



AUSTRALIAN
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Australian Defence Force JOURNAL

Journal of the Australian Profession of Arms

Issue No. 203, 2018



Address to Defence Mental Health Speakers Series

The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, AO, Australian War Memorial

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Anne Goyne, Department of Defence

Keynote speeches from Sea Power Conference, October 2017

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Major Kelly Dunne, Australian Army

The Constructive Contrarian: Roger J. Spiller remembered

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Foreword

The Department of Defence considers the mental health and wellbeing of its people as a high priority. For many years we have conducted significant research on the complex issues of military mental health. This research has underpinned the development of ways to support our people in the workplace and at home; both military and APS; before, during and after deployments; and in their transitions between Defence and civilian life.

There is always more that can be done to understand the needs of our people. The recent release of the *Defence Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2023* incorporates the latest mental health research and implements a whole-of-organisation 'One Defence' approach that recognises the needs of our integrated workforce.

I am pleased to see the ADF's flagship Journal feature articles dealing with mental health.

They offer to raise awareness and create the opportunity to continue the conversation about critical issues. These are not easy subjects to deal with and they are not unique to Defence. As the Chief of the Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin, AC said in this *Journal* in November 2015, '[t]here is no shame in seeking help and until we, as a community, change our thinking to accept and acknowledge that, even the best mental health treatment programs in the world will fail because this is an issue for our nation, not just those we rely on to protect us'. We all need to play a role in eradicating the stigma around mental illness. We need to work together to encourage each other to get the

help needed regardless of the origin of an illness or injury.

The Joint Health Command's ADF Health and Wellbeing Portal 'Fighting Fit' and the Work Health Safety Mental Health Portal support access to the services available to all current Defence personnel and their families, and ex-serving ADF Members. The portals also provide targeted resources for specific personnel and situations, including Commanders and managers, Reservists, ADF members preparing for deployment, veterans, and health professionals. Dr Brendan Nelson's featured speech forms a part of these initiatives as the inaugural presentation in the *Defence Mental Health Speaker Series*. His is an intensely personal narrative demonstrating that struggles with mental health do not discriminate for age, gender, or occupation. His advice for those serving in, or supporting, our Profession of Arms is a reflection of the aim of Defence to encourage our people to look out for each other, to reduce barriers to treatment, and to increase understanding, compassion and support for those affected.

I trust these articles will contribute to ongoing debate, discussion and research on mental health and wellbeing in the ADF.

Air Vice-Marshal Tracy Smart, AM
Commander Joint Health, Surgeon General
Australian Defence Force





Chair's comments



Welcome to Issue No. 203 of the *Australian Defence Force Journal*.

This issue comprises a pleasing range of quality contributions, including letters to the editor, two articles on the theme of mental health, the keynote speeches from the RAN's Sea Power Conference held in Sydney in early October, a range of general articles, a commentary piece, a number of book reviews and an obituary.

The Board has selected the article by Lieutenant Colonel Leon Young, titled 'The Conservative Colonel: how being creative killed your career in the ADF', as the best article in this issue. He will receive a certificate signed personally by the Chief of the Defence Force and the Secretary of the Department of Defence. The Board also 'highly commended' the article by Major David Cave on Operation COMPASS, who will receive a similar certificate.

We intend to continue with a themed section in each issue, and have listed the topics for future issues at the end of this issue, noting that the March/April 2018 theme will be 'Air Power in the 21st century'. Contributions on that and the normal range of general topics are sought by mid-January, which can be in the form of commentary/opinion pieces of 1000-2000 words or more standard articles around 4000 words.

Also, a reminder that if you are interested in becoming a book reviewer, please send your details to editoradffjournal@internode.on.net to be placed on the circulation list of books provided by publishers both in Australia and overseas.

This edition represents my last as the Chair of the Journal. It has been my pleasure to serve in this role and it is with satisfaction that I hand over a reinvigorated Journal with a renewed focus on the Profession of Arms. In particular, it is pleasing to see that we are drawing more submissions from the junior ranks who are keen to engage with the fundamental issues facing their profession in the 21st Century. I would like to extend my thanks to all Board members who have worked with me on the Journal's journey. The new Chair, Major General Mick Ryan, is a great champion of the written word and will continue to strengthen the Journal and encourage debate and discourse around the contemporary challenges for the ADF. I hope you enjoy this issue.

Ian Errington, AM, CSC

Principal

Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies

Chair Australian Defence Force Journal Board



Letters to the editor

The role and function of the ADF and civil police

Captain John Sutton's article in Issue No. 202 raises a number of important issues. One of those is the creeping militarisation of the police in Australia. The change is happening before our eyes—without informed discussion, political debate or public oversight. The police have no incentive to say 'No' to military assault rifles, flash bang grenades or armoured personnel carriers. But do we, as a society, really want to see our police so heavily armed, looking, and sometimes behaving, like an invasion force? Is it necessary or desirable? The more the police are given military-style weaponry, the more likely they are to use it. As the saying goes, 'if all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail'.

There is a vital cultural and philosophical difference between the military and the police. The military is trained to use maximum force to kill and destroy the enemy, while the traditional role of the police is to protect the community, serve the public and keep the peace. The warrior culture of the military is, or should be, anathema to the police. The excessive militarisation of the police—through more powerful arms and more sophisticated equipment—inevitably contributes to a mentality among some police officers that encourages them to think of the people they are supposed to serve as enemies. The tactics of the battlefield, and the use of unnecessarily aggressive and high-powered weapons,

should have no place among our police forces. The mission of the police is not to wage war but to protect and safeguard.

There is a body of existing work that establishes that excessive police militarisation is a problem with unforeseen and undesirable consequences. Those consequences include: tragedy for civilians and police officers, escalation of the risk of violence and the undermining of personal rights and freedoms. It is probable that most Australians do not want to see the Americanisation of our police forces. There are legitimate questions as to whether the creeping militarisation of the police in Australia is in the best interests of our nation; and whether an appropriate response to the relatively few genuine domestic terror incidents is best left to the ADF. Those questions deserve responsible public scrutiny. Captain Sutton's article is a valuable step toward such discussion.

The Hon. Justice Michael Pembroke

Judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales

The role and function of the ADF and civil police

I have just read Captain John Sutton's article, 'The increasing convergence of the role and function of the ADF and civil police', in Issue No. 202 of the *ADF Journal*. Great stuff, in particular, a good effort to link the various reasons we have separation of powers with our current situation.

Despite having worked with State response groups, I really hadn't thought about the strategic ramifications of such TTP [tactics, techniques and procedures] crossover—particularly if Australia found itself in a situation where a State police force, or a State itself, was in deep political conflict with the Commonwealth.

I wonder though about the practical results of his central argument, that is, pushing paramilitary response capabilities back to the ADF. Removing (what I consider to be) the medium-level response capabilities from police and putting them back into the ADF capability spectrum could exacerbate the issue of slow response times. I would contend that his point on page 39 that 'the ADF has a wide range of capabilities that could be deployed rapidly and efficiently to respond to virtually any internal incident' is not quite true under the current arrangements, as significant ADF domestic responses can take hours to mobilise.

Terrorist situations, in particular, are better resolved (with less loss of life and property) the faster the response. Certainly, the terrorist threat environment in Australia is geared toward low-capability attacks involving knives and cars, which may be over in a matter of minutes and potentially contained by police patrols. But we still need the ability to quickly contain and resolve larger and more complex plots, which might involve more sophisticated terrorist weapons and tactics.

It seems to me that we'd need to do some hard thinking on how any such expanded ADF domestic response capability could be postured to ensure rapid response and resolution.

Again, good article!

Captain E, Australian Army

[Editor's note: full name provided but withheld for security reasons]

Health command and technical control

The article by Colonel Reade et al, 'Command versus technical authority: lessons from the 2nd General Health Battalion', in Issue No. 200 of the *ADF Journal* advocated that the command and

control arrangements of the 2nd General Health Battalion should apply elsewhere within the ADF. This would entail health units being commanded by a non-clinical general staff officer, while health technical control would be provided by a medical officer Director of Clinical Services.

While the article contends that these arrangements replicate the management structure of every major Australian civilian hospital since the 1980s, this is not necessarily true for many rural and remote civilian hospitals of comparable size to the 2nd General Health Battalion. Furthermore, it is understood the current arrangements for the 2nd General Health Support Battalion stem from a shortfall in suitable medical officers in the late 2000s, rather than a conscious decision to reflect civilian hospital practice. It is suggested that ex post facto justification should not preclude Army clinical officers with the appropriate abilities and interest from undertaking future command roles.

The article also arguably perpetuates an ADF health care model that prioritises treatment services at the expense of other military health functions. It does not address ongoing management shortcomings, such as the ADF's environmental hazards in its base settings, or assessing medical suitability for employment and deployment, or the ADF's aviation, diving and submarine and medicine services.

Unlike Army, all Navy and RAAF health officers have a clinical background. Even so, many of these officers have successfully performed deployed and non-deployed health command roles over many years. In so doing, they continue to demonstrate the benefits of military health officers not only having consummate clinical expertise but also a comparable understanding of the relevant operational environment. This particularly includes providing clinical advice to operational unit commanders, without filtering through a non-clinical third party.

The article correctly indicates that clinical expertise alone does not translate into the ability to command. Furthermore, many—but not all—clinical officers prefer clinical rather than management roles. Even so, the experience of all three Services validates the contention that it is easier to teach command skills to clinicians, than clinical skills to commanders.

Managing military health services requires a combination of clinical and non-clinical skills which, depending on the size and scope of the health services being provided, may be beyond the capacity of a single individual. If achieving the full range of managerial skill sets requires two people, the nature of military service implies that one will be subordinate to the other.

It is therefore contended that maximum benefits accrue to ADF operational capability, maximum flexibility accrues to career managers, and maximum benefits accrue to individual personal aspirations, if *all* ADF clinical officers have an opportunity to assume command roles, technical control roles or both. If these roles have to be split, selecting who performs which should be based on the best combination of the candidates available. Sometimes, the best health and operational outcomes may be achieved with a clinical commander supported by a non-clinical staff officer; otherwise, vice-versa may apply.

Dr Neil Westphalen

Commander, Royal Australian Navy Reserve

Erratum

In the article by Dr Jim Sheffield and co-authors titled 'Debiasing the military appreciation process', published in Issue No. 202 (July/August 2017), the diagrams on pages 75 and 76 were inadvertently transposed. What appeared as Figure 3 should have been Figure 4 and vice-versa, although the titles were shown correctly. The Editor apologises to the authors. The on-line version has been corrected accordingly.



Address to Defence Mental Health Speakers Series

The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, AO, Australian War Memorial

The Board acknowledges the potential sensitivity of publishing articles on the subject of mental health. The intention is to increase awareness and understanding of its extent within, and impact on, the ADF and Australian society more broadly. However, should individuals be adversely affected by anything in this article or the following one, they are strongly encouraged to seek appropriate assistance and support from any of the services listed at the end of each article.

You don't realise what you are learning when you are learning it. I have found in my life that I learn something every day. It is often in random moments of quiet revelation, when I least expect it, that the most significant things that have transcended, transformed and shaped my own thinking and attitude to a variety of things have come. The power of it is in the story.

We thought we managed it alright, we put the awful things out of our minds. But I am an old man now and they come out from the places where I hid them every night.

Those are the words of Jim McPhee. He was in the First Field Ambulance in World War 1, a stretcher bearer at Gallipoli, Pozières, Mouquet Farm, Flers, Villers-Bretonneux, the Amiens offensive and Passchendaele.

Albert Jacka, in the Hall of Valour at the Australian War Memorial, was one of the bravest of the brave. Victoria Cross recipient, as well as Military Cross with Bar. But there is no doubt that after

the artillery bombardment at Pozières, Jacka suffered and suffered seriously from post-traumatic stress. His very close friend told Jacka's biographer that even the sharp closing of a biscuit tin would start him shaking uncontrollably for hours. On one occasion, when the media came to talk to him about one of his actions of heroism, Jacka told his mate to 'tell them I am dead'. He died at the age of 39. Early and young as a consequence, in no small way, of the psychological traumas he carried through his service to our nation. It contaminated his personal and business relationships and had an enduring and negative impact on him.

We recently commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Kokoda campaign. The 'ragged, bloody heroes' as they are called. Literally heroes in our lives, who defended our vital interests in the gripping struggle at Kokoda. The official military historian, Dudley McCarthy, gave a clue to it many years ago when he said:

It is the story of small groups of men, infinitesimally small, against the mountains in which they fought. Who killed one another in stealthy isolated encounters on the edge of a track that were life to them all; of warfare in which men first conquered the terrain, then allied themselves with it to kill or to die in the midst of great loneliness.

In 2000, one of the survivors, Sergeant Jack Sim, who had been a shop assistant from Ballarat, and is sometimes pictured just staring into an empty space, into the camera barrel, remembered that:

Some prayed, some swore with fear. But you would not show it in front of your mates. One of the boys got shot fair between the eyes right beside me. It was a perfect shot. Terrible to be afraid but it was the brave ones who were afraid that still kept going. That's what they did you know. Scared bloody stiff but they still kept going. They were so young. I loved them all.... [Then, almost an afterthought, he said] ... [n]obody went to that war or any other war I suppose that was not injured mentally, if not physically.

For my part, I grew up in Launceston in northern Tasmania, in a little suburb called Newnham. In my 13th year, my father took me for a walk down the street. He said 'son, have a look at the houses in the street'. My father was a marine chief steward, who worked for a shipping company called Hollermans, on a small ship that plied between Launceston and Melbourne. It seemed an odd thing to say but he continued:

Your mother and I do not have any money; we do not know powerful people. The only way you are ever going to live in a better house than the one in which you are growing up is if you work as hard as you can at school.

Several months later they sold the house and moved to Adelaide. They could not afford to live in Hobart at the time; they wanted to live in a city where there was a university, in case one of their children might have the opportunity to go. The paradox is that today there is a university campus at Newnham, the University of Tasmania. My father then lost his job and was unemployed for almost two years.

When I was 14, my mother was trying to console me about things that I had been involved with. She said that in the end, your life is going

to be determined by the people and the causes to which it is committed. While it didn't make much sense at the time, I said to my father later in my life that there is never a better place to live and grow up than one in which you are loved and wanted. The paradox is that we tend to take for granted the things that are most important in our lives: families who love us and give meaning, support and context to our lives. Friends, I mean real friends, who are there when you need them.

The other thing we take even more for granted is our emotional resilience. When my father was emerging from his unemployment, I asked if I could go back to a Catholic school. My mother was a devout Irish Catholic but my father was an Orange Lodge Methodist, who typically did not even talk to each other in 1957. I had been at a very good government school but felt something was missing. So I spent two years with the Jesuits, although my father went to the school three times before they accepted me. I learnt four things from the Jesuits that have informed everything I have done since. They told me pretty much every day, not directly but reinforced in many ways, that four things were essential for your resilience and success.

The first is commitment. You consistently apply yourself to the things in which you believe. You don't give up. It is one of those qualities in the Hall of Memory at the Australian War Memorial—endurance. The second is conscience. Every single decision you make has a question under it and that is 'what is the right thing to do?'. The Jesuits said to me there is no such thing as big or small decisions, they are all important. Every single decision you make in your life has consequences for you and for others. As the 17th century Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant said:

In this context, every human being is an end unto himself and not a means to be used by others. Respect for the humanity of others will be found in respect for your own humanity, and morality is freedom.

What that means is that if you believe you are doing the right thing, and have considered it and consider it to be so, you are free. Free of many things, including those that contribute to emotional ill health.

The third thing I was taught was compassion. It literally means to share another person's pain.

Almost all of human suffering and misery comes from people who make themselves the centre of their own lives. What is important in life is not to know what people think. You can ask the people you work with every day what they think about a particular issue. What is far more important is to be imbued with the imaginative capacity to understand how they think. How does this person form his or her worldview? What are the things that impinge on this person's thinking, what are the things that shape his or her life, and how does this then shape their attitudes. That is essential not only if you want to change the attitudes of other people but also if you want them to support you in achieving a common objective and, in turn, if you want to support them.

The fourth thing I was taught is courage. Whatever you choose to do, nothing is achieved without taking a risk. When I left school, I didn't know what to do. I was good at economics, so I thought I would do an economics degree. At the end of the first term, I thought this was not for me, I was either going to end up an accountant or a public servant! You can imagine writing to my father at sea and explaining not only that I had dropped out but that I didn't know what I was going to do. I got a job in a department store selling doors and curtain fittings. Later, when I was out knocking on doors and kissing babies in politics, with angry women answering the door, I could at least disarm them by talking about the curtains!

I thought a lot about it and it seemed that the people who seemed happiest in life were those who spent their lives in the service of others. I subsequently decided I wanted to be a policeman. However, by the time I applied, they said I was too old, so I applied for medicine at Flinders University and was accepted. Now, at that time, I had a sister who was a year younger than me, and a brother who was a year younger than her. My sister was going out with a young boy about my age but, after a few months, the relationship ended as my sister had decided it was time to move on. Then, at a party, he said to her, 'If you don't come back I will kill myself'. She of course said, 'Don't be so stupid'. A week later, he killed himself with an overdose and, a week later, she tried to do the same and almost succeeded.

I was only 20 at the time and our whole family was thrown into a world that was completely

unknown to us. The immense trauma and impact was beyond any capacity I have to explain but I remember it as if it was yesterday. In those days, services and support and awareness of this stuff was extraordinarily rudimentary. We were living with the remnants of an age where there was a certain stigma associated with mental illness and, certainly, with people who took their own lives or attempted to do so. It was the stalwart support of a Jesuit priest, counselling my family, that got us through. But those events completely changed the shape of our lives.

Simultaneously, my younger brother—who had been a shy, quiet boy, going to the same Jesuit school—had got to his mid-teens and started to manifest anti-social behaviour. The first instance was when he was found by the police riding a motorbike at the age of 15, without a licence, on the wrong side of the road. He then drifted into the bikie culture of the 'one percenters'. I was at university studying my guts out and had two part-time jobs, and couldn't understand why my brother was engaged in a whole lot of extremely anti-social activities. He would disappear for months, then turn up at home and my parents would welcome him in. I used to say to my father, 'Why are you doing this? You know what he is doing'.

My brother would bring elements of the life he was living to their home. But my parents never locked him out. They never said anything that was—I realise in hindsight—damaging to him in the longer term. It wasn't until 1984 that my brother called to say he had shingles. He rang a couple of months later and said he had shingles again. Getting shingles twice is a significant concern. I said to him, after strongly advising him to get further medical testing, that 'You might have that new disease, AIDS'. Anyway, suddenly his life turned around completely. He became a vegetarian and was going off to Thailand to spend time with monks. Finally, in 1990, he said to me, 'I've got AIDS'.

In the early 1990s, I had been running two medical practices in Tasmania, had gone through the leadership of the AMA at both state and national level, and made the decision that I could not get any more done unless I went into parliament. So I sold my house in Hobart and moved to Sydney with my family and, in 1995, stood for pre-selection. That was character building and a test

of my emotional resilience, especially when you turn up in Sydney, never having lived there and coming from a Labor background, to challenge the sitting member in the safest Liberal seat in the country. In the middle of that, my brother was dying.

However, the hardest job I ever had was Minister for Defence [2006-07]. I regarded it as my responsibility, first and foremost, to care for everyone within the organisation. I also came to realise that while the uniformed people, who wear the uniform and for whom we have the highest respect, are quite rightly honoured by our nation in all kinds of ways, increasingly our civilians deployed into these operational environments take very similar risks. One such individual said to me, 'If I got killed in Afghanistan, I won't be on a bronze panel or a Roll of Honour or anything of the sort ... [although] they might name a pond after me'. Therein is just one of the challenges that our nation and Defence is going to have to come to terms, in terms of respect and recognition of those who serve alongside those who are wearing the uniform.

I would also add one other thing. I have two children from a previous marriage and a 25-year old step-daughter. I went through the agony of divorce—and agony is the only way to describe it. I remember sitting in a cabinet meeting and there was a discussion about child support arrangements and divorce and so on, which I found quite offensive. I realised I was the only person in that room who had been divorced. I said to the person leading this conversation, 'Do you really think that any person actually gets married with any intention other than making it succeed?'. Therein is just one example of how people can be insensitive to and ignorant of the feelings of others.

But I married again and have been for 18 years. However, a number of years ago, my son's mother called and said our son is missing. We reported him as a missing person. That was our introduction to two years of the worst time I have ever been through. The only thing that has ever kept me awake was worrying about my son. It was a hailstorm; we were introduced to a world of rave parties, drugs and people you would not want your children associated with. I drew on what my parents did with my brother, and what I used to say to my patients. I would say there

are a small percentage of people who are genetically programmed for self-destruction. Most will come though the other side, so don't say the things you feel like saying. Restrain yourself and, a bit like the prodigal son, keep welcoming them back.

Just prior to that, I had a bizarre experience. I had been Minister for Education for a few weeks and took the senior leadership of the department for a retreat at Bowral. I had been thinking about the vision for the portfolio and wanted to get to know the senior leadership who would have to enact the policy. I was driving back to Canberra with a very senior person. I asked him what he was going to do that night. There was a pause and he said, 'I will probably spend most of tonight looking for my daughter who is a heroin addict'. He said to me, 'You get to the point where you think "if they are alive, I am in front"'.

Three months later, that was me. I would get home at 8.30 at night, then go around all sorts of places into the early hours of the morning. My son was arrested on one occasion and I thought, 'Well this is it, the media and all that'. I was worried for him. Then it all stopped as quickly as it had started. I had confided some of these things to very good friend—and that is something else, you do need to share some of this stuff, you cannot just carry it all around yourself. You need to have people and relationships, and you need to nurture relationships such that you can share these kinds of things. My friend owned some nursing homes and gave my son a job. It had an in-built pecking order, in fact it was a bit like the Army. My son discovered gardening, got a landscaping apprenticeship and never looked back. Today, I am immensely proud of him and what he has achieved.

Turning more specifically to the subject at hand, there was a study done by the Victorian Centre for Adolescent Health in 1999 called the 'Gatehouse Study'. It was a study of 2600 year-8 students over a 3-year period. Forty per cent of that cohort could not name a single person who knew them well; that is, to know who is my best friend, what is my pet's name, what is my favourite music, that kind of thing. A quarter could not name a single person they thought they could trust. Not a parent, not a teacher, not a family friend, nobody. That cohort is now in their late-20s or early-30s.

We often focus on mental health among our Defence and former Defence personnel. But it is often not understood in a context where today, the leading cause of death between the ages of 15-44 is suicide. More people are dying from suicide than from breast cancer, pancreatic cancer and liver disease. Something has happened over the space of a generation where we have reduced the toll from disease and accident but have had very little impact on that exacted by despair. Eight suicides a day, one every 10 days, in the ACT: anxiety, phobias, panic attacks, affective disorders, depression, alcohol, drug use, PTSD from a variety of causes, and suicidal ideation.

There have been three things found to build resilience in people's lives. One is that in the formative years, you need to have a stable and loving relationship with at least one adult, preferably a parent. Often, and one of the things I have learned the hard way, is that often you need to say 'no', if you are a parent in particular. And if you are not a parent and you have a partner that you love, you sometimes have to say 'no': such as, 'No, I am not going to this event, I am going to have a night off'. I have forced on myself at times that I have to be home to have dinner. Even if you go back to work afterwards, that is something worth doing. The people who care about you, and about whom you care, need to know that you really do care and you don't just say it.

The second thing that builds resilience is to feel you are a part of a community where other people understand who you are and where you also understand them. Your identity is built by the relationships you have. As you know, we are all different. Some people are easier to like and get on with than others, and it is very tempting in life just to associate with people who have attractive personalities. One of the things I learned 20 years ago is that there is always a small group of people who do not fit in. They are the people you really have a responsibility to reach out to. How often do you find that once you get beyond a person who is not the most physically attractive, or may not have the most desirable personality, how often do you really reach out and get to know them, and then discover to your surprise there is actually a wonderful person there?

The third thing is to live in a society that gives meaning and purpose to your life. We seem to have created a culture where young people, in

particular, think they have nothing other than themselves in which to believe. When I was born, it was God, King and Country. For a lot of reasons, those things now have holes in them and not all of them are good. But too many young people, in my view, are embracing values for the society they think they are going to get, not the one they want. Mistrust, cynicism, detachment, materialism and impatience, instead of values for the world they want.

These are sweeping generalisations but, generally, your profession is a part of that solution. I say to young people that the values that are enshrined in the stained-glass windows above the 'Unknown Australian Soldier' are the values you need to look to in order to build a life of value and meaning. Increasingly, they are looking for and finding meaning in what you represent. 'The good and the bad', as Charles Bean said, 'the great and the small'. I have learned also that the Australian War Memorial is a part of the therapeutic milieu of the ADF's community of people. And I am looking increasingly for ways for this to be the case for the civilian side of Defence as well. One of the things we are planning at the Australian War Memorial is a feature on what Australia does to prevent war and to maintain and keep peace—both in terms of diplomatic and military capability—and what the civilian contribution has been.

In terms of this therapeutic milieu, one of the things I have learned is that I don't know what it is like to do what the military does, to be in an operation. As Minister, I visited Australians deployed on operations. But unless you have done what another person has done, even if you have the capacity to imagine their world, you do not really know. I often thought, 'What is it like to come back?'. Jim McPhee came back to Australia after the First World War. How was he supposed to explain to anyone what he had seen and been through? How do you do it today: you can't explain it to your own family, let alone the rest of the country.

In response to the Afghanistan exhibition at the Australian War Memorial, among the many letters we received was one from a Navy officer. It meant so much to me, I can assure you. He said, 'Sir, thank you for telling my 11-year old son, in words I never could, why his father has spent so much time away from home'. Among those we

interviewed was Dan Costello, commanding an engineer detachment in Afghanistan. He spoke very courageously about the death of Sergeant Brett Till, while disarming an improvised explosive device [IED]. Courage comes in different forms, and it takes a lot of courage to tell your story.

Dan Costello told us, 'It was Major Wakelin who gave me the confidence to keep going'. They had been escorting commandos into Helmand province. They had a convoy of Bushmasters and the combat engineers were out front, clearing IEDs. They had been up all night. Major Wakelin said, 'Mate, as traumatic as it is losing a mate ... there are 144 guys who need you and we have a mission to complete. I need you and your guys to get us to Helmand'. Dan continued:

I had to walk back to the front [of the convoy] to compose myself and get my blokes ... to keep going. I said "fellas, I am hurting as much as you are at this stage". I was crying in front of them as well. I said, "It is horrific what has happened, I cannot put your mind at ease but I am going back out in front to keep going. There are 144 guys behind us that are shit scared and they won't do anything without us. Who is coming with me?" Two blokes put their hands up ... and off we went. We kept going and we kept going all that night'.

