable international order must be built around the concept of sovereignty (p137). He suggests that from sovereignty flows the principle of non-intervention which cannot be overturned even to support humanitarian intervention or the right to self determination. His suggestion that both humanitarian intervention and intervention to support the right to self determination should be eschewed because they are too open to abuse is particularly pacifist. Irrespective of the good that such intervention might do, as in the case of Tanzania's invasion of Uganda, it must be not occur as... peace between states is paramount (p134). Although the importance of sovereignty is a reason-