Another of my heroes is Captain Nick Perriman, relating to the insider attack and death of Lance Corporal Andrew Jones in May 2011. Nick said:

Andrew was still conscious at this stage and I was trying to keep him conscious by getting him ... to tell us what had happened. However, he could not really speak, he was trying but I could tell it was taking a lot out of him. It probably took 15 minutes for my medic to arrive. That sounds like a long time. But he was two kilometres away and he ran carrying 30 kilograms to get to us. He could have won an Olympic medal for how fast he ran that day ... running through the Afghan dust, exposed, just to get there. He didn't say anything other than to get the combat first-aider to tell him what had happened. I looked down ... and I thought at that point that Andrew had died. I grabbed his hand and I said, "Stay with me Jonesy".

When he got back to Australia, Nick Perriman did something that in my view takes a lot of courage. He went and saw Andrew's family. This is, of course, what leadership is about. It is what the CDF and Service Chiefs and what all of

you do but it takes a lot of courage. Nick said of going to see the family:

I guess I didn't have to but I felt obliged to. I wanted his parents to be able to talk to someone who was right there when it happened. I wanted them to see me as the person who was responsible at the time and I wanted them to be able to ask me questions. It was the right thing to do. I remember I was very, very nervous. I don't know what I was expecting but when I got there, a lot of the family was there. It was not just his mum and dad, it was the whole family. Andrew's mum was distraught and his father was quiet and listened to what I had to say. He didn't say much but he was obviously still very, very much grieving. I look back on going to see them and I am so glad I did. I still talk to his mother today ... and she calls me now and then, and I am amazed at the strength of her and David and the rest of the family in dealing with Andrew's death and not allowing it to consume their lives. They have been really involved in the veteran community. Andrew's mum never blamed me. It was tough going to see them but it was the right thing to do and I am glad that I did.

Finally, I'd like to mention a couple of things that callers have said to Lifeline, which is one of those charities I do my best to try and help. Here again is part of the solution. One caller said:

Today was the day I was planning to take my own life. Instead, I chose to walk into the light. Why? Because someone reached out to me when I needed it. My lifeline is the goodness in people's hearts and the willingness of strangers to do extraordinary acts of kindness. It is just enough in my case to keep me here, thank you.

Another said:

I spoke to a crisis supporter tonight. She took me from tears and being convinced that no-one cares about me, to smiling. If I had sleeping tablets in the house I would not be here. She helped me realise I need treatment again for depression. Thank you.

And then another:

Thank you for taking my call when I thought no-one would. I have never been so low and felt so alone with no-one to talk to. Thank you for hearing my darkest thoughts, for staying with me, for reminding me I have reasons to go on. You saved three lives that night.

In concluding, I'll mention the brilliant ABC documentary that was broadcast in early 2016, *Afghanistan: inside Australia's longest war*. In the third and final episode, Sergeant S. from the Special Air Services Regiment, reflecting on the battle of Tizak—in which Corporal Ben Roberts-Smith was awarded the Victoria Cross—with tears streaming down his face, said:

To fail would be worse than death. To let down your mates in combat would be worse than death. I don't know why I get so emotional about this stuff but that is the essence, you don't let your mates down.

The other paradox is that the most powerful and fragile of human emotions is 'hope'. We all have to believe in a better tomorrow. Tomorrow is going to be better than today, next week better than this, and next year better than this one. Not so much for ourselves but for those we love, perhaps our community and our country. What most sustains hope is people—men and women who reach out in support of one another. That is the legacy that your uniform leaves us. It is everything at the War Memorial.

A life of value is one spent in the service of other human beings. It is people who reach out, as Jack Sim in the 39th Battalion did, even when gripped by fear. You don't let one another down. The other thing coming back to where I started is the things that are often most important in our lives. T.S. Elliot wrote of family love, saying:

There is no vocabulary for love within a family. Love that is lived in but not looked at. Love beneath the light of which all other love is seen. Love within which all other love finds voice. This love is silent.

What is most important is that you do not allow it to be silent. All of us have different lives; we are different people. Some have stable relationships, others choose to be single. Some have children, others don't. But the things that are most important to us, don't ever take them for granted. As Tom Wolfe said, 'Before you know it, it will be gone, whatever it is'.

The other thing is in terms of the workplace. Over the years, I have worked with a lot of people. I have worked with people I have immense admiration for and I have worked with people I do not like. I have even had a few that I detest. But they will never know that. I can proudly say

that not one person I have worked with would say, 'Nelson never liked me'. They never knew because, the way I see it in a workplace, you need to get the best you can out of everybody.

You have to inspire people, you have to give them vision in terms of where you want to go and what you want to achieve. You have to work out what people have to offer and then get them to give it to you in order to achieve it. Among the many things you have to do is to make people feel reverence for themselves. Make people feel they are important, even if you don't particularly like them.

Dr Brendan Nelson—as a practising doctor, Defence Minister and now a public figure—has devoted considerable time and effort over many years to help people with mental health issues, including Australia's veterans. In addition to being the Director of the Australian War Memorial, Dr Nelson is a Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Australian National University; a member of the Chief Scientist's Advisory Council; and Patron of Lifeline ACT, Trish MS Research, the Weary Dunlop Foundation, Soldier On and the NSW RSL. He is also an Ambassador for Legacy, the Invictus Games and the Defence Reserves Association.

If you or someone you know needs help, call:

- Emergency on 000 (or 112 from a mobile)
- ADF All-hours Helpline on 1800 628 036
- Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608
- APS Employee Assistance Program on 1300 361 008
- Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service on 1800 011 046
- Lifeline on 13 11 14 or <https://www.lifeline.org.au>
- Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636 or <http://www.beyondblue.org.au>
- Headspace on 1800 650 890
- Kids Helpline 1800 551 800
- Mensline Australia on 1300 789 978
- Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467

Notes

- 1 This is an abridged and edited version of a speech delivered at the 'Defence Mental Health Speaker Series' in mid-2017.



Suicide, male honour and the masculinity paradox: its impact on the ADF

Anne Goyne, Department of Defence

Introduction

While there are few human problems as complex or multi-determinate as suicide, one factor remains constant: men are considerably more likely to end their lives by suicide than women.¹ To emphasise this point, of the 803,900 suicides world-wide in 2012, 506,487 (65%) were men, which equates to a rate of 15 per 100,000 for men and 8 per 100,000 for women.

The gender disparity in global suicide rates remains evident even though women have double the risk of engaging in suicide-related behaviours—such as non-fatal suicide attempts—and almost twice the rate of diagnosed major depression, a condition often associated with suicide risk.² However, in high-income countries such as Australia, the US and UK, the male rate of suicide can rise to over three times that of females. Indeed, the combined male rate of suicide for first-world countries reported by the World Health Organization

is 19.9 per 100,000 men, compared to 5.7 per 100,000 women.

Despite a recent reduction in the prevalence of suicide globally, it remains one of the leading causes of death for young people in the West.³ In Australia, suicide is the leading cause of death for men and women aged between 15–44.⁴ However, men had a suicide rate of 17.8 deaths per 100,000 compared to 5.8 per 100,000 women in 2016.⁵ Moreover, while young men make up most of the world's completed suicides, middle-aged and elderly men in the Western world have the highest suicide rate for their respective age groups.⁶ In other words, suicide amongst men in the West is not simply a factor of youth (higher risk taking, impulsivity and/or aggression) but reflects something uniquely male in a cultural context.

There is an interesting paradox in Australia that one of the safest occupations for young men is serving in the ADF. Overall, the rate of suicide

for men serving full-time in the ADF is 53 per cent lower than the general population.⁷ However, for ex-serving men, the suicide rate is 13 per cent higher than the general population, with those aged 18-24 having double the rate of the general population. By contrast, serving and ex-serving women have a suicide rate so low it is difficult to conduct any meaningful analysis.⁸

This article examines these issues and advances the proposition that the risk of suicide in Australia—and in the ADF—is linked to a culture of honour that is deeply ingrained in the psyche of young men with a predominantly Anglo-Scottish-Irish background. It argues that Australia and the ADF must look more deeply at the way men and women treat men, that men must be encouraged to open up and talk when they need help, and that suicide must be regarded not as an honourable solution but as a tragedy.

Gender and method of suicide

One common explanation for the disparity in male and female suicide in the West is that men choose more lethal methods of suicide, such as a firearm, while women choose potentially less lethal methods, such as poisoning.⁹ In Australia, the most common method of suicide for men is a firearm, whereas hanging is the second most common for both men and women.¹⁰ Regardless of the method of suicide chosen by either gender, women in the West seem to survive suicide attempts in much higher numbers than men.

To fully understand this point, it might be helpful to examine a country where women have a higher rate of suicide than men, namely China.¹¹ Pesticide poisoning is the most common method of suicide for both men and women in rural China.¹² Given that it is such a commonly used and almost always fatal method of suicide, it is doubtful either gender group would be unaware that consuming a pesticide is likely to end in death. Accordingly, the fact that women in rural China have a higher rate of suicide is seemingly because rural Chinese women intend to die rather than survive a suicide attempt. If Western women behaved the same way, the suicide rate among women in Western countries would be affected markedly.

While women in the West generally do not have at their disposal the range of highly-toxic

chemicals available in rural China, it seems fair to conclude that if they really wanted to end their lives by suicide, they would be able to do so. The difference between women in a country like China and women in the West is that women in Western countries are more likely to choose a method of suicide that allows them to survive.¹³ Indeed, it could be argued this is the 'point' of their behaviour, raising obvious questions about why rural women in China, and Western men, do not behave the same way.

Suicide and suicidal intent

The choice of suicide method provides an indication of the suicidal intentions of the person at the time, and it is the 'intention to die' that seems to differ between men and women in affluent societies, not just that women choose methods that are potentially less lethal.¹⁴ Some authors have argued that women are simply 'less competent' at completing suicide, a view described by George E. Murphy as 'sexist baloney'—and a view certainly disproved by the example of rural women in China.¹⁵

Murphy was one of the first to argue that the population of people who attempt suicide is actually different from the population of people who complete suicide. Indeed, the percentage of people surviving a suicide attempt is so high that Murphy argues the 'intent' behind most is actually to survive.¹⁶ Murphy estimates that 90-95 per cent of all suicide attempts—or 'para-suicides'—regardless of gender, are not intended to result in death but to change unbearable circumstances. According to Murphy, such para-suicides characteristically act impulsively, make provision for rescue (by having others present or notified) and employ slow-acting means, with the ultimate aim of bringing attention to a problem the individual feels cannot be resolved on their own.

The high rate of attempted suicide among women suggests women are more likely to perceive themselves as having serious problems compared to men, therefore increasing their risk of suicidal behaviour. Evidence in favour of this was provided by Lars Wichstrom and Ingeborg Rossow, who investigated gender differences in self-reported suicide attempts by some 9500 Norwegian adolescents.¹⁷ They found

that significantly more girls attempted suicide than boys; however, girls also reported significantly more risk factors, such as depressed mood, disordered eating patterns and lowered self-concept. Interestingly, Wichstrom and Rossow also found that being involved in a romantic relationship more than tripled the likelihood of a suicide attempt for both genders.

While the gender disparity in suicide risk factors may explain why more women attempt suicide, it says nothing about why males are more likely to end their lives by suicide or, indeed, why women are more likely to attempt suicide without apparently intending to die. Discussing this point, Murphy concluded that women are less inclined to want to end their lives because they are more considerate of the impact of suicide on those around them, and that women were more likely to seek help for their problems and heed the advice they receive.

According to Murphy, women are encouraged to share their problems and discuss issues and concerns with peers, whereas men are competitive and find the admission of any weakness 'unthinkable'. He argued that it was male socialisation in Western societies that increased the risk of a more-deadly decision to complete suicide, whereas female socialisation increased the likelihood that a woman would seek and receive help.

Masculinity, violence and suicide

The idea that socialisation could explain the gender paradox in suicide in the Western world has been explained by 'the socialisation model of suicide'.¹⁸ According to this model, suicidal behaviours acquire a 'gendered value', making them more or less congruent with broader masculine and feminine cultural scripts. Hence, it would follow that a suicide attempt without an obvious intent to die would be regarded as 'feminine behaviour', more likely to be chosen by women, whereas completing suicide would be regarded as 'masculine behaviour' because it aligns with male gender norms of being action-focused, aggressive and decisive.

While such a description seems to be touting an unpopular perception of women as less 'action-focused' than men, this is one occasion

where the possession of a more feminine cultural script is a significant survival advantage. Indeed, the influence of gender socialisation in relation to suicide appears so powerful that it justifies revisiting the issue of gender norms in Western society.

Of course, it is not just suicide where socialisation might arguably put men at greater risk of death or injury. According to the socialisation model, potentially any behaviour congruent with masculine norms would show this effect. To test this theory, one has only to look at the statistics for violent crime and death in Australia, where data from the 2012 census indicates that 42 per cent of people over the age of 15 reported having experienced violence perpetrated by a man at some point in their lives, compared to 12 per cent reporting violence at the hands of a woman.¹⁹

More troublingly, young men between 20-29 years were the most likely perpetrators of homicides in Australia, with around 6.5 per 100,000 young men committing murder in 2006-07, compared to <1 per 100,000 young women. There is nothing particularly surprising about this finding as it is entirely consistent with masculine gender norms in almost any part of the world.²⁰ However, what is less appreciated is that men also comprise the majority victims of violent crime, including murder. Indeed, according to a 2015 UN report, 79 per cent of all murder victims are male, and men have a global murder victim rate of 9.7 per 100,000, compared to 2.7 per 100,000 for women.²¹

The results for men in Australia are no different. As shown at Table 1, Australian men are significantly more likely to be victims of almost all forms of interpersonal violence (excluding sexual assault and intimate partner abuse). They also have two-thirds the risk of being a murder victim and are at greater risk of robbery, extortion and even road fatalities compared to women.

Table 1: Victims of suicide, violence and premature death in Australia, 2012-13²²

Problem behaviour	% of total male victims	Number of male victims	% of total female victims	Number of female victims	Year
Completed suicide	75	2030	25	649	2012
Road fatalities	72	940	28	370	2012
Murder	63	157	37	92	2013
Attempted homicide	63	99	37	58	2013
Manslaughter	71	17	29	7	2013
Robbery – all kinds	72	6788	28	2250	2013
Armed robbery (interpersonal)	77	2942	23	893	2013
Extortion/blackmail	71	338	29	140	2013
Total victims	75	13,182	25	4459	2012/13

These results provide reasonable support for a socialisation model of male violence and suicide, suggesting it may be the socialisation of men that puts them at greater risk of dying by suicide as opposed to any other explanation. This appears to particularly apply in a Western culture like Australia. It is therefore surprising how little has been done to address the problem. While Australians are very familiar with the slogan ‘violence against women is wrong’, the community remains largely unaware or even indifferent to the reality that men in this country are at high risk of interpersonal violence, including domestic homicide.²³

But haven’t gender stereotypes changed?

There is little evidence that deeply ingrained perceptions around male and female gender have markedly changed over the past 30 years—indeed, between 1983 and 2014, perceptions of gender stereotypes in the US remained very stable.²⁴ While men working side-by-side with women may have a more open mind about gender-based stereotypes, for most people gender norms and employment choices have not really changed, despite significant changes in attitudes towards women’s rights throughout the industrialised world. However, as outlined earlier, the disparity in suicide risk is not just a factor of being male.

There are also marked differences between men from different cultural backgrounds, which is particularly the case for men with an indigenous background in the US and Australia.²⁵ Indeed, Australian Aboriginal men between 25-29 have an extremely high risk of suicide with a rate of 91 per 100,000.²⁶ However, aside from the appalling toll of suicide among indigenous peoples in the West, it is white men—many with an Anglo-Scottish-Irish heritage—who have an unusually high risk of suicide compared to other groups.²⁷ In other words, some men in Western society may be at even greater risk of suicide because of the way their heritage defines manhood and what it is to be a ‘man.’

Suicide and the male culture of honour

In 2016, James David Vance published a memoir about his family and his people, the hill-folk of the American South.²⁸ He raised issues about his culture that to him were harbingers of annihilation. These hill-folk from Greater Appalachia, with a strong (almost exclusive) Scottish-Irish heritage, had become an anachronism in modern America. Their deeply ingrained culture of honour still required them to violently defend every insult and perceived slight, to uphold family honour, and view outsiders as potential enemies rather than friends.

In a similar memoir by James Rebanks, the reader is given an insight into the herding culture that has existed in the Lake District of the UK for millennia.²⁹ Indeed, it is believed that the Anglo-Scottish-Irish culture of honour that travelled from Britain to the 'New World' largely reflected the demanding nature of this lifestyle, where herdsman could revert to almost ferocious violence to protect their herd.³⁰

Despite living thousands of miles apart, both Vance and Rebanks' personal stories were surprisingly similar. Both tell of an almost self-destructive loyalty to their culture and traditional way of life. This loyalty prevented them from investing in education and the attainment of skills that would have broadened their opportunities and decreased their reliance on a more traditional lifestyle. Also embedded in their stories was an environment where male academic under-achievement, community and interpersonal violence, and alcohol abuse were part-and-parcel of growing up.

No Australian reading either of these memoirs could escape the parallels with our own society. Indeed, when we think about the foundations of Western society around the globe, the influence of this deeply traditional Anglo-Scottish-Irish culture is pervasive. Regardless of how apparently advanced these modern cultures are, there remains something ingrained in the Western way of life that makes men of this heritage more aggressively male than other cultures.

Australia has retained at its core a unique variant of this cultural script that harks back to the days of the penal colonies and Britain. Successive waves of immigration from Europe and Asia have done little to change the core Anglo-Australian culture, largely defined by a culture of honour encapsulated in 'mateship', which strongly emphasises the priority of the group over the individual. Among other things, Australian mateship places a very high value on loyalty to one's mates, a distrust of authority and strangers, sticking to one's promises, never revealing weakness of any kind, and standing on one's own two feet. While Australian women often adopt many of the norms of the code of mateship, the expectations and social pressure to conform to this ideal do not apply in the same way.

Of course, these characteristics are not peculiar to Australian or even Western men—many would be identifiable in any high male-honour society. However, it is the rejection of 'weakness', whether perceived or real, that really places Australian men at a grave disadvantage.³¹ Admitting to a fault, showing emotion, seeking help, backing down under threat, revealing pain, being overly friendly, having a mental problem, being even slightly effeminate, having concerns about sexuality, needing support, losing in competition, trying too hard (especially as a student), falling in love, caring too much, even smiling too often, can be construed as signs of weakness, potentially resulting in a loss of face or feelings of shame.

Because men are expected to handle problems with rugged independence, when they need help they cannot ask for it without exacerbating the negative emotions that brought them to need help in the first place. Indeed, young men caught in this vicious cycle might eventually regard suicide as preferable to the dilemma and shame of admitting a weakness they neither understand nor know how to manage.

While Vance does not directly discuss suicide statistics among his people, the reality is that suicide is significantly more common in parts of the US with a highly masculine culture of honour.³² A similar trend is observable in rural areas in Australia. Kairi Kølves et al in their 2012 study of suicide found that men in remote areas of Queensland had a suicide rate of 36.3 per 100,000, which is one of the highest in the world.³³ It is also one-third higher than the rate for men living in regional areas of the state, and over twice the rate for men in metropolitan areas. By contrast, women in the same remote areas of Queensland had a suicide rate of 8.8 per 100,000, which was higher than women in either regional or metropolitan areas but nowhere near the rate for men.

Male suicide and mental illness

While it has long been assumed that suicide is related to mental illness, research has demonstrated that feelings of hopelessness account for nearly all the variance in the relationship between suicide and diagnosis.³⁴ This suggests it may be the sense of failure associated with vulnerability

that increases suicide risk, as opposed to the diagnosed problem. Because suicide is an action-oriented, aggressive behaviour consistent with a traditional masculine cultural script, it can almost appear culturally preferable to the perceived shame of illness and incapacity. This conclusion is supported by considerable research showing that men are less likely than women to engage in help-seeking behaviour, especially for mental illness.³⁵

The impact of such a pervasive cultural bias is incalculable. While women in Western countries are able to show their emotions, admit to problems, seek help and even have a language for discussing their emotional concerns without experiencing cultural or personal condemnation, the experience for Western men is entirely different. Despite campaigns in Australia to reduce the stigma associated with help-seeking among men, especially for mental illness—which includes personal accounts from male sporting heroes, military commanders, politicians and even Prince Harry—the increasing gender divide in rates of suicide and violence in Australia indicates that the stigma remains.

Indeed, this stigma appears so hard to shift it may even be counter-productive to highlight the relationship between mental illness and suicide, as men may regard suicide as an ‘honourable’ solution. A more constructive and positive message would be to embrace normal emotional expression as completely consistent with a Western construction of manhood. This could open the way for men who possess more affiliative characteristics to become prominent role models for young men in Western society. The point being that emotional expression does not make an individual man weaker or stronger, it makes men as a group more resilient.

Suicide risk and ADF service

While it could be argued that the rate of suicide among serving ADF members has been reduced by a comprehensive focus on suicide prevention, it seems evident that something else is also happening. According to the 2010 ‘Mental Health Prevalence Study’, men serving in the ADF report a higher rate of suicide ideation and planning than the Australian general population, while the rate of suicide attempts is consistent

with community trends.³⁶ In the experience of the author, suicide attempts among men in the military best fit the description of a para-suicide, as opposed to an intention to die, suggesting these men might be approaching suicide in a similar way to many women.

Interviews with a number of male ADF members who have attempted suicide indicate that most did not take more lethal action because they did not want to inflict the negative consequences for their death on their mates. In other words, serving ADF men reveal a generosity and thoughtfulness towards their predominantly male comrades that is simply not seen in the behaviour of men elsewhere. It would appear that the unique sense of belonging and male honour that is part of service in the ADF changes male behaviour, and that the risk of suicide is markedly reduced. Of course, as men leave this highly esteemed occupation, often with injuries and emotional concerns, they re-enter a world where men are too often perceived as the cause of every kind of negative interpersonal problem. It is no surprise that many do not cope well with the transition.

ADF suicide statistics seem to show that the ADF today is a supportive and possibly even androgynous work environment for men and, as such, they are safer from suicide while they serve. For example, the decision to make post-operational psychological screening mandatory for all ADF members has succeeded in removing a barrier to care that once would have deprived men from receiving support. Nevertheless, such protection ends at the point of discharge and, for many ex-servicemen, the dilemma of integration into what they may perceive to be an uncaring and unappreciative civilian world remains a challenge.

The way forward

Recent World Health Organization statistics suggest that world rates of suicide are declining. Indeed, suicide rates declined across most Australian states and territories from 12.6 per 100,000 in 2015 to 11.7 per 100,000 in 2016.³⁷ Nevertheless, there has been an upward trend in the five years from 2011 (10.5) to 2016 (11.7), which is a concern. While men in metropolitan areas appear to have less risk of suicide, for those living in rural and remote locations the suicide rate remains disturbingly high. The

possibility that such men feel they have only two options when facing emotional problems—either to stoically ‘cope’ in silence or take lethal steps to end their lives—is deeply troubling.

To address the problem of male suicide, Australia must look more deeply at the way men and women treat men. As has been discussed, men are substantially more at risk of almost every form of violence, not just as perpetrators but as victims. This reality has, for too long, been hidden from view. Women have been repeatedly told they are the greatest victims of violence in our society, resulting in an understandable sense of outrage and anger almost entirely directed at men. While the statistics for domestic and sexual violence align with this viewpoint, they are not the whole story.

It is now evident that boys and young men have long been significant victims of institutionalised sexual and physical violence in Australia, and possibly all Western countries.³⁸ Moreover, men and boys are far less likely to report domestic or sexual violence due to a male culture of honour that implies a ‘real man’ cannot be hurt (especially by a woman) and cannot be a sexual victim. To complain merely reduces one’s masculine prestige and, in the absence of actual physical damage, observers too often treat complainants as less of a man. Such silence advantages perpetrators and creates a deepening sense of injustice amongst men.

The perception that men are invulnerable, or must behave as such, puts men and boys at considerable risk of violence, abuse and death, including by suicide. While it is not suggested that men should completely change their male cultural script, acknowledging the disadvantage and danger facing men in a culture of silence must now become a societal imperative. This is beginning to happen in Australia, and men are finally finding their voice. Helping them to understand and accept their emotions, to reject an unrealistic expectation of invulnerability, to open up and talk when they need help, and to regard suicide as a tragedy not an honourable solution, are positive and necessary steps in this direction, which must also continue to be embraced within the ADF.

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from La Trobe University and a Masters of Clinical Psychology from the Australian National University. From 2009-2013, Anne was the Senior Psychologist at the Australian Defence Force Academy. Since then, she has been the Senior Psychologist at the Centre for Defence Leadership and Ethics.

If you or someone you know needs help, call:

- Emergency on 000 (or 112 from a mobile)
- ADF All-hours Helpline on 1800 628 036
- Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608
- APS Employee Assistance Program on 1300 361 008
- Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service on 1800 011 046
- Lifeline on 13 11 14 or <https://www.lifeline.org.au>
- Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636 or <http://www.beyondblue.org.au>
- Headspace on 1800 650 890
- Kids Helpline 1800 551 800
- Mensline Australia on 1300 789 978
- Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467

Notes

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KEYNOTE SPEECHES FROM SEA POWER CONFERENCE 2017 SYDNEY, 3-5 OCTOBER 2017

Vice Admiral Tim Barrett, AO, CSC, RAN

Chief of Navy



When I spoke at the last Sea Power Conference in 2015, Navy was on the cusp of a strategic rebuilding and expansion that coincided with the initial announcement of the Government's commitment to a national, continuous shipbuilding strategy.

Since then, there has been clarity about how the Navy is to be rebuilt and expanded and much has been achieved. In early 2016, the Australian Government released a Defence White Paper and, this year, it followed with a companion Naval Shipbuilding Plan.

These documents outline the Government's vision for Australia's future naval capability. As important, they also give fidelity to the shipbuilding and ship-sustainment industry by providing a commitment to a permanent naval shipbuilding industry through three distinct lines of investment. These are:

- the investment in the rolling acquisition of new submarines, and continuous build of future frigates and minor naval vessels;
- the investment in modern shipyard infrastructure across the two construction shipyards in South Australia and Western Australia; and
- the investment in naval shipbuilding workforce growth and skilling initiatives, together with new-generation technology and innovation hubs.

As a consequence of these decisions, the Government announced that Naval Group will be our international partner to design the 12 future submarines. Already, we have formal government-to-government agreements in place, a functioning design centre has been built in Cherbourg (by Australian tradespeople with Australian materials) and the Australian project team there is filling rapidly. Meanwhile, the construction site in Osborne is being secured, and yard design is in progress. The project is meeting its milestones.

Concurrently, Navy's two new tankers have been selected and work will soon commence on their construction—the first ship is expected to be delivered in 2019 and the second in 2020.

Much work has also been done on progressing the acquisition of 12 new offshore patrol vessels. These vessels will provide us with an advanced capability to undertake constabulary missions and be the primary ADF asset for maritime patrol and response duties. Tender evaluation is complete, and a decision is expected from Government later this year. Construction of the first two vessels will begin in 2018.

We have also made significant progress on the acquisition of nine future frigates. These will be able to conduct a range of missions, with a particular focus on anti-submarine warfare, and will incorporate the Australian-developed CEA phased-array radar. We are on schedule to commence construction in 2020.

Additionally, all the Seahawk Romeo helicopters have entered service and are undertaking operations, deployed in ships in the region and beyond. Both LHD [landing helicopter dock] HMA Ships Adelaide and Canberra have been commissioned and are already proving their utility and versatility, with participation in major exercises and deployments this year. And just last week, we commissioned HMAS *Hobart*—one of the most sophisticated warships ever to be operated by the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). She is Aegis-fitted, the first in her class, with two more to follow, and the first destroyer for the RAN since HMAS *Brisbane* was decommissioned 16 years ago.

The delivery of such new capability has allowed the RAN to revert to its practice of complex task group operations. This practice offers strategic utility to government by delivering the agility and responsiveness that is at the heart of our approach to maritime warfare, and enables more effects to be achieved against an ever growing set of threat scenarios.

This year, the ADF has successfully completed Talisman Sabre 2017, which provided us with invaluable task group operational experience and improved our training, readiness and interoperability. It also provided us the opportunity to test and prove the readiness of the LHD HMAS *Canberra*.

And as we speak, the other LHD, HMAS *Adelaide*, is leading the Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2017 Task Group deployed into the Southeast Asia region. This deployment will demonstrate

the ADF's humanitarian and disaster relief regional response capability, as well as further supporting security and stability in Australia's near region through bilateral and multilateral engagement, training and capacity building. While this is not the first such deployment by the RAN in Southeast Asia, it will be the largest coordinated task group operation since the early 1980s. And these deployments will become a regular part of the ADF's ongoing commitment to regional security.

Indeed, it is important to note that beyond a commitment to new capability, the 2016 *Defence White Paper* also foreshadows a significant increase in investment in regional engagement, with plans to contribute to maritime security in several ways.

Firstly, with programs like the Pacific Maritime Surveillance Program, which will deliver up to 21 patrol boats with long-term sustainment to our Southwest Pacific neighbours to improve maritime awareness in that region. Secondly, with increased funds for defence cooperation in the vast array of maritime security fora and exercises that exist to provide stability within the region through the deliberate and disciplined approach to problem-solving and by reducing the chance of miscalculation.

But the generation and deployment of self-supporting and sustainable maritime task groups, capable of accomplishing the full spectrum of maritime security operations, calls for more than just an equipment list. There are fundamental attributes that a credible fleet needs to demonstrate for this to occur.

Over the last few years, the Navy has taken great steps forward in the regulated management of seaworthiness within the Fleet. This follows a similar path to the improvement in airworthiness of the aviation force. We are better managing and sustaining our platforms, infrastructure, communications and information systems, intelligence, and other mission and support systems for our current capabilities. That's not to say we have it all right but the lessons learned are being applied to the projects that will introduce the future fleet.

We are also working to have an integrated, diverse, resilient and deployable workforce that has the skills and competencies to deliver

Navy's warfighting effects. We are also improving our culture to ensure that it supports an agile, resilient and innovative Navy that actively seeks ways to better deliver our warfighting effects.

As a result, we are participating more regularly in multinational exercises and through expanding our cultural understanding and language capabilities, to understand how we can make more effective and meaningful contributions during those exercises. This progress gives me great confidence that we are on track to achieve the long-term objectives that we have set ourselves to ensure that Navy is seen as a fighting system which is part of a joint warfighting organisation and a national enterprise.

As you can see, we are building a capable, lethal and agile Navy able to fulfil the tasks required of it now and into the future. A Navy that has the ability to deliver targeted and decisive lethality if government so requires. A Navy that has the ability to take decisions quickly, to manoeuvre naval force with speed and flexibility, and to enhance survivability by ensuring that our warfighters are able to adapt doctrine and tactics to meet the needs of the moment. A Navy that can adapt to the ever-changing strategic environment.

Even since the last Sea Power Conference in 2015, there have been unpredictable shifts in our strategic environment. The unprecedented missile and nuclear-weapons testing by North Korea, the impact of the South China Sea arbitration, and the increased possibility of miscalculations that could result in armed confrontations at sea. As well, the shifting of old alliances; the rapid rise in global terrorist networks in

Southeast Asia; changes in migration patterns; and the increased activities of international criminal syndicates, from coordinated illegal fishing enterprises to smuggling illegal migrants. These are just a few.

And so, we seek a Navy that has the ability to maintain our sovereignty, defend our territorial integrity, and protect our national interests wherever they may be threatened—regionally and, indeed, globally from the Middle East across the Indian Ocean, through the South China Sea, and in the Pacific. And because we know that no country can truly expect to act alone to solve the dynamic maritime challenges which are faced in our region, we seek to build a Navy that can work with and support our neighbours, friends and allies.

It is working with our neighbours to maintain and advance the internationally-recognised, rules-based global order that has been so conducive to ensuring maritime stability, and open and reliable maritime trade in our region. We all have a vested interest in regional peace and stability, unimpeded trade, and freedom of navigation and overflight in our region.

Sea Power Conference 2017 affords us the opportunity to reflect on the work that has been done over the past two years: to consider if our current thinking about what the Navy of the future needs to be is accurate; and to develop the ideas and concepts that inform our future thinking and planning, all while meeting the current and future challenges of the dynamic regional environment in which we operate.



KEYNOTE SPEECHES FROM
SEA POWER CONFERENCE 2017
SYDNEY, 3-5 OCTOBER 2017

Major General Kathryn Toohey, AM, CSC

*Head Land Capability
(representing Chief of Army)*



The theme of this year's conference, 'The Navy and the Nation', is an appropriate focus when we consider that our Navy is in the midst of the most ambitious recapitalisation of the Fleet since World War 2.

The submarines, frigates and offshore patrol vessels that are planned, in conjunction with the two Canberra-class LHDs [landing helicopter dock], three Hobart-class air warfare destroyers, and the MRH-60 Romeo and MRH-90 Taipan helicopters already in hand will go a long way to ensuring Australia has a regionally competitive, if not superior, future naval force. And the sheer scale of this recapitalisation—more than \$90 billion and a time-frame spanning three decades—highlights that this is truly a 'national enterprise' for Australia.

The 2016 *Defence White Paper* places Australia's security firmly within the maritime environment of the Indo-Pacific region. This region contains the world's busiest international sea lanes, as well as

nine of the world's ten busiest ports. Australia, as an island nation, is economically reliant on global trade and our freedom of navigation at sea. As such, the importance of a maritime strategy to the security of our nation remains clear and uncontested. Looking beyond our shores is not a choice, it's a necessity.

I use 'maritime strategy' in the sense offered by the British strategist Julian Corbett's 1911 definition. He wrote that 'by maritime strategy, we mean the principles which govern a war in which the sea is a substantial factor'. Corbett goes on to stipulate that maritime strategy is about the relationship between the Navy and the Army in a war plan. Today, of course, we would also add air, cyber and space power to that equation.

This is consistent with Admiral Barrett, in his welcome letter to this conference, stating that 'Navies do not exist for their own sake, nor do they exist in isolation'. Notwithstanding the significance of both our Navy and the current

shipbuilding enterprise to our nation, he is tacitly acknowledging the reality that Australia's current and future national security depends on the joint force and the nation.

Accordingly, my remarks today will address the work underway between the Australian Navy and the Australian Army (and our other partners) to ensure Australia has the joint force it needs to secure our national security interests in the Indo-Pacific region.

One of the capstone capabilities essential to enabling a successful maritime strategy is a joint amphibious capability. This is not a new idea but rather has been a part of Australia's strategic identity since Federation. Ken Gleiman and Peter Dean described in their 2015 assessment for the Australian Strategic Policy Institute the significant role amphibious warfare has played in Australian military history. The Gallipoli landings of 1915 and the New Guinea campaign are well-known examples. However, as Gleiman and Dean highlight, not as much attention is paid to the maritime sustainment of Australia's operations in Vietnam, nor the amphibious operations conducted in Vanuatu (1998), Somalia (1993), Bougainville (1990 and 1994) and East Timor (1999 and 2006).

The strategic direction of the *2016 Defence White Paper* reinforces the importance of our new amphibious capabilities, centred on the Canberra-class LHDs and HMAS *Choules*. These ships provide a significant increase in the ADF's amphibious capacity and endurance. Their physical size and capability will ensure the critical role they play in joint amphibious operations will be centre in our minds into the future and not a historical footnote.

Talisman Sabre 2017 represented a significant milestone in the development of the ADF's joint amphibious capability. This biennial exercise provides the opportunity to practise with regional and coalition partners a range of operations across the broad spectrum of conflict. This year, HMNZS *Canterbury* joined HMAS *Canberra* and *Choules* to form the ANZAC Amphibious Ready Group. The amphibious landing on Talisman Sabre was the biggest amphibious landing Australia has conducted since the Operation OBOE landings in Borneo in 1945.

An advantage of exercises such as Talisman Sabre is to be able to rehearse the deployment of amphibious forces into the region to support stability and/or humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. In that regard, this year also saw HMAS *Choules* integral to the 3rd Brigade-led joint task force response to Tropical Cyclone Debbie in northern Australia.

When he addressed this forum two years ago, Chief of Army reflected that he was confident in Army's ability to generate a broad spectrum amphibious capability. He identified that his concern was:

[How Army would] successfully undertake a range of amphibious activities consistently, but not exclusively, of those other tasks the ADF must maintain (such as conventional combat and stabilisation in the case of land forces), relearning very hard lessons.

His concern drove two fundamental questions for Army: 'What must be maintained as dedicated specialist expertise?' and 'What can be rotated within the general Land Force'. Two years later, we assess that we are on track to realising an appropriate balance in response to these questions.

Firstly, unlike many other nations, Australia has chosen to integrate Army, Navy and Air Force staff into one joint amphibious task group headquarters, instead of having separate maritime and landing staffs. This year, Army reinforced the headquarters with additional staff and a permanently constituted Commander Land Forces.

Colonel Malcom Wells was appointed the first Commander Land Forces in March this year. Colonel Wells works very closely with (and indeed his office is adjacent to that of) the Commander Amphibious Task Force, Captain Brett Sonter. My recent visit to the Task Group Headquarters, hosted by these two key amphibious leaders, affirmed to me that this joint headquarters has become the focal point for amphibious planning and execution in the ADF.

Secondly, in mid-October this year, Army's amphibious trials unit, the Second Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (2RAR), will formally transition to become a specialised infantry battalion focused on amphibious reconnaissance and small boat operations. It will be designated

2RAR (Amphibious) and will be Army's standing specialist unit contribution to the amphibious force under command of the Commander Land Forces. This will strengthen our ability to deploy a battalion group by sea for a contingency within our region.

In the longer term, land-based anti-ship missiles and long-range fires capabilities included in the Integrated Investment Program will provide an opportunity for Army to make further contributions to amphibious operations and the joint force.

Like our Navy, Army has embarked on a major period of modernisation that will recapitalise the force over the next 15 years. Among other key capabilities, Army will introduce into service a fleet of more lethal, better protected and more capable armoured fighting vehicles that will underpin our contribution to the joint force. These vehicles are being acquired under the Land 400 program.

In addition to supporting amphibious warfare, Army needs to master conventional combat and stabilisation operations. Such operations may be conducted far from home in the face of an aggressive and adaptive enemy. Our recent experience, gained from over a decade of operations in the Middle East region, demonstrates that technology has dramatically increased the lethality available to our enemies, while markedly lowering its cost.

Improvised explosive devices [IEDs] can be assembled from readily available technology for as little as A\$30. IEDs, combined with the proliferation of rocket-propelled grenades, mean protection is the price of credible participation on the modern battlefield, no matter what the role. By protection, I mean the combination of materials, tactics, and passive, active and reactive systems.

As a result of this, we are building your Army to be able to survive and win in increasingly lethal and complex environments. Land 400 Phase 2 is replacing the current ASLAV [Australian light armoured vehicle] combat reconnaissance vehicle. Tenders for this project have closed and we expect a government decision on the preferred vehicle during the first half of 2018. Whichever vehicle is selected, it will be deployable by C-17 and able to be landed by a Canberra-class LHD

or by HMAS *Choules*.

Government has already provided funding in the Integrated Investment Program to ensure the growth in vehicle protective weight, necessary in response to increased lethality, is matched by the continued ability to embark land forces on our amphibious ships. Future programs will enhance and/or replace the in-service ship-to-shore connectors, such as landing craft, as well as the capability provided by HMAS *Choules*. These projects will be essential to ensure continued alignment between land and maritime capabilities.

Chief of Army noted during a recent Australian Strategic Policy Institute presentation that:

Our Army and the ADF will always be relatively modest in size. The Army will always operate as a component of the ADF. And the ADF will always operate as a component of the Australian national effort; a national effort that historically has always been part of a coalition. The logic of this is irrefutable, it is the only way we can generate sufficient strategic weight for the most pressing of problems.

Underpinning a joint force, we need a joint integrated command and control or combat system that allows the sharing of timely operational information between domains and nations—an easy thing to write but significantly more challenging to deliver and implement. However, we are making progress. Indeed, Army's battle management system operated from within the operations room on HMAS *Canberra* during Talisman Sabre this year. And, through the work of the Head of Joint Capability Management and Integration, Rear Admiral Peter Quinn, Army, Navy and Air Force are alive to the requirement to make appropriate single-Service trade-offs to support better joint outcomes.

In conclusion, this conference presents an excellent opportunity to strengthen relationships between joint, industry, regional and international partners to assure the continued stability, security and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region.

This region is defined by two oceans of overwhelming scale and size, effectively comprising vast, maritime watery deserts. However, the other story of the Indo-Pacific region is one of crowded, dense and rich areas of human endeavour on land. The region contains the

most populous nation on earth and the largest democratic nation on earth. Eight of the world's ten most populous states are Indo-Pacific nations. Over 50 per cent of the world's people live here.

These two factors—big oceans and an equally big scale of human endeavour—are perhaps best combined to create a story about the littoral. And, I would suggest, activity within the littoral is perhaps the unifying and definitive theme of the region.

All domains—maritime, land, air, space and cyber—are required to work together to realise success in this most complex of environments. Army is working hard to ensure we are delivering credible, strong and complementary land forces to assure this outcome. And, by doing so, we are in effect supporting our Navy and the nation.

KEYNOTE SPEECHES FROM SEA POWER CONFERENCE 2017 SYDNEY, 3-5 OCTOBER 2017

Air Marshal Leo Davies, AO, CSC

Chief of Air Force



My last presentation to this conference was in 2015. It was more of a scene-setter. It talked about the forthcoming Defence White Paper. It talked about the Force Posture Review. It talked about the First Principles Review. A lot has been delivered since. But I think there's still a lot to come, so this gives me an opportunity to talk about air power. But not air power on its own. It's no longer a context of the Battle of Britain, so 'on our own' can no longer be the case.

Chief of Navy's description of Navy 'as a fighting system which is part of a joint warfighting organisation and a national enterprise', recalling Alfred Mahan's description of sea power as the instrument by which a nation exercises command of the sea, is a very useful context. I agree that the Royal Australia Navy (RAN) is the primary means to provide that outcome. But I offer that the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) is a significant partner and that air power offers an important enhancement.

My presentation is not so much about history or about doctrine, policy or strategic guidance. This has been covered by Chiefs of Army, Chiefs of Navy and Chiefs of Air Force over many years. It is about the part that Air Force is playing. All three Services and the non-Service groups are being guided by a force design principle. Multi-domain operations, as articulated by this conference's theme of 'the Navy and the Nation', are already real and they're becoming increasingly more possible.

So let me pose a thought or a perhaps question: 'How do we get to know what is above, on and below perhaps a 10,000 or 100,000 square mile piece of maritime domain?'. But, perhaps even more importantly, how do we make sure that everyone else who needs to know, does know—whether it's the frigate, the air warfare destroyer, the Triton [unmanned aircraft], the P-8 Poseidon [maritime patrol aircraft], the RAN's 'Romeo' [anti-submarine/anti-surface warfare]



helicopter or the LHD [landing helicopter dock] with the army that it carries?

Chief of Joint Operations, the Vice Chief of the Defence Force and the Service Chiefs are about closing what is perhaps currently an air-sea gap. Pulling the 'stitching' closer, getting synergy and becoming totally networked. The RAAF is on the journey to becoming a fifth-generation air force. Critically, this means being integrated across multiple domains.

So, it is not without some sophistication that joint warfighting is the very first of the Air Force's strategy vectors. We need to have a shared understanding of what we do—that's the education. In 'the Navy and Nation', it's the human dimension. Joint training—that for me is the application. In 'the Navy and the Nation', that's the fighting system. Force design, doctrine and planning is the answer. In 'the Navy and the Nation', that's part of the national enterprise.

Our fifth-generation Air Force will possess attributes whose key functions are to support and integrate across domains. Perhaps some practical scene-setting might be useful.

A P-3 Orion [maritime patrol aircraft] joining the surface action group gets a joining

instruction message on the ground before we leave. We get perhaps a HF [high frequency] update enroute but that's in voice. Maybe a HF-covered radio teletype handover message that might give us some ranges or some basic thermal indicators. What's the water doing?

Arrival on station, Link 11 [tactical data link] on UHF [ultra-high frequency]. Most of the contacts the P-3 gets will say 'unknown surface'. We can't transmit or receive any tracks for the S-70B [Navy's Seahawk helicopter], unless perhaps there is a voice communication. In fact, no correlated tracks are available at all. Everything has to be verified by voice. It has to be amplified by voice.

Any fast jet traffic in the area is on Link 16 [military tactical data exchange network]. But we don't have Link 16 to the surface action group. Anti-submarine warfare begins—we put maybe 32 sonar buoys in the water, and they're all time-shared. There is no link of that information to the helicopters. Any join by a helicopter to the P-3's area is by voice. It is slow. It is human intensive.

What about a P-8? It departs base with beyond line-of-sight Link 16 feed of air surface and subsurface contacts already. DSN [Defence Secret Network] nexus chat communications enroute updated from air warfare

destroyer and the frigates. RAAF Edinburgh sends analysis of previous missions that includes acoustics, screen prints, electromagnetic spectrum and what the water is doing.

The PWO [principal warfare officer] on board can talk directly to the TACCO [tactical coordinator] or the sensor managers. About 40 megabits a second permits video streaming, imagery and sensor data—intricate sensor data. Common data links support multiple channels, which means more tactical application at each station, on the ships and in the aircraft. We're not drowned any more by communications. Extended agency awareness, probably Headquarters Joint Operations Command, of the P-8 through DSN nexus page-drops build a common operating picture.

Fast jet traffic is aware via Link 16. JREAP [Joint Range Extension Applications Protocols] available if required. We know about them; they know about us; we know where the enemy is. Multi-static ASW [anti-submarine warfare] field deployed, perhaps up to 60 buoys. And with that many on board again if we need to, and there is no time sharing. We can cover between four and five times the volume of water, and with every hour that passes, with increasing fidelity.

In my mind, we don't have to wait for the submarine any more. An ASW contact is gained, Link 16 assigned, the Romeo is aware, and the Romeo can prosecute.

As Chief of Navy has put it, 'a new way of getting stitched up'. However, it will take improvements in programming. We can't just do it continuing the way we currently plan and execute. But I have some good news. What we've already learned in the transition of our current P-3 crews to P-8 is that they learn quickly. This is an exciting aircraft and set of systems that allow them to do more and they learn to do it quickly.

We used to ask: 'Why does a LHD need Link 16?'. What we must now ask is: 'How could you deploy it without Link 16?'. I would like to see white uniforms and green uniforms on board our

P-8s, on board our E-7 Wedgetails [early warning and control aircraft]. I almost said on board Triton [unmanned aircraft] but not quite. But, certainly, on board Growler [electronic warfare aircraft]. We need to build our joint cadre. We need to get that from real and enduring education.

I've spoken here mainly about the P-8 in a narrow setting. But in the combat scenario I just mentioned, there would likely be a Wedgetail managing the airspace, a Triton finding out first what is out there, as well as space-based assets, and Growler aircraft controlling the electromagnetic spectrum. All of these are contributors, and I could spend another 10 or 15 minutes on each indicating how they'll work with a modern navy.

How would the RAN design our modern Air Force to meet the sea power delivery end-state? I suggest that it wouldn't be too much different in terms of the order of battle. But what I do believe is that the Air Force doesn't know all the answers and how to apply what it is we are growing. We need the Navy to help us. So our intent is to close the air-sea gap.

I asked earlier about the 10,000 square miles or the 100,000 square miles. I had the pleasure to fly a F-35 [joint strike fighter] simulator in Arizona not too long ago. I'm not a Hornet [multi-role fighter aircraft] pilot. I'm an F-111 [strike aircraft] pilot by trade and, before that, P-3B and P-3C TACCO. But I do know what the F-35 gave me. It gave me data, it gave me information, it gave me intelligence, it gave me decision making. Not a single-target mentality that perhaps we were guilty of not many years ago.

The F-35, the air warfare destroyer, the future frigate and the future submarine program are all indicators of where we're heading. The Air Force and the Navy are growing. We need to grow together. We are building a fighting system and, in my view, Air Force is here to play its part in our national enterprise.



KEYNOTE SPEECHES FROM
SEA POWER CONFERENCE 2017
SYDNEY, 3-5 OCTOBER 2017

Vice Admiral
David Johnston, AM, RAN

Chief Joint Operations



As Chief Joint Operations, I largely am the beneficiary of the work of the Service Chiefs and those within their organisations, because I am the ‘employer’ of the ADF, having picked up all of the work that goes into the generation of the force.

In my role I have a number of responsibilities, and I’m going to cover just a few. Many of you would expect that I plan, conduct and lead operations, and that’s true. I am also the joint collective trainer for the large exercises where we look to deliver joint capabilities. That role comes back to Joint Operations Command.

What is less understood is my role in reducing risks to future operations. I’ll focus on Navy capabilities but they could be switched to land and air in many of the things I’ll talk about. I will show how the work of Navy contributes to the government’s requirements in the delivery of effects to enable national security. Joining the dots should enable you to see how your

particular contribution matters, and contributes to that outcome.

I’m going to very briefly pick up and bookmark Chief of Navy’s comments, which Major General Toohey and Chief of Air Force also mentioned, about the integration of capabilities, and I’ll throw to you—from a joint commander’s perspective—a couple of the key challenges I see as we continue to develop the ADF.

In order to talk first about how Navy contributes to the output of government, let me give a quick update. I work to Defence White Paper outcomes, as we all do, but mine are very clearly expressed in strategic defence interests and strategic defence objectives. It’s pretty simple: a resilient Australia with secure approaches, a secure near-region, and a stable Indo-Pacific reinforcing the rules-based global order. That sets the work we aim to do in Joint Operations Command.

We do that in concert with the Service Chiefs and the other groups in Defence by focusing on operations, exercises and our international cooperation program, as well as the engagement we do—from Service Chief or Group Head-level down to the way an Able Seaman will conduct themselves when they step ashore.

How then in Joint Operations Command do we pick up on those three series of objectives? Well, I run three lines of effort, and everything fits within these three lines.

We seek to know the environment in which we work. And that is understanding what's occurring there. Gaining familiarity with it and building the confidence of the force to be able to operate successfully—for Navy to fight and win in that environment.

We seek to partner—our second line of effort. That's building relationships, building interoperability, building capacity among our partners where it's important, and mitigating current and future risks by the activities that we perform in operations, exercises and our other areas across Defence.

Finally, we respond, and that's those circumstances when government directs an output from us, and where the ADF is tasked with being able to deliver a national security effect.

What might surprise you is that I aim to spend as much of our effort in the first two lines of effort as we can. The more we know and the more we partner, the least we will likely be required to respond, because we have been able to address the risks that are emerging in our environment.

I'm now just going to dive into those three strategic defence objectives. Again, just to highlight within the second node—the partner line of effort—the manner in which naval forces and our land and air elements contribute to the responsibilities we carry.

For our first strategic objective, knowing our exclusive economic zone and the approaches to Australia from north through to south is a key element we have been focusing on. I draw one example of why that's important: theatre anti-submarine warfare. Chief of Navy has referenced, with the substantial growth of submarine capabilities in our region, that knowing our

environment—and understanding it such that we can then operate successfully in it—is a key element that we have been building over time and reinforcing recently.

So our environment is key. We invest significant efforts in understanding what's occurring in the water space, on the surface and in the air, and making sure that we know what it occurring through those areas that are important to Australia. And the contributors to that—from a naval perspective—are out there every day to build that understanding to ensure that we're able to deliver on that outcome.

Within our ability to partner are Navy-led exercises such as Kakadu. But equally the Talisman Sabre exercises and the other occasions that we bring, as a joint force, our partners into our region to train and work with us, and to build our own capability and understanding of operating with others in our environment.

I also want to highlight the need for an inter-agency approach. We work hard between Navy, Army and Air Force. We work hard with our international military partners to build interoperability. But I have been pushing to make sure we work as closely with our interagency partners here in Australia, such that we're able to work across all the national security contributors to make sure that we are effective in what we do.

Finally, we respond when we need to. Our maritime operations in the north, particularly those to reinforce our border security, are well known. In recent times—and with our partners in Maritime Border Command—we have done substantial work in the last 12 months in disrupting the movement of narcotics into our country.

Let me now move to the second of our strategic objectives, which is very much around maritime Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific. Many of those in a naval uniform are accomplished in an environment where we sent task groups but often single ships in the past. However, 'up top' now is different to what it has been over the last decade: it is now significantly focused on understanding our environment and working with partners.

Chief of Navy mentioned Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2017 as an example of that, with the six-ship task group—with Army and Air Force elements

contributing—both knowing our environment and working with our partners to build and make sure we understand how to work in it, and that they know how to work with us. So that activity is a key one for us this year, and we will see it repeated every year as we deploy ADF elements in various tasks throughout our region.

In relation to the second objective, I'll highlight two further examples. The first was the tragic loss of Malaysian Airlines MH-370 in the Southern Indian Ocean that required us to work with a significant number of partners to search for that aircraft and bring search-and-rescue efforts to bear.

But equally our humanitarian and disaster response. At the moment, HMA Ships *Choules* and *Huon* are enroute to Vanuatu to be ready to support an evacuation from Ambae Island and to assist with the setting up of displaced-person camps. Humanitarian operations in our region are a key part of responding within our environment, as is Navy's support to stability operations, which we have had to conduct over a number of years.

The third and final defence objective is our global remit. That relates to the maintenance of the rules-based global order and working with coalition operations wherever government requires. And this is where we build the relationships to provide responsiveness and effectiveness where we need it. It is everything from the work that a ship will do conducting training with other maritime nations, all the way through to the work that the Chief of the Defence Force and the Service Chiefs do in their senior engagements as we meet people in our region.

It's a key part of what we do and it leads to the full spectrum of outcomes that we may be required to generate, of which our contribution through the Middle East region—now longstanding in its 64th rotation—has been a key element.

One example to set the scene for my final comments. Operation FIJI ASSIST was our support after Tropical Cyclone Winston—the largest storm system to hit the Pacific—collided with Fiji last year. Australia was asked to provide assistance, and did across a number of government agencies. But what I want to highlight is the integrated approach that was necessary to deliver this outcome.

It started with P-3 [maritime surveillance aircraft] support that conducted surveillance around the islands to help build an understanding of the damage that had occurred. It then moved quickly to airlift, to move humanitarian aid, and then military equipment so that we could establish a land-based rotary-wing capability. Then the first deployment of the LHDs [landing helicopter dock] with HMAS *Canberra* taking a substantial land force component to generate the effects ashore. It was a highly integrated mission and a good example, from humanitarian operations through the spectrum to high-end warfighting capabilities, of the way that we will need to fight and work together.

In closing, I want to reiterate that the way the ADF needs to respond to challenges is through integrated output. Integrated across our three Services. Integrated within the joint environment. Integrated with our government partners and other agencies, and then with our partners offshore—the coalitions we bring together.

The first two elements to bring that design and doctrine are largely what the Service Chiefs look after. The last two components—training and certification—are collectively what we bring together to ensure forces can deliver what they need.

I have highlighted a few of the areas where I believe the integrated nature of our work is fundamental. Knowing our environment can only be done properly in an integrated environment, and takes significant work to develop. Theatre anti-submarine warfare is an integrated problem to deliver the outcome that you need over broad areas. And air and missile defence—a very topical issue—is also a highly integrated function that brings together all three Services—and the intelligence agencies—to deliver those effects.

Most of these joint effects are well known to you. But it's also in the background where the integrated work is essential. Logistics, health, intelligence and communications—none of them now work if they are not in an integrated environment. For example, I did a count recently of the work it takes to move one Mark 82 bomb from the stores base in Australia to the air task group providing support through Operation OKRA [air combat and support operations in Iraq]. There are seven different parts of Defence that come together to achieve that—different

groups who need to work together to move one single bomb.

That's indicative of the support we need, and the integrated nature by which we need to work to bring those outcomes together. So, your work matters. The integrated nature by which Navy, Army and Air Force come together is essential

to achieve the three strategic defence objectives the government charges us with. As we move forward, I ask that you think not only through the lens of your own contribution but those of the partners that you will need to work with to understand how to build those bridges and integrated mechanisms with them.

The Conservative Colonel: how being creative killed your career in the ADF

Lieutenant Colonel Leon D. Young, Australian Army

Chair's note: this article will inform the Strategic Leadership Development Program of the Defence and Strategic Studies Course conducted by the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies at the Australian Defence College.

We assert that creativity is the most important requirement for command.¹

Introduction

Creative thinking is critical to the development of good strategy. It is also an 'essential trait of successful managers' and, as quoted above, an important requirement for command.² Despite its perceived organisational importance, creative thinking appears to be a burden to career progression within the ADF. In fact, to promote to an O6 level (colonel equivalent), it appears that one must be—or at least seem to be—below average in creative thinking.

The title of the article is a playful challenge to institutional perceptions of creativity and its impact on a career in the military. As provocative as this statement sounds, it is based on empirical evidence garnered from the current generation of officers in the ADF. This article reviews

the results of a recent study exploring why this dramatic drop in creativity at the O6 level could be a problem for the ADF. It includes a number of proposals to mitigate or reduce the impact of a loss of creative thinking.

Background

In 2016, as part of a larger study into the development of strategic thinking in large organisations, the author measured the creative thinking capacity of the ADF.³ The rationale was that creative thinking is a critical cognitive characteristic of strategic thinking. The study involved participants from the ADF, members of foreign military services and Australian public servants.

All the participants were sourced from either the Australian Defence Force Academy or the three Service headquarters. Their ranks ranged from officer cadets and midshipmen through to O7 level (brigadier equivalents). The sample of 612

completed responses was large enough to give confidence in the statistical validity of the results.

‘Creativity’ has numerous definitions but could reasonably be explained as a ‘complex phenomenon involving the operation of multiple influences as we move from initial generation of an idea to delivery of an innovative new product’.⁴ Creative thinking has often been strongly correlated with divergent thinking.⁵ However, there is a strong argument that creative thinking involves much more than just divergent thinking.⁶

Divergent thinking appears to be the thinking style that elicits new or original ideas, yet it is convergent thinking that ensures these ideas are assessed as valuable to the problem at hand.⁷ So, for the purpose of this article, ‘creative thinking’ is defined as the ability to produce ideas that are novel and useful in competitive environments.⁸ The obvious next step would be to determine how creative thinking can be measured.

As a thinking process, creativity has three distinct and testable elements: (1) divergent thinking (novelty), (2) convergent thinking (evaluation) and (3) analogical thinking (communication of the idea).⁹ The last element is simple enough to test, as the assessment can be based on a communicated product rather than, for instance, measuring brain activity.

Divergent thinking is often characterised by fluency (the ability to generate many solutions), flexibility (the ability to explore in many directions) and originality (the ability to generate unexpected solutions). Convergent thinking emphasises the requirement to assess the value of the idea against the problem at hand.¹⁰ In this case, ‘quality’ can be used to represent the ability to consider feasibility, value and appropriateness of the solution.

The instrument used for assessing creative thinking in this study was based on these four criteria. Three of these are divergent thinking (fluency, flexibility and originality) while the last (quality) involves convergent thinking.¹¹ Table 1, modified from research on divergent thinking testing in the field of design, was considered the most appropriate assessment tool for divergent and convergent thinking.

Table 1: Creative thinking assessment framework, describing the four main criteria of creative thinking¹²

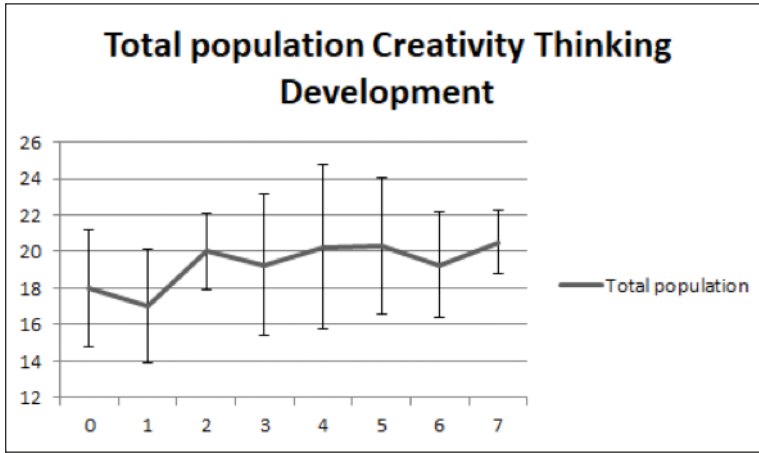
Sub-skill	Definition	Metric
Fluency	Ability to generate many solutions consistently	Quantity of ideas generated
Flexibility	Ability to explore design space in many directions	Variety of ideas generated
Originality	Ability to generate unexpected solutions	Originality of ideas generated
Quality	Ability to consider feasibility, value and appropriateness	Closeness of fit with goals, technical and economic feasibility, and potential value

Results of the study

The results provided a strong baseline of the level of creativity across the ADF. As this was a cross-sectional survey (rather than longitudinal), it displayed the relative differences in creative thinking across ranks and Services for a specific point in time. The trend across the individual Services show a similar drop in creative thinking. However, when taken as a whole, the results are less obvious. For this reason, this article focuses on the Army participants as a general representative of the broader population.

Figure 1 illustrates the change in creativity across the whole sample. The total population included non-officers (considered as rank 0) and participants from all categories. The most significant observation is that creative thinking experiences a sharp increase from officers in training (rank 1) but quickly plateaus. The value at rank O2 is relatively insignificant due to the low sample size compared to the population size.

Figure 1: Development of creative thinking across the total population (with standard deviation represented by error bars)



The second observation is that the variance (as illustrated by standard deviation) demonstrates a continual decrease from rank O4 through to rank O7. The concern is that this reinforces the stereotype of a process-driven bureaucracy, due to the minimal increase in average creative thinking and the reduction in variance. While they can be efficient, process-driven bureaucracies are generally less agile in dynamic environments.

Figure 2 illustrates the change of creativity within the ADF officer sample (that is, excluding

non-commissioned officers, public servants and foreign military officers). The ADF officer results excluded O2 due to low sample size. While there was representation at rank 7, it was relatively small. The graph shows an increase in creative thinking from cadet (O1) to O4 before it plateaus. Interestingly, there is a small dip in creative thinking at O6 across the ADF. The variance also decreases from O3 to O6, which appears to indicate that officers on the extremes are either being 'normalised' or are leaving the service

Figure 2: Development of creative thinking across the ADF officer population (with standard deviation represented by error bars)

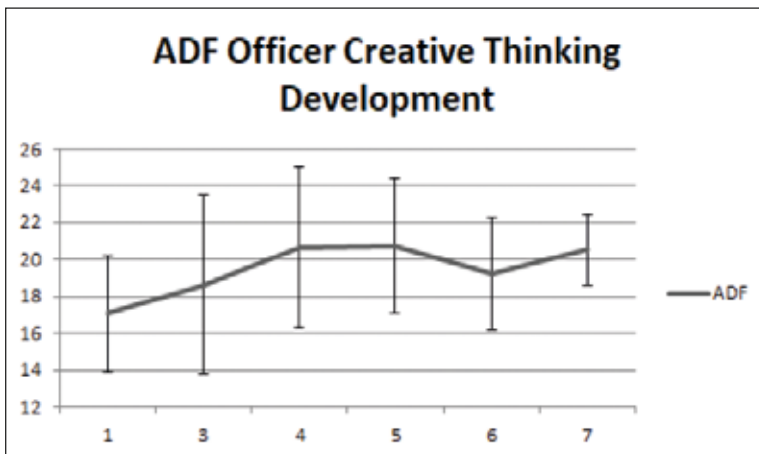


Figure 3: Development of creative thinking across the Army officer population (with standard deviation represented by error bars)

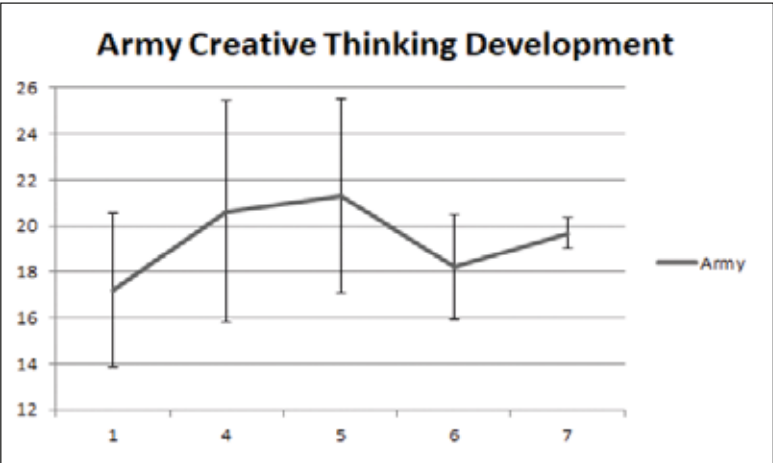


Figure 3 illustrates the results from the Australian Army population and provides a graphic illustration of ‘the conservative colonel’. There is a clear increase in creativity from officer cadet (O1) to lieutenant colonel (O5). However, the colonel (O6) level exhibits a sharp decline in creativity across the sample. The word ‘sharp’ is deliberate as, while the score drops by 3.1 on a 30-point scale, empirically this equates to a drop of 14.5 per cent in average score.

Unlike the other Services, the number of participants at Army O6 was quite high compared to the population size and represented about 33 per cent of that population sub-group. This provides confidence that the results are strongly indicative of the O6 population. It is also very clear that the variance decreases sharply (the standard deviation dropped by more than 50 per cent from O4 to O6). Even more worrying is that it appears that only the bottom cohort, in terms of creative thinking, is promoted from O5 to O6.

This variance flows into the O7 level. While the sample size was relatively small, the results are still valid enough to reflect the population. It can be seen that creativity increases for O7, however, as the variance shows, this is only because the top cohort is promoted. Hence, it could be concluded that the promotional system, at this level, appears to favour the creative officer. Unfortunately, the available pool for promotion is at the wrong end of the spectrum. In fact, the

best of the available colonels (O6) is still below the average of the lieutenant colonels (O5).

At this point, it is worth asking if a decrease in creative thinking can be attributed to age. Due to the linear progression through the ranks, officers are naturally getting older as they are promoted. It would be convenient to assign the change in creative thinking to an ageing body and reduced cognitive flexibility. However, studies have shown that while major creative contributions peak in young adulthood, minor contributions do not fall off until individuals are in their mid-60s.¹³

This peak actually moves up in occupations that require substantial training and life experience—and the profession of arms is one of these occupations. More recent research has confirmed that any difference in creativity assigned to age is in fact related to working memory capacity.¹⁴ Thus, it is unlikely that the age difference between O5 and O6 would have been a significant contributor to the reduction in creative thinking.

Is creative thinking important to Defence?

But what does this mean? Firstly, it is useful to understand the context of the result. The colonels surveyed in this study were all in Army Headquarters. The question could be asked

whether creative thinkers are needed in a headquarters where most of the work is procedural. The counterargument is that while creative thinking may not be the most important quality of an O6 officer in this environment, these individuals are future branch and division heads. Hence the more pertinent question is whether creative thinking is required in senior leaders, not just at the O6 level.

Creative thinking is critical to strategic thinking

Colin Gray has contended that:

[According to Antulio Echevarria] 'critical thinking is far more important to achieving a successful transformation than is creative imaginative thinking'. One could add that the better critical strategist might even dare to question whether transformation is desirable.¹⁵

This argument does not degrade the requirement for creative thinking; rather, it is intended to highlight that new is not always better. Again, it highlights the idea of usefulness. Critical thinking, in this case, is required to evaluate the usefulness of the novelty. Gray precedes this statement by saying that creativity is critical to the development of good strategy. It is also clearly noted elsewhere that, to be a master of strategic art—of all the individual skills—one must be creative.¹⁶

As a cognitive characteristic, creative thinking has been consistently included in the literature as one of the most important characteristics of strategic thinking.¹⁷ For example, strategic thinking has been described as a 'creative process subject to regular examination and necessary readjustment'.¹⁸ One of the key figures in business strategy, Henry Mintzberg, asserts that creativity is required to 'develop new perspectives'.¹⁹ Another influential writer contends that strategic thinkers are required to 'generate imaginative possibilities for action and operate easily in the conceptual realm'.²⁰

The idea of generative thinking, that is, generating new and innovative ideas, is quite common in the strategy literature. Julia Sloan contends that 'successful strategy across the centuries has proven to be dynamic and generative, not static and finite'.²¹ Stan Abraham asserts that 'strategic thinking entails the process of finding

alternative ways of competing and providing customer value'.²² Similarly, Estaban Masifern and Joaquim Vilà argue that conceiving 'the ideal strategy is mainly a creative process, driven by logical reasoning, imagination and the will to transform reality'.²³ The evidence is clear that creative thinking is absolutely critical in strategic thinking and the development of good strategy.

Creative thinking is critical for command

The requirement for creativity at the highest levels is indisputable if command and control are considered the personification of military structure. As Ross Pigeau and Carol McCann contend, structure and process are only possible because of human creativity.²⁴ Therefore, if the organisation is to change or adapt in increasingly complex and dynamic environments, creativity is required.

To drive this point home, a recent study of the US Army demonstrated that individual (leader) creativity was a significant predictor of leading change.²⁵ In this case, leading change referred to forging a new direction, gaining acceptance and implementing change. Simply, 'creative thinking is a key capability that helps individuals and organisations deal with and manage change'.²⁶

As Jim Storr contends, '[war] is evolutionary, and that allows original and novel thought.... [which] is the gateway to creativity for the practitioner'.²⁷ Military doctrine is littered with references to adapting and creating opportunities in complex and uncertain environments.²⁸ US doctrine on joint operations, for examples, asserts that operational art, as well as the art of strategy, requires a cognitive approach that is supported by creativity.²⁹

Yet, despite the apparently fundamental requirement for creative thinking, Milan Vego agrees that 'the peacetime environment encourages [the] breeding of officers who rigidly follow rules'.³⁰ This is not to say that every soldier and officer needs to be a creative genius, however, the importance of creative thinking for the development of strategic thinking and for leadership should not be understated.

What can be done about it?

If we accept that creative thinking is important to the organisation, then we must be prepared to change. Unfortunately, some would argue that the 'military authoritarian structure is itself a deterrent to creative thinking'.³¹ The reasoning is that an authoritarian structure generally only permits pressure to be applied down, however, creative thinkers tend to apply pressure up by revealing the need for change. Strengthening this obstruction to creative thinking is the phenomenon where success at the junior level requires conformity that is often hard to shed as one progresses up the ranks. One could argue that even mission command rewards conformity.

So how can the ADF, as an organisation, change and how hard will the change be? Broadly, there are four ways the capacity for creative thinking can be improved, either by changing individuals or changing the organisation.

Continuous development of individual creative thinking

This is, admittedly, a long-term plan that seeks to improve and encourage the development of creative thinking from initial entry. The difficulties in teaching creativity have been analogised with sport—'you can teach someone to play but you can't teach them to win'.³² The employment of creative thinking has been described as feeling like 'a one-armed man trying to hammer together a chicken coop in a hurricane'.³³ However, there is an acknowledgement in the literature and practice that creative thinking can be fostered if not taught.³⁴

The critical antecedent to success is the development of instructors, mentors and commanders with the requisite skills to enable creative thinking in a context-dependent environment.³⁵ The benefits are that the base level of creative thinking increases and thus we can accept a dip in variance at senior levels. The cost is the obvious timeframe for improvement (upwards of 20 years) and the minor modification and coordination needed across the professional military education spectrum.

Discrete development of individual creative thinking

After identifying the lack of creative thinking at specific ranks, it may be more appropriate to apply a discrete treatment that seeks to create an immediate improvement. For example, given that the majority of senior ranks in the ADF complete the Defence and Strategic Studies Course at the Australian Defence College, it would seem reasonable that this course could seek to improve the creative thinking of students to enhance their ability to 'operate at the strategic level in a complex and modern security environment'.³⁶

Fortunately, there is evidence that creative thinking can also be encouraged through a more linear process.³⁷ This can generally be described in four broad steps, namely (1) gathering and analysing the information, (2) ideation and incubation, (3) synthesis, and (4) evaluation and communication. As to content, the greatest success has been from courses that have also 'stressed techniques such as critical thinking, convergent thinking and constraint identification'.³⁸ Importantly, these courses were supported by explicitly and clearly informing students about the nature of creativity.

Change the promotion criteria from O5-O6

The evidence demonstrates that the current promotional system for O6 does not recognise creative thinking as an important selection criterion. This is not necessarily a 'bad thing', as one could argue that the ADF has a demonstrated track record of significant operational success. However, there is a substantial risk that future military leaders might have reduced capacity for strategic thinking when they most need it.

Because it appears that the promotional requirements for O7 recognise the value of creative thinking, it would be worthwhile adjusting the 'filter' for O6 to allow a greater variance through this promotional gate. This would ensure that the available pool for promotion to O7 remains large enough. The benefit is that there would be

no cost to the professional military education system, although there is a risk that some of the O6s are not necessarily the right 'organisational fit' for that rank.

Organisational fit offers a counter-argument to change. Organisational fit refers not only to the suitability of O6s at that rank, and their potential for future ranks, but also how the individual fits in the organisation. Thus, promotion could involve a trade-off, where creative thinking may be 'sacrificed' for other qualities deemed to be more important. These qualities are likely to change as the organisational requirement changes and could include qualities such as compassion, leadership, realism and ambition.

Recognise the value of organisational creativity

Perhaps the answer lies less with individual creativity and more with a 'creative organisation'. There is a valid view that creativity is not so much the product of an individual or individual intelligence; rather, it is the product of a collective exchange of ideas.³⁹ However, if this is the aspiration, care would be needed to ensure there is a diversity of ideas available. A homogeneous population would logically be detrimental to creativity, due to the decrease in the number of distinctly different exchange types, and a lack of diversity would encourage 'group think', the antithesis of creativity.⁴⁰

In this final option, we accept the potential deficit of creative thinking at the more senior ranks. The requirement of these leaders is not to be the creator but the facilitator of creative thinking in their organisation. The advantage is that we would be leveraging existing organisational strengths of team-work and clear direction with little disruption to the organisation. The challenge would be to recognise the barriers imposed by rigid authoritarian structures that are potentially populated by individuals who embrace a top-down approach to change. Overcoming this situation is not in the scope of this research but presumably could be mitigated through a shift in the cultural acceptance of divergent ideas.

Conclusion

The title of this article is a light-hearted reflection of an institutional perception of 'grey beards' and the empirical evidence suggesting that above-average creative thinking is not beneficial to a career in the military. There is an argument that based on recent operational successes, the ADF is doing well and, therefore, the counter-theory that creative thinking in senior leaders is not as important as other qualities is a valid hypothesis. However, this article has argued that creative thinking is critical to both the development of strategic thinking and for effective command. Without either of these two, the ADF is unlikely to enjoy long-term success in highly dynamic and complex environments.

Given that creative thinking is required at all levels, this article has provided a number of options to either mitigate or improve this capability. Two of the options involve the development of individual creative thinking. The first seeks to increase the lower bound of creative thinking by an organisation-wide, context-dependent education program. This option, while highly beneficial, is long term and relies on capable instructors, mentors and commanders to facilitate ongoing learning. The second seeks to create discrete interventions aimed to 'fill the gap'. This option, admittedly, is more immediate and likely to foster or support the first.

The remaining options look to amend the organisation to encourage the influence of creative thinkers already in the military system. Of these, one looks to amend the promotional requirements from O5 to O6 to ensure that creative thinking is a valued criterion. The last recognises the flaws, and seeks to reinforce the leader's role in facilitating teams and encouraging creative thinking. The challenge would be in aligning the worldview of a leader who has achieved success through conformity to accept divergent responses. Of the remedial options presented, while the first is preferred due to the enormous long-term benefit to the organisation, the second option is the recommended one, as it presents a more realistic cost-benefit ratio.

One of the key constraints to this research is that the creativity score is relative, not absolute. While the scores allowed for direct comparison across the ADF population, it is unable to be compared with an equivalent commercial organisation or even another military. Further work would need to gather data on these types of organisations to better understand organisational constraints across different fields. Additionally, it would be useful to investigate the differences in culture in the ADF's present population to better understand causation for change in creative thinking.

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Operation COMPASS: the Australian Army's first experience of manoeuvre warfare in World War 2

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Introduction

Operation COMPASS was the first successful offensive made by British, Australian and Commonwealth forces in the Western Desert during the Second World War. Although the opposing Italian force was comprehensively beaten, the operation has been overshadowed in history by Rommel's subsequent counter-offensives and Australian actions at Tobruk in 1941 and El-Alamein in 1942. Yet the operation's effective employment of a joint approach, better logistics and superior doctrine by a resource-constrained mechanised land force makes it a very relevant case study.

Indeed, the ADF's contemporary approach to manoeuvre warfare is heavily shaped by the lessons learnt from Operation COMPASS, particularly given it was the first successful Allied ground offensive of the war. Like all operations in the desert, it was won by the side best able to concentrate combat power against its

adversary's weaknesses. The decisive actions were made by a small but mobile land force that continually outmanoeuvred its opponents, pitting British strengths against Italian vulnerabilities.¹ Lacking the doctrine and mobility to counter this approach, the Italians used defensive actions that only served to isolate and weaken their forces before their eventual rout.

This article contends that the decisive victory of Western Desert Force over the Italian Tenth Army can be explained by the superior ability of its commander, Lieutenant General Richard Nugent O'Connor, to concentrate combat power, as enabled by fundamental factors including joint operations, logistics, manoeuvre and command.

The article will explore these factors by examining their influence on the actions of both sides, and identifying where O'Connor's forces were superior, or the Italians deficient, in their approach. It posits that O'Connor achieved his

decisive victory by adapting his methods of warfare to the desert conditions better than the Italians, and by gaining and retaining the initiative through consistently bold action. The study of this seminal Anglo-Australian feat of arms provides useful lessons for contemporary military leaders.

Operation COMPASS

In December 1940, the British seemed to be on the defensive on a number of fronts. The Battle of Britain had prevented the invasion of the homeland but had left Axis forces free to act elsewhere. In the Western Desert, Italian forces had advanced 60 miles into British-administered Egypt from Libya. However, beset by problems, the Italian Army had halted and established expedient fortifications around Sidi Barrani to prepare to drive on Cairo.

At that point, British and Commonwealth forces under General O'Connor were tasked to conduct a five-day raid to cut the Italian supply lines and force them back behind the Libyan border. However, O'Connor and his higher commander, General Archibald Wavell, harboured greater ambitions. Suspecting the vulnerability of the Italians to a more mobile and armoured force, they had developed plans for a longer offensive that might defeat the Italian threat to Egypt permanently.² To achieve this, the experienced and mechanised 7th Armoured and 4th Indian Divisions, and later the 6th Australian Division, would be pitted against a much larger enemy force.

When Operation COMPASS was launched on 9 December 1940, the British forces were able to continually out-manoeuvre and defeat the slow-moving Italian formations, successively overwhelming their prepared defensive positions in eastern Libya.³ Then, after a hurried advance on two axes, a small British armoured force blocked the Italian Army's retreat south of Benghazi. Following a frantic and close-run battle, the remnants of an entire Italian Corps surrendered, having lost 130,000 soldiers, nearly 400 tanks and 845 artillery pieces. British and Commonwealth forces suffered 500 dead and just over 1400 wounded or missing. A series of fundamental factors underpinned this British triumph.

British strategy: joint operations before COMPASS

The geography of the Western Desert is well suited to the conduct of joint and combined warfare. Most actions occurred within a relatively narrow coastal strip, which could be influenced from the sea by indirect fire, and control of this zone belonged to the side which commanded the adjacent sea. The British rapidly dominated the coastal strip through a 'coordinated and complementary' joint campaign executed by all three British Services in the theatre.⁴

The Royal Navy in the Mediterranean consisted of some of the oldest and least capable vessels in the fleet and, on paper, it was considerably outclassed by the strength of the *Regia Marina* (Italian Navy). The Mediterranean Fleet might, therefore, have been expected to surrender control of the central Mediterranean Sea to the Axis. Instead, Admiral Andrew Cunningham, the Fleet's Commander-in-Chief, adopted an offensive approach and actively sought to engage the *Regia Marina* close to their bases on the Italian mainland.

After a bruising but indecisive encounter at the Battle of Calabria in July 1940, and a strike on the Italian base at Taranto in November, the *Regia Marina* refrained from actively engaging the Royal Navy in force.⁵ The consequent control of the sea permitted the British and Commonwealth forces to operate off the Egyptian and Libyan coasts in support of the land forces involved in Operation COMPASS.

Like the navy, the Royal Air Force in Egypt was significantly outnumbered by the *Regia Aeronautica* (Italian Air Force). Both sides initially depended largely on biplane fighters and older bomber designs, which were obsolete but relatively evenly matched on paper. This meant the tactics and techniques for employing these forces were a decisive factor, and even small numbers of more advanced aircraft could have a disproportionate effect. The Royal Air Force (RAF) devoted the early phases of Operation COMPASS to destroying the *Regia Aeronautica* on the ground, then pushed forward more fighter aircraft, including the new Hurricane, to prevent their opponents striking back.

As a result, the Italians effectively ceded control of the air within a week, with only limited air-to-air engagements occurring thereafter.⁶ The scale of the area of operations meant that some *Regia Aeronautica* ground-attack operations continued but these were spasmodic and largely ineffective.⁷ Italian air-ground coordination was also limited by the continuous withdrawal rearwards of air assets in the face of the advancing ground forces. Moreover, Italian aircraft were based so far rearwards they could not respond to support requests in a timely manner, and had limited fuel to loiter over potential targets. By the start of Operation COMPASS, Italian forces had effectively lost control of the sea and air, and conditions were right for the Army to force the Italians from eastern Libya.

Joint operations during COMPASS

Operation COMPASS planners used joint operations from the very start. On the first night, an allied force under the command of Brigadier General Arthur Selby advanced on the coastal town of Maktila, which was covered by a bombardment from the 15-inch guns aboard three naval gun boats, supported by naval spotter aircraft. Inland, the noise of the 7th Armoured and 4th Indian Divisions' approach march was concealed from the Italian camps by RAF bombing raids.⁸ This pattern of activity would continue throughout the operation, with the gun boats supporting most of the land forces' deliberate attacks.

In the air, the RAF and Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) conducted frequent 'softening-up' and ground-attack sorties on Italian forces with a collection of Gladiator and Hurricane fighters and Blenheim light bombers. Once air superiority had been achieved, slow-moving and normally vulnerable Lysander spotter aircraft reconnoitred enemy positions and coordinated attacks by accompanying Hurricane fighters and artillery. Deliberate attacks were often supported by Wellington medium-bombers, whose noise was also used to mask the final advance of attacking troops.⁹

The effect was decisive: defensive positions were generally effectively suppressed and yielded quickly to combined arms assaults

by infantry and tanks, while Italian freedom of movement was severely constrained. It was not a one-sided battle but the RAF had superior techniques for establishing control of the air, gained from their recent experience in the Battle of Britain. By mid-January, the *Regia Aeronautica* was a spent and ineffective force, and was unable to prevent armoured columns from advancing deep into the Italian rear, nor disrupt continual allied ground attacks on Italian forces lying exposed in the near-featureless desert.

At nearly every stage, the Italians were harassed by RAF and RAAF aircraft ranging hundreds of miles forward of their bases, including on their rapid retreat to Benghazi.¹⁰ These were not the integrated close air support operations of later in the war—ground attacks were generally conducted in the enemy's rear and not in direct support of ground units—but they were nonetheless effective. The Italian commander, Marshal Rodolfo Graziani, despaired of these attacks, noting they caused 'grievous losses ... [and] severe strain on morale' to an already demoralised force.¹¹ Of course, the RAF could not seize or hold ground but the land force could not move without its protection. It might be said that with control of the air, the British could not achieve everything but without it they could achieve nothing.

The Royal Navy's dominance of the Mediterranean meant that Axis supplies and reinforcements could only be safely moved from Italy to Tripoli.¹² From there to Bardia, along the coast road, was a journey of some 1000 miles which tied up already scarce motor transport vehicles, and consumed many of the supplies during transit. Close to the front line, the convoys were extremely vulnerable to interdiction from the air, further disrupting their progress. The Italians were not safe even within their fortified positions at Tobruk and Bardia, with frequent air and sea raids disrupting their operations and denying the use of the very air and sea ports these positions protected.

Ironically, the Italians had the decisive advantage on land of possessing a sea port (at Tobruk) to supply their forces but could not use it due to naval action. This created a serious dilemma for the Italians: their forces went largely unreinforced during Operation COMPASS and were forced to fight with what weapons and supplies they had available. Conversely, the

British superiority of supply allowed their rapid manoeuvre and advance, and was another key contributor to their victory. This joint approach not only increased the combat power available to O'Connor but improved his ability to concentrate that power at the point where it had the greatest effect.

Logistics

Superior logistics does not win battles but it does place forces in the best position to prevail. The sheer distances of the desert and the minimal road and rail networks meant logistical considerations dominated O'Connor's plans. Every gallon of petrol, every bullet and tin of bully beef needed by the British forces had to be moved all the way from Egypt to the rapidly advancing frontline. Further, materiel reinforcement from other theatres was almost impossible due to the inability of either side to move convoys through the central Mediterranean. As George Forty has noted, it was 'an unbelievably difficult place to wage war and battles were to a large degree dictated by supply considerations'.¹³ Australia's Colonel George Vasey summarised it succinctly: 'this is a "Q" war'.¹⁴

British situation reports of the time and the official histories are dominated by discussions of how best to amass sufficient supplies to mount the next advance or assault.¹⁵ Indeed, after the initial breakthrough at Sidi Barrani, O'Connor's operational plans were largely based on capturing logistics nodes: Halfaya Pass for its access to the coast road; the two tiny jetties at Sollum; Bardia and Tobruk for their harbours; and Benghazi for its port facilities. Consequently, Italian plans were based around defending these locations and denying them to the British. Logistics, therefore, did not just influence the campaign, it dictated when and where the decisive battles would be fought.

The disparity in the logistical capacity of the opposing forces was evident in the movements of the campaign. Graziani's advance into Egypt in September 1940 had been halted after just 60 miles not by any substantial British opposition but by his infantry's inability to march any further on foot. Even after consolidating his positions, he was unable to resume the advance because his scarce motor transport was unable to move

sufficient supplies forward from depots at Bardia and Tobruk.

Conversely, the British fell back on their railhead at Matruh, and built up forces and supplies to counter Graziani's advance. O'Connor might only have had two divisions of fighting troops but they were highly mechanised and had a comparatively large logistics support element. In preparation for the British offensive, two large forward supply dumps were secretly established in the no-man's land between the Italian and British frontlines. These supplied the initial assault and breakthrough at Sidi Barrani, while the subsequent advance to Bardia was supported by two small piers captured at Sollum. The British surrounded and then captured Bardia, needing its port to support the subsequent assault on Tobruk.¹⁶ The British thus maintained their supply lines, while the Italians lack of motorised transport to supply or move counter-attack forces forced them to retreat to defensive strongpoints and try to withstand a siege.¹⁷ Through lack of supply, an otherwise modern army was compelled to adopt medieval tactics.

The investment of and assaults on Bardia and Tobruk further demonstrated the importance of logistics. Needed in the Sudan, the 4th Indian Division was withdrawn and replaced by the inexperienced 6th Australian Division, while O'Connor tried to build up sufficient combat power to penetrate Bardia's considerable defences. The result was an unavoidable operational pause. Again, the joint approach provided an advantage: supplies and reinforcements could be brought up by ship, and bombardment by naval vessels significantly reduced the artillery and shells needed to be amassed to support the assault on the fortress.¹⁸

Bardia fell to an Australian assault just after Christmas, and O'Connor immediately invested Tobruk, requiring the port infrastructure there to supply his planned advance on Benghazi. Further evidence of the dominance of supply on O'Connor's plans was his decision to pause and conduct a deliberate attack on Tobruk, expressly to reduce the time the Italians had to destroy the much-needed docks and warehouses.¹⁹ He was successful: the docks were repaired in two days, and enough supplies were accrued over the following fortnight to permit the final pursuit of the Italians to their destruction at Beda Fomm.²⁰

Manoeuvre: mechanisation and doctrine

While the preceding factors gave O'Connor freedom of action, it was through manoeuvre that he was able to concentrate his combat power at the decisive point. Outnumbered by five-to-one in men and guns, O'Connor consistently used his forces' superior mobility to avoid areas of enemy strength and instead exploit their vulnerabilities. In so doing, he prevented the Italians from being able to use the advantages of their prepared defensive positions or superior weight of artillery. The inability of the Italians to counter this movement has already been discussed.

O'Connor's approach was made possible by the inherent mobility of his small mechanised forces, underpinned by the freedom of action gained from joint operations with sound logistics support. The combat power of these small forces was greatly enhanced by organising combined arms brigades of tanks, infantry and anti-tank guns, screened by light armoured vehicles and supported by towed artillery.²¹ A regiment (battalion) of tanks was allocated to most infantry brigades, and squadrons of heavier Cruiser and light Vickers tanks were swapped between regiments to balance mobility and firepower. The heavily armoured but slow 'I' tanks (also called Matildas) were specially designed to accompany infantry in the assault, and were attached to infantry battalions for specific attacks.²²

The opposing Italians had numerous light and medium tanks, some which outgunned their British equivalents, but tended to employ them in smaller groups in direct support of their infantry. With the infantry largely employed in static defences, the tanks could not exploit their advantage of mobility. Consequently, the only Italian offensive manoeuvres employed in the entire campaign were local counter-penetration or spoiling actions against British advances. Counter-attacks on British units larger than a battalion were almost non-existent.

Even at Mechilli, where two opposing armoured brigades clashed on 24 January 1941, with the British force being driven off, the Italians withdrew instead of exploiting their success.²³ Much of this timidity can be attributed to the Italians' assignment of their armour to the lowest levels of

command and a consequent lack of mass. With their tanks usually deployed in 'penny packets' of six or seven, they were able to be easily countered by the embedded anti-tank guns and medium tanks within British formations.²⁴ Conversely, the Italians' control of their artillery was held at the highest level, reducing its ability to quickly support troops in local contacts.

These issues were a direct result of the Italians' continued use of First World War-era 'motorisation' doctrine which promoted the primacy of artillery, and in which armour was to operate in support of the infantry.²⁵ Despite the numerical superiority of their infantry forces, these troops were 'of little value against a smaller number of highly mobile armoured and mechanised formations'.²⁶ The resulting vulnerability of the Italian forces made it almost impossible to counter British manoeuvres. This was not necessarily the commander's fault: Graziani had identified the need for mobile, mechanised and armoured formations before his advance into Egypt but could not obtain them. Only the under-strength Special Armoured Brigade was assigned to him. In 1938, Italian Army doctrine had belatedly embraced the doctrine of 'mechanisation' and adopted a theory of massed armour, mobile artillery and an indirect approach to attack an enemy's flanks. This doctrine had even been tested in Libya using First World War-vintage tanks and equipment.²⁷

Unfortunately for the Italians, they did not possess the industrial capacity or the money to re-equip their forces in time for their offensive in the Western Desert. Those mechanised forces which did exist were retained in Italy for the defence of the mainland.²⁸ As a consequence, Graziani's forces continued to use the obsolete 'motorisation' doctrine, a factor which one of the Italian General Staff called "a canker" ... [which] lay at the heart of very painful losses'.²⁹ The Italians were a First World War-force in their doctrine and mobility—and they paid dearly for it.³⁰ There is evidence the Italians recognised these failings: after Operation COMPASS, they doubled the number of artillery weapons in each division, changed their command arrangements, and fielded heavier and more capable tanks.³¹ They also deployed their only armoured division (the Trieste Division) to Libya alongside Rommel's Afrika Korps.³²

The relative impotence of the Italian Army is evident in Graziani's inability to move beyond Sidi

Barrani in September 1940, and his incapacity to withdraw his forces effectively from Benghazi in February 1941. As has been noted, Graziani was forced to employ his large infantry force in powerful but immobile defensive positions like Bardia and Tobruk.³³ This could have significantly constrained the British advance—Tobruk certainly limited Rommel's options when he failed to capture it later in 1941—but without the capacity to counter-attack, the Italians could only react to British movements. As would be shown throughout the following Western Desert campaigns, fighting an opponent to a stalemate was a temporary solution but forcing a decision required mobility. It was the British who possessed the advantage of mobility, and they exploited it from the very start.

In the opening battle at Sidi Barrani, British armoured forces had advanced through a gap between fortified camps which was not covered by obstacles or fire. A direct attack on the rear of the Italians' Nibeiwa camp by infantry and Matilda tanks followed, pushed through a poorly concealed gap in the perimeter minefield.³⁴ This started a pattern: O'Connor and his subordinates Major Generals Michael Creagh (7th Armoured Division) and Iven Mackay (6th Australian Division) would continually use their light armour and wheeled-reconnaissance columns to seek out gaps which they could move their forces through.

Where gaps did not exist, such as on the defensive perimeters at Bardia and Tobruk, a small force would penetrate the defensive line and a following combined arms team would move through the breach to roll up the defences from the flanks and rear. Well-defended surfaces were avoided in favour of exploiting empty spaces between units or through turning a flank. Thus, the Italians were largely prevented from fighting where they intended to fight, and the British forces avoided the engagement areas where the Italians' superior artillery could be brought to bear. In so doing, the advantages of the defender were largely negated: choice of terrain, shorter lines of communication, and the layering of direct and indirect fires were unable to be used.

The most spectacular and successful exploitation of a gap was in the culmination of Operation COMPASS at the battle of Beda Fomm. Several weeks after the capture of Tobruk,

O'Connor pushed the remains of the exhausted 7th Armoured Division through 150 miles of un-reconnoitred desert at night across the base of the Cyrenaican bulge to Beda Fomm. The lead elements of the armoured division took up a block position astride the coast road just ahead of the Italian force fleeing from an Australian divisional advance on Benghazi. A furious 48 hours of combat followed, as an Italian force of some 25,000 soldiers, 100 artillery pieces and 100 tanks tried to break through the blocking position and its flank guards.

Critically, the Italians did not coordinate their attack and committed their armour piecemeal to the battle as it arrived. These small groups of tanks proved no match for the equally small numbers of dug-in anti-tank guns and hull-down medium tanks of the blocking force which occupied the high ground. Trapped, the Italian Tenth Army surrendered on 7 February 1941.³⁵ In the final battle, as in the rest of the campaign, the Italians had been unable to concentrate their superior numbers against a smaller opponent, instead attacking without coordination and frittering away their combat power.

Command

Ultimately, the British victory was decisive because their superior command and control allowed them to concentrate their combat power where it would do most harm. This superiority can be assigned to technological, organisational and human factors. Unlike the Italians, the British pursued their joint approach by linking the air commander with O'Connor's headquarters, and giving O'Connor direct command of some reconnaissance and fighter aircraft.³⁶ With full knowledge of each other's plans, the air forces coordinated their operations to achieve O'Connor's intent, changing between control of the air and ground-attack missions as the situation required.

O'Connor also benefited from having comparatively experienced and motivated subordinates. The 7th Armoured and 4th Indian Divisions had nearly two years of experience in mechanised operations in the desert, while the otherwise-inexperienced 6th Australian Division benefited from the presence of some of Australia's best commanders with experience from the First World War.³⁷ The British forces had better

communication networks at lower levels (including between individual tanks and aircraft) than the Italians but this was only part of their ability to react faster.³⁸ The rapid evolution of events inherent in mobile warfare also required commanders who were comfortable with ambiguity and could achieve their commander's intent in rapidly changing circumstances. This relied not just on procedures and technology but also on the trust between commanders at different levels.

The British commanders were more experienced, audacious and motivated than their opponents. O'Connor knew his units and his commanders well, and was allowed considerable latitude by Wavell in planning and executing Operation COMPASS. As a consequence, he was able to display considerable initiative in planning operations, and daring in executing them. While O'Connor was required to back-brief his operational plans to Wavell, he was given a relatively free hand and was encouraged to take bold and decisive manoeuvres by both Cairo and London.³⁹

Neither Wavell nor O'Connor sought undue credit for success and they were effusive in praising their subordinates. As a consequence, their subordinates were more prepared to take calculated risks. With the support of his superiors, O'Connor's known boldness, highly trained mind and extensive wartime experience was able to be translated into decisive tactics, as demonstrated by his audacious and risky interception of the Italians at Beda Fomm.⁴⁰

Reflection

A number of other factors have been put forward by other authors for O'Connor's victory but they are not as influential as is often made out. The Italian equipment was not, as is often claimed, dramatically inferior to that of the British. Certainly, they had no tanks to match the British Matildas, nor sufficient anti-tank guns that could defeat the Matildas front-on. But the Matildas were a scarce, temperamental and carefully used asset—there were only 50 at the operation's start—and they rarely participated in tank-on-tank battles.⁴¹ They were also not present at the later battles of Mechilli, Derna or Beda Fomm.

Contradicting the myth of inferior armour, the Italian light and medium tanks proved more than

capable of holding their own against their British counterparts at the engagements at Mechilli on 24 January 1941. There, the Italian Special Armoured Brigade held its ground to defeat a British advance and subsequent counter-attack. O'Connor was sufficiently concerned that he waited a week-and-a-half to bring up reinforcements before advancing to and capturing Mechilli.⁴² Italian armour had proved equal to the British when employed effectively. Similarly, if British troops were truly so much better equipped, their advance should have slowed following the replacement of the experienced and mechanised 4th Indian Division with the unblooded and poorly equipped 6th Australian Division in mid-December.⁴³ However, it did not.

Much has been written about the moral superiority of the British and Commonwealth troops over demoralised Italians who viewed the conflict as Mussolini's war but this is perhaps an over-simplification.⁴⁴ Certainly, morale was a key factor in the susceptibility of the Italian defences to crumble once outflanked—and the Italians often surrendered in droves.⁴⁵ But equally, there are many accounts of when the Italians 'fought like hell', particularly their artillery teams, and many of their formations were well-trained and well-equipped for defensive operations.⁴⁶

Knowing the propensity for the Italians to surrender when they felt all was lost, O'Connor designed his operations around creating the feeling of impotence by using encirclement, penetration and fire support to shatter their will to resist.⁴⁷ O'Connor simply attempted to avoid pitting strength against strength, exploiting one of his enemy's key weaknesses.

Had the Italians been more tenacious, the British force would probably have suffered more serious casualties and may not have been able to advance so far or so fast. But several months later, British forces were defeated with even greater speed during Operation CRUSADER by Rommel using the same tactics as O'Connor. Similarly, in 1942, the British adopted isolated but strong defensive positions at Gazala that were very similar to Italian dispositions at Sidi Barrani in 1940, and they were overwhelmed just as quickly. While the fighting spirit of the Italians was certainly lacking, it does not wholly explain O'Connor's success.

Conclusion

While O'Connor's tactical nous and the capabilities of his Western Desert Force were key to victory, they were not the only factors. O'Connor entered Operation COMPASS at a significant numerical disadvantage but with a more capable force and a favourable strategic situation. His success is explained by the effective synchronisation and coordination of all elements of his military power, using sound military strategy and a joint plan for waging war. He was thus able to strike when and where the conditions suited his forces, and with the weight of air and sea power supporting his small land force.

The failures of the Italians were also instrumental in allowing O'Connor to use his limited resources to best effect, and cannot be ignored. Ultimately, O'Connor won a decisive victory by using these advantages to focus his combat power against Italian weakness time and time again. In the difficult conditions of the Western Desert, his opposition had no effective response.

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Notes

- 1 For simplicity, in this paper 'British' encompasses British and Commonwealth forces.
- 2 Orders from Wavell to Wilson, 28 November 1940, quoted in Gavin Long, *The Six Years War: a concise history of Australia in the 1939-45 war*, Australian War Memorial: Canberra, 1973, p. 132.
- 3 Ian Playfair, *The Mediterranean and Middle East: the early successes against Italy (to May 1941)*, Vol. 2, HM Stationery Office: London, 1954, pp. 257-359.
- 4 Niall Barr, *Pendulum of war: three battles at El Alamein*, Random House: London, 2004, p. 3.
- 5 Playfair, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, p. 238.
- 6 John Baynes, *The Forgotten Victor – General Sir Richard O'Connor*, Brassey's Publishing: London, 1989, p. 114.
- 7 Playfair, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, pp. 261-2.
- 8 Jon Latimer, *Operation COMPASS 1940: Wavell's whirlwind offensive*, Osprey: Oxford, 2000, p. 32.
- 9 Playfair, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, pp. 262-98.

- 10 Telegram Wavell to War Office, 4 February 1941, in 'Operation "COMPASS": situation and operational reports, 1940 December-1941 March', folio 158A, WO 106/2136, British National Archives.
- 11 Quoted in Playfair, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, p. 357.
- 12 Playfair, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, pp. 241-56.
- 13 George Forty, *The Desert War*, Sutton Publishing Limited: Stroud, 2002, p. 14.
- 14 Quoted in Long, *The Six Years War*, p. 161.
- 15 See 'Situation reports on current operations: Operation "COMPASS", 1940 December-1941 January', WO 201/349, British National Archives; 'Reports on lessons of operations, accounts of engagements, December 1940-September 1941', WO 201/352, British National Archives; and 'Operation "COMPASS": situation and operational reports, 1940 December-1941 March', WO 106/2136, British National Archives.
- 16 Latimer, *Operation COMPASS 1940*, p. 38.
- 17 Craig Stockings, 'The Anzac legend and the Battle of Bardia', *War in History*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 2010, p. 98.
- 18 Playfair, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, p. 290.
- 19 Playfair, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, p. 290.
- 20 Forty, *The Desert War*, p. 30.
- 21 'Reports on lessons of operations, accounts of engagements, December 1940-September 1941'.
- 22 'Reports on lessons of operations, accounts of engagements, December 1940-September 1941', p. 12.
- 23 Latimer, *Operation COMPASS 1940*, p. 66.
- 24 Playfair, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, pp. 284, 293, 358-62 and 364; and Long, *The Six Years War*, p. 139.
- 25 John Sweet, *Iron Arm: the mechanization of Mussolini's army, 1920-1940*, Stackpole Books: London, 1985, p. 115.
- 26 Barr, *Pendulum of war*, p. 8.
- 27 Sweet, *Iron Arm*, pp. 124-8.
- 28 Sweet, *Iron Arm*, pp. 186-9.
- 29 Barrie Pitt, *The Crucible of War: year of Alamein 1942*, Vol. 2, Jonathan Cape: London, 1982, p. 23.
- 30 Craig Stockings, 'Something is wrong with our army ... : command, leadership and Italian military failure in the First Libyan Campaign, 1940-41', *Defence Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2013, p. 128.
- 31 James Sadkovich, 'Of myths and men: Rommel and the Italians in North Africa, 1940-1942', *The International History Review*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1991, p. 289.
- 32 Sweet, *Iron Arm*, pp. 186-9; and Playfair, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, p. 290.
- 33 Sadkovich, 'Of myths and men', p. 291.
- 34 Long, *The Six Years War*, p. 135.
- 35 Playfair, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, pp. 356-62.
- 36 Playfair, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, p. 262.
- 37 Sweet, *Iron Arm*, p. 148. The Australian official history refers them as being of 'exceptional quality': Long, *The Six Years War*, p. 84.
- 38 The Italians had no inter-tank radios, instead relying on semaphore: Stockings, 'The Anzac legend and the Battle of Bardia', p. 104.

- 39 Latimer, *Operation COMPASS 1940*, pp. 68-9.
- 40 Baynes, *The Forgotten Victor*, pp. 92-4.
- 41 'Reports on lessons of operations, accounts of engagements, December 1940-September 1941', p. 15.
- 42 Sadkovich, 'Of myths and men', p. 292.
- 43 The Division arrived missing significant artillery, machine guns and anti-tank guns: Long, *The Six Years War*, pp. 145-6.
- 44 Stockings, 'The Anzac legend and the Battle of Bardia', p. 104.
- 45 For example, rear echelon troops at Bardia: Long, *The Six Years War*, pp. 163-204.
- 46 Latimer, *Operation COMPASS 1940*, p. 33; also concluding note to 'Reports on lessons of operations, accounts of engagements, December 1940-September 1941', p. 31; and Long, *The Six Years War*, pp. 165-9.
- 47 Stockings, 'Something is wrong with our army ...', p. 129.

Additional reading

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Bickers, Richard, *The Desert Air War 1939-1945*, Pen and Sword: London, 1991.

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Assessing medical suitability for employment and deployment in the ADF

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Introduction

This article follows previous papers by the author, regarding occupational and environmental medicine in the ADF.¹ They asserted that high rates of workplace illness and injury indicate the need to improve the management of hazards associated with ADF workplaces, with better emphasis on prevention. They also advocated that the ADF's health services should be premised on an occupational and environmental health paradigm, which would require reassessing the fundamental inputs to capability for both Joint Health Command, and Defence's Work Health and Safety Branch.

The papers argued that such a reassessment could lead to a holistic and sustainable workforce-based health service delivery model by 2030. This timeframe is based on the current state of the ADF's occupational and environmental health services, and the small number of civilian specialist practitioners within the Australasian

Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. These considerations suggest that a mature health delivery model would take 10-15 years' sustained effort with respect to occupational and environmental physicians alone.

This article expands on those papers, by addressing medical suitability assessment for the employment and deployment of ADF members.

ADF health assessments – recruiting

The need for high recruiting medical standards was first demonstrated in Australia during World War 1. Of the 589,947 men who were medically examined for the First Australian Imperial Force (AIF), 30.3 per cent were rejected on medical grounds. Thereafter, 33,800 of 421,809 AIF entrants (8.0%) were medically discharged before leaving Australia, while another 16,000 of the 331,781 personnel who served overseas

(28.1% of all AIF non-battle casualties) were invalided home before seeing active service.² These militarily ineffective personnel not only wasted resources and hampered operational capability, but also constituted a considerable post-war burden with respect to their rehabilitation and compensation entitlements.³

Substantial clinical advances since have driven major changes to recruiting medical standards. Conditions such as asthma, which were previously incompatible with military service, can often now be adequately managed without reducing operational capability. Furthermore, Navy recruiting in particular has significantly benefited from advances in shipboard habitability since the 1950s—for example relating to the prevention of certain skin conditions and the treatment of obstructive sleep apnoea.⁴

Even so, recruiting health assessments still fulfil several aims. Firstly, they facilitate operational capability by ensuring that entrants are medically suitable for the tasks they will undertake: all else being equal, infantry soldiers who are recruited to a higher medical standard have a capability edge against opponents who are not. This consideration also applies to occupations that require specific medical standards: for example, the importance of visual tasks for aircrew means that, compared with other occupational groups, they require a higher visual standard.

Secondly, recruiting health assessments ensure that operational capability is not degraded by pre-existing medical conditions that may be exacerbated by the tasks that entrants undertake during their service: for instance, entrants with pre-existing back conditions pose a capability risk for duties that entail carrying heavy packs for extended periods. Finally, recruiting health assessments ‘baseline’ each entrant’s health status for compensation purposes, with respect to future medical conditions they may develop during their service. For example, when ascertaining compensation eligibility for a knee condition, it is essential to have adequately documented the medical status of that knee before entry.

Virtually all ADF recruiting health assessments are conducted by contracted civilian medical practitioners.⁵ A key differentiation from their Defence counterparts is that they do not provide

treatment: where necessary, such cases are referred back to the candidate’s civilian GP.

A key limitation of all health assessments, however, is that they cannot positively confirm that personnel are medically suitable for a particular purpose—they can only document the apparent absence, at that time, of conditions which may limit or prevent examinees from undertaking that purpose. Consequently, health assessments for recruits must always be considered only one of many ways of managing health-related employment and deployment risk.

ADF health assessments – current members

Misconceptions

A key misconception among many Defence health staff and the general ADF population, is that health assessments are primarily used to identify new medical conditions in order to facilitate treatment. In fact, the number of medically or operationally significant clinical conditions identified via this means is very small. Moreover, finding such a condition at a routine health assessment usually implies a failure in patient presentation/reporting, and/or the standard of primary health care they receive.⁶

It is therefore essential that the diagnosis and treatment of every new medical condition includes considering its impact on the affected member’s ability to perform their normal duties and vice-versa, that is, considering the impact of their normal duties on their newly diagnosed medical condition. This means that Defence primary health care providers not only need to be good clinicians but also need a thorough understanding of the duties that their patients undertake.

Personnel requirements

Documenting a member’s health status via a health assessment fulfils several aims, many of which relate to personnel employment requirements, such as promotions, courses, re-enlistments and career transfers. The overall intent is to limit the expenditure of resources on personnel who are not medically suitable.

Another key requirement is to ascertain health status prior to deployment. When done correctly, pre-deployment health assessments also 're-baseline' the member's medical status for subsequent compensation purposes. This entails repeating the same health assessment on their return, to identify changes to their health status that may be ascribable to their deployment.

Post-deployment health assessments should also document the actual and potential workplace hazards encountered by each member during their deployment. As maritime workplace hazards, for example, are obviously not the same as those ashore and vice-versa, pre- and post-deployment health assessments both need to be environment-specific.

The 're-baselining' requirement also applies to non-deployed personnel, particularly regarding the current status of previously identified medical conditions they have developed since their previous health assessment. Besides validating their current medical suitability to deploy, this also facilitates compensation for non-deployed workplace-related conditions.

The health assessment workload must not be underestimated. For example, of the 144,000 US Army personnel considered 'non-deployable' for medical and dental reasons as at December 2016, 55,000 (38%) were so classified because they were out of date for their annual periodic health assessments and/or dental examinations.⁷ Even the financial and personnel cost of civilian employment assessments (where they exist) should not be underestimated.⁸

Furthermore, the author has previously noted that, anecdotally, only 20-40 per cent of ADF primary care presentations are for non-work-related conditions typically seen in an equivalent Australian civilian population—the remainder are predominantly workplace-related musculo-skeletal and mental health disorders, for which 're-baselining' is required for compensation purposes. Despite these facts, the ADF's health services currently do not apply 'baselining' to their health assessments.

Occupational health requirements

ADF health assessments should also align with the legislative requirements of the *Work Health*

and Safety Act 2011 and its implementing regulations, and Safework Australia's supporting Guides, National Standards, and Model Codes of Practice.⁹ It is essential to understand that these occupational health assessments can only ascertain the effectiveness of the examinee's workplace hazard controls: they are not themselves control measures.¹⁰ Identifying a preventable work-related condition at an occupational health assessment usually not only occurs far too late for the affected member but may also have a range of adverse reputational management and other organisational consequences.¹¹

At present, the responsibility for the ADF's occupational and environmental health services is divided between Joint Health Command and Defence's Work Health and Safety Branch. As a result, the ADF's overall legislative compliance with occupational and environmental health assessments is minimalist, reactive, and ad hoc.¹² The aforementioned link between workforce treatment services and workplace health assessments indicates that Joint Health Command should be responsible for both.

Health assessment content

Current ADF health assessments do not assess medical suitability for employment and deployment: they are primarily 'healthy lifestyle' checks per the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' 'Red Book'.¹³ As previously noted by the author, the usefulness of the College's otherwise extensive preventive health guidance to the ADF is limited by its focus on the general Australian population, rather than being targeted for a young, medically fit, geographically mobile and predominantly male workforce. Furthermore, lifestyle factors such as tobacco use are irrelevant if they do not actually preclude employment or deployment.

Health assessment periodicity

ADF periodic health assessments are presently conducted every five years until members reach 40, with progressively shorter intervals thereafter. These timeframes do not reflect personnel or legislative considerations but resourcing issues based on the 'Red Book'. From an occupational and environmental health perspective, using this guidance for a young and generally fit ADF

population is unduly conservative—evidence suggests their periodic health assessments can be safely performed five-yearly until individuals reach 60.¹⁴

Even so, because they can only confirm the absence of medical conditions at that time, five-year intervals are too long to accommodate additional personnel and/or legislative requirements. Health assessments for these purposes should therefore be ‘triggered’ when required. Balancing their demands against resourcing issues suggests that ‘triggered’ personnel health assessments should remain valid for all subsequent personnel management requirements for a maximum of 12 months, while ‘triggered’ occupational health assessments should comply with Safework Australia’s guidance.

Temporarily medically unfit personnel

Defence medical practitioners who deem ADF personnel temporarily medically unfit for normal duties for less than 28 days may either recommend a period of restricted or alternative duties, or a period of excused duties, or have them admitted to a military or civilian hospital.

Except for aircrew, and apart from the need for command approval, Joint Health Command direction for managing temporarily medical unfit personnel is generally similar to that used for civilian sickness certification.¹⁵ At present, however, ADF ‘medical absences’ are not managed as a workforce capability management issue premised on early rehabilitation and timely return to work but as a health administrative issue that is almost solely premised on conditions-of-service considerations.

Furthermore, Joint Health Command currently does not collect or report work-related illness/injury data, or record lost time or restricted duties, or identify the ensuing health care costs (albeit some of this information is collected via a separate non-health reporting process managed by Defence’s Work Health and Safety Branch). Yet this health information is essential for monitoring the effectiveness of the ADF’s occupational and environmental health services, accounting for the health care costs incurred by Joint Health Command and the compensation

and health care costs incurred by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs.

Whether deployed or non-deployed, the inappropriate employment of medically unsuitable personnel poses threats to the health of those affected and to the mission of their units. Furthermore, evacuating deployed personnel with known pre-existing conditions wastes assets and poses operational hazards for other members.

Conversely, however, inappropriately limiting or preventing personnel from undertaking their normal duties also has significant adverse consequences. For the affected member, it delays or blocks their career progression, deployments, promotions or attendance at courses. For their units, it increases the workload for other personnel (who themselves may already be under strain) and may also limit or even prevent normal operations if the affected member is essential to their unit’s functions.

These consequences may also have unintended second- and third-order effects regarding future patient compliance and willingness to report injuries, illnesses and symptoms, or receive treatment. It may also lead to perception management issues not only regarding individual health staff members who needlessly block their career aspirations but in relation to the ADF’s health services in general.

These considerations mean that in addition to diagnosis and treatment, every Defence primary health care provider must make a decision regarding the anticipated medical suitability for duty of every ADF member at every patient presentation. This not only prevents or limits further workplace injuries by limiting or stopping personnel from working when necessary but also facilitates effective personnel utilisation by ADF commanders by keeping affected personnel at work where and when it is clinically appropriate to do so.

Hence, Defence primary health care providers who cannot assess medical suitability for ADF employment and deployment on these terms are both a threat to the work-related health and safety of the patients they treat (if they keep them at work inappropriately) and a liability to ADF operational capability (if they stop them from work inappropriately). Making these decisions necessitate a risk-management approach to patient care that balances the anticipated



risks and benefits of the member's duties to their health, and vice versa. This further supports the contention that Defence primary health care providers need to be not only good clinicians but also need a comparable understanding of the duties their patients undertake.

However, the author has previously referred to studies indicating that even civilian medical fitness-for-work certification can be challenging for GPs and other providers, which is one reason why understanding how to assess medical suitability for ADF employment and deployment typically takes full-time novice military and civilian GPs up to 12 months. The author has also previously described how civilian GP training does not provide the full range of primary health care skills and expertise required for the ADF workforce.

In summary, ascertaining health suitability for employment and deployment of temporarily medically unfit personnel is an occupational and environmental health function that is intrinsic to providing appropriate health care for every ADF member. However, it is not recognised as such by the current health care model used by Joint Health Command for its garrison health services, or in the fundamental inputs to health capability for either Joint Health Command or Defence's Work Health and Safety Branch.

The ADF Medical Employment Classification System

Defence medical practitioners who consider an ADF member to be temporarily medically unfit for their normal duties for more than 28 days should conduct a Unit Medical Employment Classification Review in accordance with the relevant joint and single-Service references.¹⁶ Depending on the outcome, personnel who remain medically unfit for more than a specified period (typically 12 months) should undergo a Central Medical Employment Classification Review. These reviews refer members to the relevant single-Service Medical Employment Classification Review Board for a determination regarding their long-term employability and deployability, which may (but by no means always) include medically-based separation from the ADF.

All review outcomes have two components. The first is a Medical Employment Classification

code, which describes the member's employability and deployability, for use by their career management agency for posting and other longer-term career-related purposes. The second lists the member's employment restrictions that specify their duty limitations and approvals, for use by the member's Command for day-to-day personnel management purposes.

Unlike the current medical absence process, this system is unique to the ADF, with no civilian equivalent. Yet for the same reasons as for temporarily medically unfit personnel, recognising when to conduct a Medical Employment Classification Review is an occupational and environmental health function that is intrinsic to providing health care for ADF members. This further supports the assertion that Defence primary health care providers need to have a good understanding of the duties their patients undertake.

It is also essential that Defence primary health care providers appreciate that this system is not a patient management tool but a process to inform personnel management decision-making while maintaining patient confidentiality. Abuse of the system for patient management purposes leads to unnecessary personnel management decision-making delays, which may adversely affect the member's command and other unit personnel and their future employability in or out of the ADF.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the average Defence medical practitioner conducting these reviews should consume about 30-40 per cent of their level of effort, or about the same as their clinical workload. This is because the frequently substantial career (and at times operational capability) implications and future compensation entitlements mean that every review requires careful consideration and detailed documentation, in particular regarding:

- The circumstances as to how the member first presented (particularly for conditions that are or may be work-related, for subsequent compensation purposes);
- The clinical findings at that presentation ('baselining');
- Initial and current treatment after presentation;
- For personnel with multiple conditions or injuries, repeating these steps for each condition

or injury;

- Describing the member's current clinical status, and any limitations regarding their ability to undertake normal duties ('re-baselining' for subsequent Reviews); and
- Recommended Medical Employment Classification code and employment restrictions, and justification.¹⁷

However, of the 13,816 Central Medical Employment Classification Reviews conducted by garrison health staff between 1 February 2011 and 30 September 2016, at least 35 per cent were inadequate with respect to documenting these findings.¹⁸ While comparable figures with respect to Unit Medical Employment Classification Reviews do not exist, the relative lack of supervision suggests they would probably be higher.

Poor-quality reviews have important career and other implications with respect to the affected member's employability and deployability, as well as the time and effort wasted on representations, appeals and ministerial inquiries. It also makes it more difficult to assess the eligibility of members for treatment and compensation services provided by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and, in particular, ascertaining the extent to which their medical conditions may relate to their ADF service.

Conclusion

With ADF personnel arguably exposed to the most diverse range of occupational and environmental hazards of any Australian workforce, high rates of preventable workplace illness and injury indicate the need to improve the management of occupational and environmental health hazards, with better emphasis on prevention.

Among its other attributes, the proposed occupational and environmental health paradigm would entail basing the timing and content of health assessments on personnel management and/or legislative requirements, with a maximum interval of five years. Rather than generally irrelevant lifestyle-related health promotion considerations, it would also entail Defence medical officers who accept the need to assess medical suitability for employment and deployment at every ADF patient presentation as intrinsic to providing health care for the ADF workforce, while adequately informing

the relevant personnel managers.

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His seagoing service includes HMA Ships SWAN, STALWART, SUCCESS, SYDNEY, PERTH and CHOULES. Deployments include DAMASK VII, RIMPAC 96, TANAGER, RELEX II, GEMSBOK, TALISMAN SABRE 07, RENDERSAFE 14, SEA RAIDER 15, KAKADU 16 and POLYGON 17. His service ashore includes clinical roles at CERBERUS, PENGUIN, KUTTABUL, ALBATROSS and STIRLING, and Director Health at the then Headquarters Australian Theatre (East Timor), Director Navy Occupational and Environmental Health, Director of Navy Health, staff officer Joint Health Command, and Fleet Medical Officer (January 2013 to January 2016). Commander Westphalen transferred to the Active Reserve in July 2016.

Notes

- 1 N. Westphalen, 'Occupational and environmental medicine in the Australian Defence Force', *Australian Defence Force Journal*, Issue 200, November-December 2016, pp. 49-58, available at http://www.defence.gov.au/ADC/ADFJ/Documents/issue_200/Westphalen_Nov_2016.pdf accessed 13 October 2017; and N. Westphalen, 'Primary health care in the Australian Defence Force', *Australian Defence Force Journal*, Issue 202, July/August 2017, pp. 91-7, available at http://www.defence.gov.au/adc/adfj/Documents/issue_202/Westphalen_July_2017.pdf accessed 13 October 2017.
- 2 A.G. Butler, *Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services, 1914-1918*, Vol. 3, Australian War Memorial: Canberra, 1943, Chapters 14, 15 and 17. 103,897 AIF personnel were returned to Australia as invalids. These included 71,048 sick or injured, and 31,375 wounded.
- 3 As each voyage from England to Australia took around three months, returning AIF invalids required a high level of en-route care. However, only two dedicated 'white' hospital ships were available, which moved 17,760 AIF invalids between September 1915 and November 1919, while the remaining 86,137 invalids were moved in non-dedicated 'black' transports: see Butler, *Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services, 1914-1918*, Chapter 14; and C. Lloyd, and J. Rees, *The Last Shilling: a history of repatriation in Australia*, Melbourne University Press: Melbourne, 1994. The repatriation of ex-AIF injured and ill members after World War 1 was one of the first and by far the largest nation-wide health scheme in Australia.
- 4 For example, Navy personnel with obstructive sleep apnoea were considered medically unsuitable for sea until the development of compact, quiet and generally

unobtrusive Continuous Positive Airway Pressure machines. Using these machines at sea, however, would still not have been possible prior to the widespread availability of mess-deck bunks with suitable access to mains power. As another example, ships' air conditioning systems have facilitated the entry and retention of Navy personnel with skin conditions such as acne, which are more susceptible to exacerbation in tropical climates.

- 5 Exceptions include all ADF aircrew and Navy clearance diver entrants, who require confirmation by the relevant ADF Senior Medical Adviser.
- 6 Anecdotal and an illustrative case in point is that the author can recall only one routine medical in 15 years where he identified a significant new medical condition in an ADF member. Even then, the patient did not see a doctor for (what turned out to be) lymphoma for two months, because he had decided to wait for his medical. While preventive health assessments can and should be used to detect conditions such as high blood pressure, the majority of such conditions do not prevent the affected member from deploying or being employed.
- 7 The US Army Medical Command therefore instituted a 'reset' program to resolve this issue by 31 March 2017: see A.G. Tolson, 'Health center sees success in medical readiness reset', *The Redstone Rocket* [website], 15 March 2017, available at http://www.theredstonerocket.com/military_scene/article_0707fb3e-0989-11e7-836e-e7c56c19bfc.html accessed 13 October 2017.
- 8 For instance, in 2013-14, the author undertook confirming civilian pre-employment medicals (not too dissimilar to ADF pre-deployment health assessments) for a major mining project in northwest Australia. Completing all the clinical and administration requirements for each medical would have taken examining doctors and supporting nursing staff at least two hours, at an estimated total cost of over \$700. For another example, civilian pilot medicals can take over 90 minutes to complete, and cost the applicant up to \$300.
- 9 Safework Australia, 'Model Work Health and Safety Regulations' *Safework Australia* [website], available at <http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/model-whs-regulations> accessed 13 October 2017; and Safework Australia, 'Publications and resources', *Safework Australia* [website], available at <http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/publication> accessed 13 October 2017.
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Tell us what you really think!

A new way to measure public opinion

Major Cate Carter, Australian Army

Thirty years ago, this journal published an article describing the findings of a 1980 public opinion poll on community attitudes to the Defence Force.¹ This was one of only a few polls that have addressed public perceptions of the military in Australia, yet the ADF still believes it enjoys a high level of public support.² However, this belief is based more on anecdote than comprehensive research and, in fact, we do not really know what the public thinks.

In the meantime, ADF cultural policy is being written on assumptions of social expectations—and waves of veterans are transitioning back into the community without any real idea of how that community regards them. It is a disservice to both serving members and veterans to give them so little understanding of public sentiment, so we need to do more. The trouble is, opinion polls and town hall meetings do not provide much information that is meaningful or revealing of the civil-military relationship, so a different kind of measurement is needed.

This article contends that qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews with small, targeted audiences would generate more specific findings, which could directly influence ADF policy and enrich the civil-military understanding.

The data

There are several existing data sets of public opinion on Defence issues but their scope includes topics which range from the Australian-US alliance to defence expenditure. The data sets are also limited to attitude-based prioritisations of importance, and do not reveal any significant level of engagement with ADF members.

By missing this crucial information, we cannot determine how much ADF members themselves contribute to the public image of 'Defence'. Community attitudes also tend to be measured, by both Defence and the media, around events which polarise responses to either ardour

(ANZAC day) or horror (scandals). Little of this information is useful for determining the nature of the relationship between the ADF and the public.

Most of the data comes from polls conducted over the last 40 years. During this time, the Department of Defence and others have periodically attempted to survey national attitudes towards Defence and defence-related policy. However, the various polls have had different purposes, with their questions accordingly reflecting their differing objectives.

The 1980 Advertising Service's poll

A survey in 1980 was commissioned by the Australian Government Advertising Service, on behalf of the Department of Defence, to investigate community attitudes primarily for recruitment purposes.³ This study came at a time when post-Vietnam demobilisation and social mobilisation had left the Defence Force hollow, and bereft of a strategic role. The research was commissioned to identify strategies that would boost recruitment and provide a new image for the ADF.

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods, aiming to identify community assumptions and determine national benchmarks. The qualitative phase, in which over 3200 'influencers' were interviewed, included peers, parents, potential recruiting target groups, recruiters, employment officers and school career advisors. However, while this was a useful cross-section of those likely to influence potential recruits, most displayed a significant lack of knowledge of the ADF, with researchers commenting that ADF members themselves were an overlooked source of information.⁴

The 2000 Defence Review Report survey

The 2000 Defence Review Report, 'Australian perspectives on defence', marked a change in preparation for strategic policy by releasing a discussion paper and following it with a community consultation process.⁵ The Howard Government heralded this as a significant shift in how defence and security policy would be made in Australia, alluding to post-Cold War instability in the region and renewed public interest in defence issues.

The consultation team, chaired by Andrew Peacock, held 28 public meetings in cities and regional centres, attracting over 2000 people. It also held a number of private meetings with government, private sector and interest groups; and received 1100 submissions. Seven themes emerged from the process, only two of which related specifically to the ADF, namely 'personnel' and 'Reserves'.

Despite the Howard Government's ambitious promotion of its 'new way' of policy development, the meetings faced some organised protest and were criticised, among other things, as being too brief and ambitious, gender- and age-biased, driven by departmental agendas, and generating little or no dialogue.⁶ The survey methodology was also criticised as being ineffective, leading to questions about whether government consultation with the community is more concerned with the fact that it consults, rather than what it consults about.

The 2004 Australian Strategic Policy Institute's report

The rise in public awareness of defence issues following deployments to East Timor and the Middle East was subsequently seen in a 2004 report published by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI). This report traced changes in public opinion over the previous 25 years but, as the author cautioned:

[P]ublic opinion on defence and national security doesn't dictate or lead what governments decide, at least in the way that public attitudes about health and education, for example, help to shape policy. Nevertheless, [it] established boundaries beyond which a government ventures only at its peril.⁷

The beneficiary of public opinion polls was, of course, the Australian Government. However, in the public meetings conducted for this report during 2003 and 2004, there were clear messages for Army that are still familiar today, namely that:

[T]he Army is too small ... that commercial outsourcing of ADF support elements had gone too far ... and that the ADF was losing links with the broader community.⁸

The 2009 Australian National University's poll

In 2009, a report titled 'Public opinion towards defence and foreign affairs' presented the results of an Australian National University poll, prepared to provide information for the 2009 Defence White Paper.⁹ A sample of 1200 people was surveyed in telephone interviews, although only two of 17 questions related to civic participation in the ADF, namely:

- If you had a son or daughter who was planning to enter the defence forces, would you support that decision, or would you suggest a different occupation?
- Have you or a close relative ever served in the ADF in any capacity?¹⁰

The other questions related to wider strategic issues including terrorism and the war in Afghanistan, which are matters of defence-related policy but provide no guidance on society's views of the ADF. By having defence policy as a constant companion, surveys involving questions about the ADF are almost always contaminated with cross-disciplinary equivocation, which can not only be ineffectual to our understanding of the civil-military relationship but harmful.

More recent developments

Subsequent attempts to present Australian public opinion of the ADF, despite alluding to its necessity, fail to consider it in sufficient depth. In 2014, Charles Miller contributed a chapter titled 'Public attitudes to defence' in an edited volume on *Australia's defence: towards a new era*.¹¹ Miller noted that not a lot of public discussion resulted from Thomas Millar's 1965 edict that '[we should] not be frightened to have a public discussion on defence'.¹² Miller goes on to present results from polls on five defence-related issues, one of which was public attitudes towards the ADF. However, what follows are comparisons between developed nations of public confidence in their respective militaries, which is more about, 'How much do you like us?' rather than 'Who do you think we are, and what is it that you think we do?'.

The data from this period gives only a brief glimpse into public attitudes to the ADF and its members, and is more useful as a

quasi-longitudinal study of political preferences. What it does not give us is topical and relevant information which describes the social classification or value assigned to ADF members by those not in the ADF.

A recent study has come closer to achieving this. The 2015 report, 'Guarding against uncertainty', commissioned by the Department of Defence, was prepared to inform the 2016 Defence White Paper and was the second large-scale attempt to use qualitative methodology to present national public opinion on defence issues.¹³ Responses were gathered from consultative meetings with 500 individuals across Australia and from matters raised in 260 submissions. Using unstructured interviews and thematic analysis, the findings yielded information about five general topics. However, the scope was again broad and did little more than produce many potential but unpursued leads.

In summary, opinion polls, whether gathered through longitudinal or cross-sectional design, are typically fraught with ambivalence. Polls present answers to precise questions but the nature of the individual may mean he or she does not possess a fixed view on an issue, and may present an immature or ambiguous sentiment.¹⁴

Such studies have not been very useful to a sociological understanding of civil-military relations and would be more valuable if they were designed around one topic, targeted a specific sector of the community, and tested both military and civilian responses to the same questions. This kind of design would enable the process of information-gathering to be carried out with depth and focus, and until individual topics are exhausted.

Influences

Before exploring new ways of measuring public opinion, it is useful to identify the main influences on public perception, and describe how they enhance or distort the image of the ADF.

Australia maintains certain myths around the 'history' and 'sacrifice' of the ADF and its members, which are most evident during commemoration and national celebrations.¹⁵ Stories and images dominate the way activities of the ADF are presented to the public. These stories form



an abbreviated social narrative, which is then adopted back into the ADF.

But the ADF too, cultivates its own share of the mythology, and this contributes greatly to internal notions of collective identity. Stories of the history and tradition of individual units are handed down from leaders to subordinates and maintained (sometimes out of context) by unit members. The two narratives are not always compatible, and so a dichotomy endures.

Some myths have been borrowed and rewritten into a chapter of the Australian narrative. This is no more clearly seen than in certain stories of public hostility towards American veterans of the Vietnam War, which were transferred to Australian historical accounts.¹⁶ In a society where those veterans are still living, this transference exacerbates the phenomenon of 'false memory', which can shape collective identity. The influence of military mythology on public opinion is generally distorting because it creates a contradiction between what is understood and what is presented. That the serving member perceives a contradiction between what is taught and what is experienced serves only to compound this distortion.

The ADF's relationship with the media has dominated the period of Middle Eastern operations and domestic incidents over the last decade. The main criticism from the media concerns the way the ADF regulates reporting by 'managing' broadcasters and messaging. Kevin Foster writes about articulation of national identity and surmises that the paradox of ADF public relations is the impossibility of balancing operational security, reputational management and brand promotion, contending that:

While fulfilling their mission, their principal responsibility was not to the Afghans or the International Security Assistance Force, but to the history of the organisation they served. They had to be seen to be serving in the great traditions of their Anzac forebears.¹⁷

Controlling messaging from overseas deployments is not the only regulatory activity perceived by the media. Problems have also occurred when the ADF has tried to control messages in times of scandal. This further isolates ADF members from their civilian support base because public defence and condemnation can

be equally meaningless when damage control strategies are perceived as being orchestrated by political figures.¹⁸ The ADF's strategic communication practices have the potential to be one of the greatest influences on public opinion but, ironically, often have a negative effect, due sometimes to perversion but sometimes to silence.

The point at which the tight control of strategic communication messages is relinquished is when an ADF member separates from military service. Ex-service organisations now dominate the media's presentation of the military-to-civilian transition process, and act as facilitators for presenting the transition struggles of contemporary veterans. The image which has emerged, however, is often one of 'veteran entitlement', which is again a distortion—and can only have a degrading effect on relations with the public.¹⁹

However, this is not just a local problem. Kings College London and market research organisation Ipsos MORI conducted a comparative survey in 2015 on public opinion of 'the military' across five countries, including Australia.²⁰ The survey explored themes of military members as 'hero/victim/villain' and found that many respondents had a conflicting image of military members, regarding them as both hero and victim at the same time.

In championing the cause of the veteran, ex-service organisations have inadvertently contributed to the separation of serving and ex-serving communities. This has possibly pushed the serving community further away from the public eye, and replaced it with an image that is somewhat incomplete and ambiguous.

A new way to measure public opinion

From this description of the main influencers, it is likely that the Australian community has a distorted view of the ADF, which is contributed to by many stakeholders, including government, the media and the ADF itself. It is also apparent that the information available on public attitudes to ADF members is too broad and too shallow.

In referring earlier to the community consultancy activities of 2000 and 2015, it was suggested

that such studies would be more useful if they were designed around one topic, targeted a specific sector of the community, and tested both military and civilian responses to the same questions. This is the logic behind a more productive methodology.

To find out what people think, we need to start with a qualitative approach. Qualitative research lends itself to a social reality that is constructed and dynamic (reflecting Australian society). It needs to emphasise how people interpret their world through their words and behaviour (suited to interviews); and should be inductive, that is, by generating theories, rather than testing existing theories (suited to finding out 'what' rather than 'how much').²¹

Where population samples have been used to map changes over time, as is the case with policy-based opinion polls, they have generally employed a quantitative strategy (that is, they have measured something like percentages) and used repeated cross-sections of population samples, rather than true longitudinal designs which would retest the same sample.

To gather data at a single point in time (that is, what is everybody thinking in 2017), we could use a cross-sectional design with variables of observations and cases. This usually looks like a quantitative method but—when we substitute unstructured interviewing for the observations, and social sectors for the cases, and record a large amount of unstructured data—it becomes a qualitative method within a cross-sectional design. This is a more appropriate method for finding out what sectors of the community think today.

It would be tempting to criticise this kind of research as being a mere 'chat' between like-minded people to confirm our own assumptions. But this can be prevented by the validity of the research. Several criteria can be employed to measure, for instance, the credibility of the data; evidence of over-generalisation (or its transferability to other cases); how much the data is dependent on circumstantial factors; and to what extent it can be confirmed by other research.²²

The preoccupation with detailed description in qualitative research gives context for the social understanding and behaviour we observe.²³ This practice is borrowed from anthropology,

and acknowledges that people act within a social environment which has its own protocols and traditions. The opinions and actions of an individual, therefore, cannot be fully understood without a knowledge of these protocols and traditions. In the case of what the public thinks of the ADF, the context may include things such as family background, power relationships, access to media, degree of social separation, cultural background and degree of influence.

The other habit of qualitative research which makes it applicable is its emphasis on limiting structure. The structured manner of previous public consultation risks constraining responses to either/or answers, resulting in a scaled degree of agreement on policy-based themes. Furthermore, by suggesting answers to participants, the researcher risks altering participants' social reality by imposing a frame of reference which may lead the interpreter to a false conclusion.²⁴

The effectiveness of the qualitative, interpretive method is in the analysis of the data. Such a large amount of information needs to yield some significant, usable findings or the whole process is a waste of time. 'Grounded theory' is one way of generating theory (or concepts) from data. An important element of grounded theory is that it is iterative, that is, it occurs concurrently with data collection, with the two processes informing each other.²⁵

An example is the technique of 'coding'. When reading the transcripts of interviews with a target group, certain phrases may emerge as prevalent. These could be, for example, 'assertive', 'confidence', 'easy to work with' or 'unpredictable'. These could form the concept of 'behavioural characteristics'. Other phrases concerning 'bullying', 'sexual harassment', 'gender empowerment' or 'coercion' could reveal a concept of 'perceptions of work conditions'. As the concepts emerge, the researcher can identify conceptual gaps and collect more data with different target audiences.

The concepts could be further organised into categories. For example, 'behavioural characteristics' and 'perceptions of work conditions' could be categorised into 'occupational suitability'. What would emerge is a list of categories, some of which may correlate, such as 'occupational suitability' and 'knowledge of what

ADF does'. These correlations may lead to initial hypotheses about 'what the public thinks', and then to theoretical frameworks on the social phenomenon that is the civil-military relationship.

Another way of processing the data is through 'phenomenology'. This philosophical approach is concerned with the subjective human experience as expressed through the participants' emotions, feelings and perceptions.²⁶ In this approach, the researcher aims to understand how the participants interpret their world and attributes meaning to it by how things 'appear' to them, rather than how things 'are'. Due to the approach's focus on the interpretation of emotions and perceptions, it is often found in psychological and other clinical studies.

The key to this logic is narrowing the topic sufficiently that only a specific target group of people

are qualified to provide the answer. This calls for purposive (or selective) sampling, whereby the participants are selected according to their characteristics and the objectives of the research.²⁷ Proportion is less important than expertise in this case, however, variations such as gender, age and ethnic background may have to be considered in analysing data. For some topics, cluster samples may prove to be most beneficial.

This process would be most effective when applied to a number of different target groups in the same timeframe. These groups would largely correspond to sectors of society, and the approach must be proactive (that is, conducted in their workplace) rather than by recruitment.²⁸ A possible design for targeted research is proposed in Table 1.

Table 1: Targeted research design for qualitative study

Sector/group	Topic	Optional determination (not revealed to participant)	Example research questions
Workplace supervisors	Management of Reservists	Asset or liability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Where does the manager get info about what Reserve service entails?What workplace problems need to be addressed when a Reserve member is away?How have the member's work skills changed?
School teachers	Children of ADF members	Influences and effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How does the child describe the parent's job?Is there a perceived difference between male and female service parents?How is the absence of a parent manifest in the child?To what extent does the child express a desire to join the ADF?
Careers counsellors	ADF careers	Knowledge of ADF career structure and opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Where does the careers counsellor get info about ADF careers?Are there currently serving members available to the careers counsellor?How well are entry standards understood by the careers counsellor?

Sector/group	Topic	Optional determination (not revealed to participant)	Example research questions
18-23 age group	Peer attitudes	Perception of military subculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Do the participants have any contact with friends who have joined the ADF?How much do they learn about the ADF from friends?How do they perceive civil/military 'differences' in ADF members?Is the career perceived in terms of positive or negative effects?
18-23 age group	ADF members as partners	Degree of preference	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How likely are they to meet ADF members socially?What preconceptions do they have in terms of approachability?How stable/unstable is a relationship with an ADF member perceived to be? What differences do male/female ADF members present as potential partners?
Parents	Gender issues	Perception of difference in son/daughter experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Would they support either child joining ADF?What are the benefits for either gender?What are the perceived disadvantages/obstacles for either gender? How are the different genders represented to prospective recruits and their families?
Parents	Single Service knowledge	Perception of difference in three Service environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Which Service is preferable and why?Which Service do they know most/least about?What characteristics of each Service suit gender preference?
Media	Strategic communication	Dominant message themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Which elements of ADF are easiest/hardest to extract info?How much difference is perceived between dominant messages and observations?How much difference is perceived between strategic and field-sourced messages?To what extent has embedding enabled access?
Extended families	Separation	Consequences of physical separation of members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How long have families been separated from ADF members?Have members ever been posted to family location?How many visits per year occur on average when member is posted?What positive/negative differences are perceived in member on reunification?What positive/negative effects have been perceived in family members since posting?

Sector/group	Topic	Optional determination (not revealed to participant)	Example research questions
Law enforcement	Risky behaviour	Perception of civilian/military behavioural difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are ADF members revealed to law-enforcement personnel? • What unlawful or high-risk behaviours are observed in ADF members vs civilians? • What unlawful or high-risk behaviours are observed in veterans vs civilians?
Tertiary Institutions	Transferable skills	Enhanced or diminished capacity to learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do ADF members/veterans self-identify? • What characteristics have enhanced/diminished learning capacity? • What differences are perceived in how ADF members approach learning? • What group dynamic effects present in classes with ADF members or veterans?
Workplace peers and supervisors	Obstacles to transition	Behaviours and characteristics of veterans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are differences in behaviour observed between veterans and non-veterans?? • Which behaviours are perceived to be beneficial/detrimental? • To what extent can veteran behaviour be modified? • How do group dynamics change with veterans in the workspace? • Are there roles that suit/do not suit veterans?
HR managers	Employability of veterans	Asset or liability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do HR managers gain their knowledge of ADF roles and skills? • How much transferability is the responsibility of the ADF/veteran/employer? • What characteristics are perceived as assets/liabilities? • Are there some industries/work settings/roles that suit/do not suit veterans? • To what extent should veterans be given priority employment over civilians?

Outcomes

The whole point of qualitative, targeted research on public attitudes is to find answers to specific questions which still remain after opinion polls have been exhausted, that is, 'Who do you think we are, and what is it that you think we do?'. These questions include those concerned with ADF cultural policy and transition of veterans back into the community. Importantly, it will recalibrate the ADF's perceptions of itself by identifying areas of misunderstanding in the community, and areas of lack of knowledge about the ADF.

The findings could inform ADF policy expeditiously by, on one hand, saving ADF efforts in policy areas that have been misinterpreted and, on the other, investing more effort into an area of real community concern. These realignments could shape policy in strategic communications, recruitment, transition, cultural renewal, personnel management, housing and career management. Finally, the findings could drive ADF strategic engagement strategy by allowing ADF messages and practices to be tailored to the influential groups within the sectors studied.

Conclusions

This article started with an opinion poll conducted nearly 40 years ago. Since then, although the pursuit of public opinion has been sporadic, some conclusions can be drawn. First, the data from polls over the last 15 years gives only a brief glimpse into public attitudes towards the ADF and—largely because it has been considered as a subset of broader defence policy—provides little contribution to a sociological understanding of public perceptions of the military. Moreover, opinion polls are traditionally fraught with the complication of ambivalence, and present sentiments which appear immature or ambiguous.

Second, the predominant influencers of public opinion—the maintenance of myth, the ADF's relationship with the media, and the presence of ex-service organisations—have contributed to a distorted view of the ADF by the Australian community. In particular, they have created contradictions between what is understood and what is presented, cultivating a sense of detachment and supporting a separation between the serving and ex-serving communities.

Third, a more productive approach to gathering public opinion would be through qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews with small, targeted audiences corresponding with sectors of the community. Repeated cross-sectional designs processed using thematic analysis would lead to meaningful hypotheses about 'what the public thinks', and then to theoretical frameworks on the social phenomenon that is the civil-military relationship. Such findings have the potential to realign the ADF's cultural perceptions, inform policy development and shape community engagement.

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Modernising the Australian Army within the joint force: a discussion¹

Lieutenant Will Leben, Australian Army

In the end we all come to be cured of our sentiments.... The world is quite ruthless in selecting between the dream and the reality, even where we will not. Between the wish and the thing, the world lies waiting.

Cormac McCarthy,
All the Pretty Horses, 1992

Introduction

The conduct of warfare is changing rapidly. Indeed, in the words of the Chief of Army, ‘we are probably at some sort of inflexion point’.² But contrary to much of the pessimistic discourse on warfare’s ongoing evolution, contemporary developments offer immense opportunities for militaries to reimagine themselves, technically and tactically.

The proliferation of precision-weapon systems and sensor suites, the increased lethality of

man-portable weapons, exponential advances in computing capacity, rapid improvement in the capacity of autonomous systems, and the potential for manned-unmanned teaming are just some of the relevant technical developments.³ Each of these developments is challenging in themselves—and even more so when considered against the geopolitical context of events in Europe, East Asia and the Middle East.

A variety of conceptual responses have already emerged from militaries around the world. So-called ‘multi-domain battle’ is one prominent example, although it should be treated with scepticism, as already observed by a number of commentators.⁴ It appears dubious that much of this thinking actually describes or argues anything genuinely novel. Therefore, it may be more fruitful to think in plainer language: how are current developments likely to impact on how the land force executes both fires and manoeuvre?

This article is, in large measure, a response to Chris Smith and Al Palazzo's 2016 publication, *Coming to terms with the modern way of war: precision missiles and the land component of Australia's joint force*.⁵ It is not a rebuttal or rejection of that piece. Rather, it takes that work as a start-state for a number of discussion points, proceeding in two parts. In the first, it seeks to establish a useful though artificial delineation between 'the deep fight' and 'close combat'. In doing so, it discusses how we might need to alter what precisely we mean by close combat. In the second, it discusses the place of technical and technological solutions in the emerging operating environment, arguing that in exercising caution against technical panaceas, we must not reject necessary technical solutions.

'The deep fight' and 'close combat'

Smith and Palazzo's paper nominally discusses the development and proliferation of precision missiles by land forces, with their resulting capacity to reach into and touch the air and maritime domains as never before. This discussion has been catalysed not just by futures thinking but by Australia's 2016 Defence White Paper, which flags the ADF's acquisition of significant new capabilities, such as land-based anti-shiping missiles (new, that is, for the ADF).⁶

Smith and Palazzo identify a helpful analogy for their vision of the future fight:

Land warfare ... seems to resemble the island-hopping campaign in the Western Pacific of the Second World War. Close terrain is akin to the islands from which the Japanese established their fortresses. Open terrain is like the oceans between except that now the 'oceans' are far more dangerous places to be and where troops are most vulnerable.

Within this context, the Australian Army—and the broader joint force—will face a new level of advanced sensor and precision-strike technologies, impeding access to objectives (indeed, potentially to whole theatres). Emerging US Navy doctrine on 'distributed lethality' further describes this vision, and has been an important influence on futures thinking in this area.⁷ The challenges of close terrain and intimate killing, by comparison, will likely remain relatively unchanged.

The Chief of Army has clearly elucidated the implications of this geographic and technological context, and is worth quoting at length:

The use of force and coercion will increasingly be generated and delivered across, and with reach, to and by all the domains of land, sea, air, space and cyber, and soon I think AI [artificial intelligence]; a next domain because it is possibly no longer a human domain.... We need to generate, coordinate and anticipate multiple cross-domain actions and reactions.... Variations in technological capacity across the region require a force to have the agility to operate across the continuum from high tech to the primitive—perhaps simultaneously.⁸

In light of this work, it is worth considering how the Australian Army understands 'close combat'. Army's core business is preparing to fight and win Australia's wars, with its doctrine asserting that 'the conduct of sustained close combat in combined arms teams is the Army's unique contribution to [the] joint or coalition force with a whole-of-government approach to war'.⁹

Much of Army is built around thinking that places manoeuvre force elements 'front and centre', being uniquely equipped and trained to close with and kill the enemy.¹⁰ It seems safe to venture that in the professional imagination, this entails combined-arms teams moving onto and clearing objectives, be that clearing complex terrain or achieving break-in of forward weapon pits. It has also been recognised for some time that even combat service support elements need, at the very least, to be able to protect themselves in a cluttered and fluid battlespace.

Questions about how Army thinks about itself might be considered in view of this disconnect between the future picture of advanced sensors and fires, and the extant imagining of close combat. In the first instance, is our imagining of close combat still relevant? What Army lionises as an organisation, while evolving, is still largely the traits and successes of close combatants in a traditional sense. It may be useful, therefore, to establish a formal distinction between what we might term 'traditional close combat' and what we might term 'the deep fight'.

It is reasonable to say that understanding already exists that the challenges of each problem set are in some ways separate. Expanded

sensor and fires capabilities are not some new conceptualisation but largely the battlespace in which the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and Royal Australian Navy (RAN) have dealt in for some time—although those Services face little competing demand to prosecute the close fight. It is also reasonable to say that this distinction is arbitrary. As has already been the case for many years, joint fires and effects play a role in the close fight. Similarly, intimate close combat is often required to seize ground or destroy an enemy with the ability to affect joint fires with great range.

Nonetheless, it still may be worth of Army, and the ADF, making such a distinction, for at least three modernisation reasons. First, the kind of soldiers and officers that Army recruits and trains to win in close combat seem unlikely to be the best poised to achieve success in other domains. Recent developments and writing, most prominently the announcement of an Australian ‘cyber force’, clearly pre-empt this observation.¹¹ Secondly, in terms of technological development and acquisition, the platforms required to survive and win in the close fight might be profoundly different from those that excel in other domains. Thirdly, and linked to both the above, is that the organisational structure or design required for success in these different spaces is likely quite different.

Is Army the best ‘owner’ of long-range anti-ship-ping and anti-aircraft missile systems? It is no doubt possible to incorporate such a capability into the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery’s order of battle. Yet the reality is that the Australian Army is a small force, with a current experience as a missile operator limited to a handful of obsolete point-defence weapons. Batteries of such weapons would presumably sit outside a force generation cycle (whatever that cycle looks like in the future), being very scarce, and see irregular operation as part of Army’s core exercise regime focused on the execution of foundation warfighting.

It may well be the case that the RAAF and RAN are more appropriate homes for these capabilities, both in terms of their technical nature, and the kind of individuals required to operate them. So long as Army remains centred around combat brigades designed for land manoeuvre, facilitated appropriately by fires, rather than as a

force optimised for the delivery of joint fires in the first instance, this appears a fair conclusion.¹²

Army does not need to own more so-called ‘multi-domain’ capabilities to play its part in the future joint force. In such a case, the burden lies with joint headquarters in integrating capabilities into planning and execution, much as is currently the case with scarce or sensitive enablers held at formation levels. The force design or modernisation focus for Army thus remains on equipment and organisation for the prosecution of the traditional close fight, being what the combat brigade and below are likely to experience.

It is worth adding before proceeding further that Army and Defence may yet need to invest time considering the changes to the character of war portended by the unmanned and, more profoundly, the autonomous systems that will be a feature of the future operating environment. It is not rash to say that the traditional Thucydidean formulation of war, as an endeavour defined by the intersection of the fear, honour and interest of humans, is eroded by these developments.

Put simply, a robot does not panic in the face of massed armoured vehicles or cower in fear at a sustained artillery barrage. Nor does it take variously bold or courageous or irrational actions due to considerations of honour, and its interest calculations are clearly of a rather different algorithmic nature to that of a human being.

The long-term possibility is that rather than the high-tech but still familiar combat of *Starship Troopers* and *The Forever War*, the deep futures reality may be a much less romantic, hard sci-fi imagining of machines fighting machines in a battlespace liberated of the vagaries of human emotion and decision making. This extreme case is, of course, a very deep future scenario, although we may see parts of it piecemeal much sooner.

Technical panaceas and technical solutions

Smith and Palazzo’s treatment of technological developments is, at different times, cautious and enthusiastic. On the one hand, their analysis heavily emphasises the art of war—the way we employ new weapon systems, rather than those weapons themselves:

[The use of complex terrain to avoid precision weapons by ISIS is] in essence the logical extension of infiltration tactics of the First World War ... in response to the stalemate of the trenches. From that beginning, such tactics have been refined over a century because of continuous improvement in the lethality, range and precision of weapons.

They later continue:

The experience of the First World War suggests that if those same ideas overcame the defensive anti-access envelope, then (the no-man's land of the Western Front) can be reconceptualised in ways that will restore the equilibrium between the defence and the offence now.

Such analysis suggests a primacy ascribed to the art rather than the science of the military profession. As Colin S. Gray has written, '[w]ar and strategy are so multidimensional that a technical shortfall, even a major one, often can be made good in the coin of other strategic qualities or quantities'.¹³ Technology is, of course, deeply relevant to futures thinking. However, as Gray notes, 'the use made of technology typically is more important than the technology itself'.

Conversely, the very title of Smith and Palazzo's paper points to significant, technology-driven shifts. They explain:

Advances in long-range precision weapons, combined with modern sensors, may favour the defender in warfare because they have given them the potential to create theatre-sized 'no-man's-lands' where attacking forces are exposed to precision weapons and can only operate at the risk of high casualties.¹⁴

In citing various examples (Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan) nulling the promise of precision technologies, Smith and Palazzo acknowledge that technologies cannot be a silver bullet. Indeed, they note that 'the incorporation of technological advances is but one part of the art of war'.

What is missing, however—at least explicitly—is that Army needs to identify where technical solutions are non-negotiable and, at once, emphasise other areas where how it employs weapons must be the focus. In general terms, identifying whether technical or tactical solutions are appropriate is useless. Neither has primacy.

However, this is not necessarily the case when we reach the specific.

Referring back to the distinction made between the deep fight and close combat is useful at this point. Smith and Palazzo conclude that the future land force likely needs 'to be able to change quickly from a heavy protected force to a light force and back again, which may be a significant factor in dealing with the immense "no man's lands" of contemporary and future warfare'.¹⁵ In other words, forces need to be light enough to survive the deep fight but heavy enough to win the fight in the direct fire zone. This does seem to be an indisputably desirable factor. Indeed, the seeming conclusion that this would be a desirable quality for a force in almost any context renders the point somewhat null.

Regardless, it may evade the reality that light forces cannot become heavy. More precise and lethal fires in the direct fire zone, that last few hundred metres, are not problems that can be solved—at least predominantly or currently—with new methods of employment. Survivability in the close fight, in a high-threat environment, means armour. Inherently physically protected platforms also grant the force flexibility in the crowded littorals that Army envisions, when shooting first will often not be an option. This reality must continue to underwrite thinking and commitment to programs like Army's Land 400 project [for infantry fighting vehicles].

Physically protected platforms also grant a level of redundancy, in a context in which platforms relying primarily on high levels of network-enabled situational awareness, or on-call joint fires for instance, are presumably going to be subject to persistent cyber or electronic attack. J.C. Wylie's well-known dictum that 'the ultimate determinant in war is the man on the scene with a gun' appears to hold true. The very nature of innovation means that we cannot say that some tactical method will not carve a way forward at some point in the future. Nonetheless, this is currently unforeseeable.

A failure to distinguish carefully between 'art' and 'science' solutions has been present at times in the Australian debate. James Ellis-Smith wrote a provocative piece in 2016 on the lessons we should draw from events in Ukraine.¹⁶ He argued that:

Barring a significant and sustained increase in size and capacity, the Army must question the assumptions of our approach to conventional land combat ... if we seek to compete against contemporary threat groups. To do so we must embrace truly revolutionary ideas—ideas such as the systematic adoption of asymmetric and insurgent methodologies—as fundamental elements of an ‘Australian way of war’.

On this view, it would seem that a platform like a tank, or the planned infantry fighting vehicle, or conventional artillery, is of little use to Army and Australia for two reasons. First, Australia does not possess the mass to use such a platform with any decisive impact in a conflict. Secondly, it fails to lead Army on a more innovative path of employing forces that would overcome the imposing threat environment.¹⁷

These reasons are flawed for the same reason the desire to be both light and heavy is flawed. This assertion will, of course, raise debates about what makes a force ‘survivable’, and how we think of ‘light’ and ‘heavy’ land forces. It may, for instance, be argued that the conventional notion of ‘heavy’ forces as those centred on heavy armour and massed indirect fires is outdated. There are certainly indications that survivability will increasingly be provided by active protection measures rather than armour itself, for example. This retort is an important one, to which there appear to be two initial responses.

In the first instance, as discussed above, the changes affecting the deep fight are not the same as the changes in the close fight. Our conception of ‘heavy’ forces as armour-centred close combat elements remains valid in that close fight, which Army ultimately must maintain the ability to prosecute, regardless of the scale or decisiveness of that fight in a broader context. There is no avoiding that in an anti-armour and artillery-rich environment, survivability in the close fight means tanks and infantry fighting vehicles with the mobility to be in the right place, at the right time, as well as the protection, if required, to take a hit and continue the fight. In other times and places, this ability centres on well-equipped and trained infantry holding ground.

Secondly, no concept has yet emerged that actually articulates how ideas such as ‘the systematic adoption of asymmetric and insurgent

methodologies’ will allow Army to carry out close combat as the government requires of Army.

Conclusion

Distinguishing between what we might term ‘the deep fight’ and the ‘close fight’ is a useful if artificial delineation. Army should remain a force fundamentally focused on winning the latter contest. This will continue to require adaption. That is not one and the same, however, with assuming responsibility for effects demanding equipment, organisation and people better placed elsewhere. Carefully balancing this tension will be a continuing challenge.

Nothing explored here is novel. Yet, to date, the discussion on these modernisation issues appears far from mature. The battlespace is changing as rapidly as it always has. Army needs to respond with agility to these developments. Thinking about future war requires the profession of arms to seek novel ways of employing emerging technologies and innovating tactically, while still paying heed to the lessons of past wars. The devil lies in striking the right balance between these competing signals.

Army needs to think hard about what close combat will actually look like in 2040. Given the fundamentally speculative nature of those discussions, Army must recognise when to rest on (relatively) traditional solutions to surviving the close fight, and when novel operating concepts may offer an alternate path forward. Army should carefully consider any deviation from a focus on success in the close fight.

Lieutenant William Leben recently concluded his time as a tank Troop Leader in the 2nd Cavalry Regiment. He is currently preparing for deployment as a Training Team Leader with Task Group Taji – VI. He graduated from the Royal Military College-Duntroon in December 2014 and completed an honours thesis in politics in 2015.

Notes

- 1 This paper changed drastically over the course of several versions. The author extends his thanks once again to the numerous officers who offered feedback and discussion. Errors of thought and expression remain, of course, solely those of the author.
- 2 Lieutenant General Angus Campbell, ‘A Turning Tide? Australia’s strategic defence interests and the Australian Army’, address to the Lowy Institute for International

- Policy, Sydney, 4 October 2016, available at <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/news-and-media/multimedia/audio/turning-tide-angus-campbell-australia%E2%80%99s-strategic-defence-interests> accessed 6 October 2017.
- 3 Kimberly Bratic, 'Army tests manned-unmanned capabilities in Pacific Initiative', *US Army* [website], 31 August 2016, available at https://www.army.mil/article/174299/tardec_tests_manned_unmanned_teaming_capabilities_in_pacific_initiative accessed 29 November 2016; Franz-Stefan Gady, 'Drone swarms: how the US Navy plans to fight wars in 2016', *The Diplomat* [website], 23 April 2015, available at <http://thediplomat.com/2015/04/drone-swarms-how-the-us-navy-plans-to-fight-wars-in-2016/> accessed 29 November 2016; and Rob Morris, 'The new reality: how augmented, virtual and mixed reality will enhance the future soldier', *Land Power Forum* [blog], 18 July 2016, available at <http://www.army.gov.au/Our-future/Blog/Articles/2016/07/The-New-Reality> accessed 29 November 2016.
- 4 US Army, 'Multi-Domain Battle: combined arms for the 21st century', *US Army Training and Doctrine Command* [website], 24 February 2017, p. 4, available at <http://www.tradoc.army.mil/MultiDomainBattle/docs/MDB-WhitePaper.pdf> accessed 9 May 2016. An internet search should provide critiques but Jim Storr's criticism of 'banal' new military concepts springs to mind: see Jim Storr, *The Human Face of War*, Continuum: London, 2009, pp. 12 and 197-8.
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- 6 Department of Defence, *2016 Defence White Paper*, Commonwealth of Australia: Canberra, 2016, p. 96.
- 7 Thomas Rowden, Peter Gumataotao and Peter Fanta, 'Distributed lethality', [US Naval Institute] *Proceedings Magazine*, January 2015, available at <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2015-01/distributed-lethality> accessed 13 September 2017.
- 8 Campbell, 'A turning tide?'.
- 9 Australian Army, *Land Warfare Doctrine 1: The Fundamentals of Land Power*: Department of Defence: Canberra, 2014, p. 31.
- 10 Australian Army, *Land Warfare Doctrine 3-0-3: Formation Tactics*, Department of Defence: Canberra, 2016.
- 11 Ashlynn McGhee, 'Cyber warfare unit set to be launched by Australian Defence Forces', *ABC Online* [website], 30 June 2017, available at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-06-30/cyber-warfare-unit-to-be-launched-by-australian-defence-forces/8665230> accessed 3 July 2017. See also James Davis, 'Cyber for land lubbers', *Land Power Forum* [blog], 18 June 2017, available at <https://www.army.gov.au/our-future/blog/cyber-space/cyber-for-land-lubbers> accessed 3 July 2017.
- 12 There is potentially a further discussion to be had in terms of national capability here. Where would any Australian investment in presumably quite small amounts of new precision fires and sensors be meaningful at the level of national policy, within the context of alliances? Or is this money better spent elsewhere?
- 13 Colin S. Gray, *Another Bloody Century*, Phoenix: London, 2006, p. 100.
- 14 It is worth noting that Stephen Biddle's influence, centred on his idea of modern system force employment, is particularly apparent in this part of Smith and Palazzo's work: see Stephen Biddle, *Military power: explaining victory and defeat in modern battle*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2004.
- 15 Gray, *Another Bloody Century*, p. 12.
- 16 James Ellis-Smith, 'Challenging our approach to conventional war: another view on Ukraine', *Land Power Forum* [blog], 18 August 2016, available at <http://www.army.gov.au/Our-future/Blog/Articles/2016/08/Lets-learn-the-right-lessons-from-Ukraine> accessed 29 November 2016.
- 17 In alternate but familiar language, we might say that innovation would attempt to 'dislocate' rather than 'disrupt' the threat.

COMMENTARY

The Enlightened Soldier – Scharnhorst and the Militärische Gesellschaft in Berlin, 1801–1805

Major Kelly Dunne, Australian Army

I have always considered myself a passionate supporter of professional military education (PME) through-out my career. As a junior officer, I was fortunate to be posted to the Royal Military College – Duntroon, and be exposed to units such as 1st Armoured Regiment, both of which had a rich culture of professional development, thanks to strong leadership that consistently prioritised not only training but also the education of their staff.

When I became a sub-unit commander, I planned to carry on the tradition of developing my staff through unit-based PME sessions. I was soon hit with the challenges I had overlooked by setting such an aspirational goal for my geographically isolated, resource-limited health company. Like many units, we were very short on staff, and we were extremely busy supporting units all over Australia. Our company battle rhythm was often not worth the paper it was written on, as time set aside for our own training and PME was almost always trumped by the higher-priority support tasks of other units.

I was initially stubbornly determined that my company would pursue a weekly PME program covering a breadth of topics, even though at times I might only have an audience of 4–5 people because the rest were allocated to support tasks or away on essential courses. But as the months went past and preparation for major field exercises meant working many weekends and long hours each day for weeks on end, away from families, I felt guilty about taking precious time off staff for PME pursuits. I stopped prioritising their education and adopted a less consistent, more sporadic approach, primarily aimed at addressing obvious gaps in their immediate knowledge and experience, with no investment in longer-term skillsets.

I let myself off the hook from the more difficult, less familiar topics that I found challenging to teach, such as military history and strategy. I largely avoided the professional reading that I knew would enhance my knowledge in these challenging areas, regularly bypassing the

military section of bookstores, and opting for lighter, more enjoyable novels that required little concentration.

I justified this by declaring that I wasn't an academic, so I would leave those areas to 'smart people' and focus on tactical-level training and getting the immediate job done. I was biased towards prioritising the perceived short-term advantages of training over the longer-term benefits of education. I didn't see many practical examples of those who had invested heavily in military education becoming better leaders or better education translating into increased levels of success on operations.

In early 2017, when Brigadier Mick Ryan handed me a book titled *The Enlightened Soldier – Scharnhorst and the Militärische Gesellschaft in Berlin, 1801–1805* by Charles White and told me to read it, never have I been more guilty of failing to adhere to the phrase 'don't judge a book by its cover'. Antique in appearance, plain text embossed on a green cloth-style hard cover, and void of even a single image, you would be forgiven for thinking it belonged alongside a volume of vintage encyclopaedias on a dusty shelf in a library.

Visually, the book did nothing to entice me to read it. But when I opened it and saw countless handwritten notes from Director General Training and Doctrine contained within the margins—I knew there must be far more to this book than meets the eye. Reluctantly, I started my journey of professional reading and, after only a few pages, it became immediately obvious to me why Brigadier Ryan had suggested I read this book. It was about the birth of PME as a concept.

The Enlightened Soldier introduces us to Gerhard Scharnhorst, a Hanoverian-born officer who advocated better education for all ranks, a merit-based system of promotion, and the abolition of 'mates rates' nepotism for the wealthy. His attempts to innovate, reform and legitimise the army system in Hanover were unanimously rejected. Fortunately, the Prussian army recognised his talent and was able to convince Scharnhorst to transfer across.

Scharnhorst argued that the lack of professional study had caused the army to become 'hopelessly anachronistic'. In response, he established a first-of-its-kind military society

dedicated to the study of war; he convinced others that soldiering was not merely a craft but a profession that required continuous study. He wanted a mechanism to bring young soldiers together with more experienced soldiers so that they may learn from them. He proposed a curriculum that, despite being over 200 years old, is still remarkably relevant today, covering military history, strategy, elementary tactics, applied tactics, topography, engineering, artillery and a diverse range of general education topics (mathematics, chemistry, languages and physics).

As I read page after page, the brilliance of Scharnhorst became more and more apparent, as many of the concepts he introduced into being are still used by many militaries today. He spoke of the need for quality instructors and close moderation of instructor standards, modifying curriculum and procedures to increase flexibility to suit the learning needs of individuals, using emotional intelligence and clever techniques in influencing others when implementing cultural change, and creating a healthy atmosphere for learning across all ranks. His concept for PME involved papers, lectures, debate, discussions and essay competitions, as well as public recognition and reward for dedication to military studies.

Greedily, I wanted more from the book to convince me all this dedication to academic pursuits was worth it. I didn't want the end result to be that Scharnhorst simply produced a bunch of smart army people who sat around pondering deep intellectual concepts. I needed a practical example of something real that actually happened out of all this investment in study—and it didn't disappoint.

As any keen military historian will attest, a short French guy by the name of Napoleon was quite a force to be reckoned with if you were around in the early 1800s. In just six years, Prussia fielded an army that played a significant role in the defeat of Napoleon; the decisions made by the Prussian army were primarily influenced by staff officers assigned to each general who had been personally trained by Scharnhorst. Scharnhorst, the 'intellectual father' of the Prussian army, had helped change the course of history through dedicated commitment to PME.

If that wasn't enough to convince me just how important PME is to producing better quality

officers and soldiers, there was one further gem hidden in the book that you might skip over if you aren't paying attention. Carl von Clausewitz, arguably the most famous military theorist in history, studied under and received mentoring directly from Scharnhorst well before he published *On War*. Defeating Napoleon and producing students like Clausewitz was all the proof I needed that there is a very real benefit to prioritising PME within the workplace, despite the tempo of units today.

The Enlightened Soldier is unfortunately no longer in common circulation, so purchasing your own copy of the book is quite an expensive undertaking, unless you can find it at a second-hand bookstore. For those in the ADF, however, it is available on loan through the Defence Library Service. If you would like to borrow a copy, please email askalibrarian@defence.gov.au. For PME enthusiasts, it is a short, worthwhile read and, despite its plain appearance, is captivating for those interested in the professional development of themselves and their subordinates.





IN MEMORIAM

The Constructive Contrarian: Roger J. Spiller remembered

Professor Michael Evans, Australian Defence College



On 13 August 2017, Professor Roger J. Spiller passed away in Leavenworth, Kansas at the age of 72 after a long bout with cancer. Professor Spiller was a leading American military historian and theorist of war who served as the inaugural George C. Marshall Chair of Military History at the US Army Command and General Staff College for over two decades. He had a deep fondness for Australia and he mentored many Australian Army exchange instructors who taught at the Command and General Staff College, including the future generals Peter Leahy and Craig Orme.

Between 1997 and 2007, Roger Spiller was a regular visitor to Australia, serving as a keynote speaker to several Chiefs of Army History Conferences organised by Professors Peter Dennis and the late Jeffrey Grey. On these visits, he offered sage advice to Australian scholars who chose to work for the Defence Department. Indeed, Professor Spiller influenced the intellectual development of the Australian Army's

think tank, the Land Warfare Studies Centre, which was partially modelled on the Combat Studies Institute of the US Command and General Staff College.

Roger Joseph Spiller was born on a ranch near Bonham, Texas on 19 October 1944. His father Joel was a Texas Ranger and his mother, Verna, possessed a love of reading which she passed on to her son. In 1962, the young Spiller enlisted in the US Air Force and served as an air rescue medic in assorted Cold War danger spots. Of note was his service in the Congo during the crisis years 1964-65, when the country was wracked by civil war, *coup d'état* and foreign intervention involving European, South African and Rhodesian mercenaries as well as incursions from Che Guevara and a contingent of Cuban revolutionaries.

After completing his military service in 1965, Spiller returned to Texas and completed a BA in English literature and international relations

and an MA in History, both from Southwest Texas State College in San Marcos. He married Irene Nicholis in 1971 and they moved to Baton Rouge where Spiller completed a doctorate at Louisiana State University under the supervision of the leading historian, T. Harry Williams.

In 1978, Spiller became an associate professor in military history at the US Army's Command and General Staff College, where he helped found the Combat Studies Institute as an in-house Army think tank for the study of war. For the next 27 years, he would serve as an influential force on the educational development of the US Army officer corps. In the 1980s, he became Special Assistant to the Commander in Chief, US Readiness Command in Tampa, Florida and he was subsequently appointed as the first George C. Marshall Distinguished Professor of Military History.

A parallel appointment saw Spiller also serve as Personal Historian to the US Army Chief of Staff for three years. In later life, Spiller became the Ewing Distinguished Visiting Professor of Military History at the US Military Academy, West Point; a contributing editor to *American Heritage Magazine*; and a historical consultant to the leading documentary filmmaker, Ken Burns, for two of his major PBS television series, 2009's *The War* and 2017's *Vietnam*.

Spiller's publications include the editorship of the three volume *Dictionary of American Military Biography* (1984) which won the American Library Association's Award for the best reference work of the year; the prescient *Sharp Corners: Urban Operations at Century's End* (2001); and the discursive *An Instinct for War: Scenes from the Battlefields of History* (2005). However, it is as a brilliant essayist that he is likely to be best remembered. The quality of his essays can be seen in the collection of his finest compositions published in 2010 by the University of Nebraska Press under the title, *In the School of War: Essays*.

To read these essays is to be in the hands of a master craftsman—whose skill in being able to say more with less by combining economy of language and elegance of prose—is an art now seldom evident in contemporary academia. Spiller's last work was a new translation of, and introduction to, French combat theorist Ardant

du Picq's *Battle Studies* (2017). Historian Dennis Showalter has aptly described Spiller's translation and analysis of du Picq's work as 'the definitive English version of a seminal analysis of men in war'.

As a person, Roger Spiller lived a life of many parts: an air rescue medic, a military intellectual, a combat theorist and educator; an advisor to generals; an avid cyclist and a television consultant. Above all, he was an American type that is rarely encountered today: the graceful Westerner, a laconic blend of Randolph Scott and Sam Elliot—tall, lean and gentlemanly but a natural sceptic—a man with no patience for stupidity, hypocrisy or pretension.

When confronted by pompous senior US Army officers who stacked their offices with books they seldom consulted, Spiller would dismiss them 'as monkeys in the box at the opera'. When assailed by negative criticism or ignorant views, Spiller counselled, 'never wrestle with pigs. You both get dirty. And the pig likes it'. If you came up to Spiller's grade as a man he would say: 'I'd ride with you'. It was the highest compliment one could receive and a reference to the horse riding days of his Texas youth.

Spiller was, as his fellow historian John Shy once remarked, a 'constructive contrarian'—a politically-incorrect, heavy-smoking Texan—seemingly straight out of the pages of the novels of Wallace Stegner and Larry McMurtury. Yet, if Spiller sometimes cut an old-fashioned figure from the American plains, he was possessed of a powerful intellect and a razor-sharp wit and he was never afraid to puncture sacred cows and orthodoxies.

For example, despite working for the US Army, Spiller perhaps surprisingly, strongly opposed the Vietnam War and assigned Michael Herr's searing *Despatches* as reading for his students—a book on men and war that is best described as 'Dante goes to hell with the music of Jimi Hendrix'. Moreover, Spiller upset many defenders of Southern honour when he suggested that Robert E. Lee was an overrated general and a traitor to his country. And he successfully annoyed US Army traditionalists when he demonstrated with meticulous scholarship that the revered American combat historian, S.L.A. Marshall, was an inaccurate guide to the human dimension of warfare.

It was entirely in keeping with Spiller's character that he would take Australian visitors to the Last Chance Saloon in Leavenworth and introduce them to assorted Western writers and movie buffs. Indeed, the author vividly recalls being introduced to consultants involved with the production of Ang Lee's 1999 Hollywood film, *Ride With the Devil*, about Confederate guerrillas fighting pro-Union Jayhawkers on the Missouri-Kansas border during the American Civil War.

Spiller loved to spin yarns over drinks and a good meal. On one occasion, he told a group of Australians of how his father, a Texas Ranger, quelled a riot single-handed in a nearby town. Disembarking from a train, Spiller's father was met by a group of anxious town elders demanding to know 'where's the other Rangers?' To which Spiller senior laconically remarked: 'One riot; one Ranger' and proceeded to restore the peace.

Spiller's Texan quirkiness and natural irreverence endeared him to Australians—especially West Australians—whom Spiller considered to be close cousins of Texans. When invited to this country for a conference or seminar, he would often send a single line e-mail simply stating 'I'm coming. But where's the beach?' Yet another wonderful Spiller yarn was his 'rubber chicken treatment' for lecturers deemed unworthy of a military audience—a tale that is lovingly reproduced in an essay in his book of essays, *In the School of War*:

Legend has that the inmates of one of the classrooms [at the US Command and General Staff College in the 1970s] built a Rube Goldberg machine of pulleys and levers that dropped a rubber chicken from the rafters to the lectern so that the chicken came to a stop just in front of the instructor's face. When a lecture was going badly, someone would saunter to the back and pull the lever, and drop the dreaded chicken, effectively terminating the class amid gales of laughter.

Spiller had little time for traditional military history which he regarded as sanitised, disembodied and mechanistic. He believed that military history needed to be replaced by the history of war in the broadest and deepest sense. His inspirations were not campaign historians but the French combat theorist, Ardant du Picq, and noted writers on the human face of warfare such as Stendhal, Stephen Crane and Ernest

Hemingway. His historical and literary models were John Keegan and Paul Fussell.

Like these scholars, Spiller believed that battle was the one subject history analysed poorly. He had no time for the intellectual sterility and artifice of today's 'megastore military history writing' in which battles unfold like an orderly stage play. Spiller's interest was fixed on what poet Walt Whitman called 'real war'—the psychological battlefield of soldiers and marines as symbolised by the combat careers of figures such as Audie Murphy and Eugene Sledge. He attempted to enter what he called the 'combat soldier's special world, a world largely undiscovered by either military theory or history'. In his intellectual journey into combat history, Spiller described how he jumped at the chance to teach and write on warfare at the US Command and General Staff College:

Imagine a place ... that seemed to be built around your own interests, with a library full of works on your speciality, a large faculty whose work was related to your own, and students who practiced what you studied. What would you give up to spend a year in such a place? If one were a religious historian, it would be a little like teaching at the Vatican.

And a military Vatican it proved to be with Spiller spending 22 productive years at the institution. During his time at the Command and General Staff College, Spiller became a close observer of the doctrinal revolution that swept the US Army between 1973 and 1986, led by generals William DePuy and Donn Starry. He wrote perceptively about the road that led from the disillusionment of defeat in Vietnam to the military triumph of a reformed US Army in the Persian Gulf War of 1991.

As an educator, Spiller also did much to try to impart a philosophy of historical-mindedness into mid-career officers as a key component of their military professionalism. He was never under any illusion about the challenge of this task for a civilian scholar. As he wrote, if one serves as a scholar in and to the military, credibility and relevance are everything and one must learn to 'apply the historian' as much as 'applying history'. Failure to match the scholar to such a task only courted a rubber chicken fate. His insightful account of the formation of the Combat Studies Institute and of the navigation of the

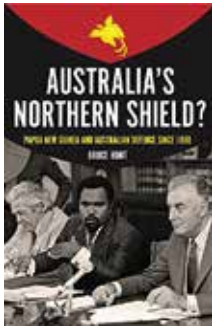
treacherous shoals in the sea of closed politics that constitute the world of American military hierarchy in his anthology, *In the School of War*, should be standard reading for any scholar who seeks to work in a defence department.

Roger Spiller was always versatile and graceful with his pen and his interests were wide. He wrote on Japanese combat doctrine in the Second World War; on America and the Vietnam syndrome; on urban warfare in the new century; on Hollywood and its treatment of war films; and on the philosophy of history, including the construction of counterfactuals. We are all the poorer for the passing of this American original.

We may no longer be able to 'ride with him' but we can take comfort from a body of scholarship that is a testament to the pursuit of excellence. Ever a literary man, Roger Spiller would take comfort from Prospero's farewell in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: life's revels must come to a close and dissolve like spirits 'melted into thin air.... We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep'.

Michael Evans is the General Sir Francis Hassett Chair of Military Studies in the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies, Australian Defence College and a professor in the school of humanities and social sciences at Deakin University in Victoria.

Book reviews



Australia's Northern Shield? Papua New Guinea and the defence of Australia since 1880

Bruce Hunt
Monash University Publishing: Melbourne,
2017, 374 pages
ISBN: 978-1612-5196-8
\$39.95

Reviewed by John Donovan

Bruce Hunt has written a comprehensive review of the place of Papua New Guinea (PNG) in the defence of Australia. He relies on primary-source documents, including formerly classified Cabinet notebooks. His book gives an insight into the development of policy over an extended period, and the speed with which long-established policy could change.

Hunt identifies early concern about the strategic value of PNG among pre-Federation colonial governments. They pressed Britain to take control of the eastern half of New Guinea, the western portion then being controlled by the Dutch. British interest was limited until Germany took control of north-eastern New Guinea and the New Britain archipelago. Britain then annexed Papua.

The Japanese victory over Russia at Tsushima 'elevated Japan to the role of a direct military threat', focusing attention on PNG as a 'shield' for eastern Australia. Hunt describes the fraught negotiations after the First World War, leading to an Australian mandate over the former German New Guinea, though control of German possessions north of the Equator went to Japan. Between the wars, Australia saw PNG as a defensive shield. After the Nazis took power, suggestions were made that German New Guinea should be returned, 'correcting the harshness of ... the Versailles Treaty'. Unsurprisingly, this proposal was not greeted with enthusiasm in Australia.

After the Second World War, Australian governments both Labor and Coalition supported the Dutch desire to retain control over west New Guinea (West Irian to the Indonesians) after Indonesian independence, and Indonesia was identified as a potential threat. Attitudes changed across the 1950s and early 1960s, as Australia gradually came to accept the need for change in west New Guinea, particularly after the US made it clear that it would not support Australia militarily, while the UK counselled that Australia needed to keep Indonesian goodwill.

Among the first politicians to change their position were the prime minister, Robert Menzies, and the attorney general (later minister for external affairs), Garfield Barwick. However, support for the Dutch continued almost until the last moment, tempered by the desire to reduce friction with the Indonesian government of President Sukarno. Although Indonesia repeatedly stated that it had no claims against PNG, Australian authorities considered the wording of its claims for west New Guinea capable of being used to justify a claim for PNG or, indeed, north Borneo.

The start of 'Confrontation' with Malaysia soon after Indonesia gained control of West Irian elevated concerns in Australia that a move on PNG might follow. Australia therefore decided to support Malaysia. Hunt follows the debates about Australian operations during Confrontation, including whether Australian forces should operate in north Borneo. Although Australia took a cautious line, Hunt notes that there were direct clashes between Australian and Indonesian troops. However, the attempted coup in Indonesia in September 1965, and subsequent purge of

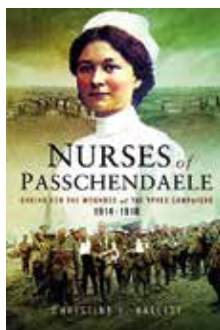
the Indonesian Communist Party, eased tensions.

As Hunt demonstrates, the Australian perception of PNG as a defence shield largely ended with the fall of President Sukarno. Australia's perception then identified Indonesia as its northern defence shield. Relations between Indonesia and PNG were managed to minimise friction between the three nations, particularly after PNG gained independence. Hunt describes the process under which the path to independence for PNG was complicated by secessionist movements and concern about a possible collapse of law and order.

Hunt demonstrates how politicians and the Australian defence and foreign affairs bureaucracy consistently maintained the need for PNG as a defence shield for over 80 years. What stands out in his account is the speed with which Australian attitudes then changed. Within a decade, the place of PNG in Australian defence and foreign policy diminished, with Indonesia becoming the new shield, while potential internal problems became the principal concerns about PNG. While PNG remained of 'unique strategic importance to Australia', there was no defence agreement with the independent PNG, only an undertaking with no explicit commitments.

Hunt records that personalities as different as Edmund Barton, W.M. (Billy) Hughes, H.V. (Bert) Evatt, Sir Robert Menzies, Sir Garfield Barwick and John McEwen took remarkably similar political positions on PNG. After federation, Barton sought unsuccessfully to develop a Pacific empire stretching as far as the Cook Islands and Tonga! After the Second World War, Evatt sought 'complete and exclusive power' over PNG, as well as parts of Borneo, which could then be exchanged for Dutch New Guinea (see Graeme Sligo, *The Backroom Boys*, Big Sky Publishing: Newport, 2013).

This book is an invaluable reference on Australia's strategic interests in PNG. There might be more information available but it is unlikely to change Hunt's conclusions.



Nurses of Passchendaele: caring for the wounded of the Ypres campaigns, 1914-1918

Christine E. Hallett

Pen and Sword: Barnsley UK, 2017, 216 pages

ISBN: 978-1-5267-0288-3

£12.38

Reviewed by Dr Narelle Biedermann,
James Cook University

In this impressive read, Hallett has somehow managed to bring together the stories of nurses, soldiers, doctors and others who were involved in the prolonged and unrelenting Ypres campaigns. At first glance, the reader expects to be taken on a journey with a few nurses who happened to be in or around the Ypres salient during some of history's most gruesome battles. Instead, Hallett gives us insights into caring from a wide range of perspectives, from the local women who nursed civilians injured and maimed as unfortunate collateral damage, through to Red Cross and military nurses from across the globe who all found themselves nursing the human by-product of modern war.

It does get a little confusing keeping up with these stories, as Hallett jumps from one location to another, but it is possible she does this to show us the widespread effect of the battles across Ypres. As a devotee of Australian military nurse histories, this book took me to places I hadn't really contemplated. I knew, of course, of the work of our Australian field hospitals, casualty clearing stations and ambulance trains which were never far removed from the battlefield itself.

But this book illustrated for me that our medical and nursing service was just a mere speck in the mass of medical care throughout the region across those five bitter years.

Hallett uses a combination of letters, diaries and personal accounts held so precious in archives around the world to not just tell 'a' story but to tell 'the' story of nursing in France and Belgium. However, this is not an easy read; the reader needs to remain alert to changing locations and new characters in each chapter. There are maps at the beginning of the book—and it must be said that I needed to refer to them regularly as I tried to keep track of the battle movements and collateral impacts on towns and villages. It could have done with a summary of names and their details in one central place to refer back to, as it did become confusing keeping up with each nurse and their alliance or background. Nevertheless, it is a fruitful read.

As a nurse, I learned extraordinary amounts about different techniques for wound management and gas inhalation, for example, that are never mentioned in other works describing nursing from this time. My heart and feet ached at their stories of work without respite, sometimes whilst under fire, sometimes in awful climates. We think of nursing in this period as primitive and, perhaps compared to our technologically-driven contemporary profession, it was. However, Hallett reminds us of the evolution of nursing practices that were forced on them by the tsunami of casualties continuously presenting to them and the evolution of weaponry and warfare.

The nursing work that existed in 1918 was certainly way more evolved than it was in 1914. It cannot be understated that the work that all medical services provided during this extraordinary time were testament to their dedication and sacrifice to the service of humanity. But the emotional toll was immense. Oftentimes, I found myself reading the familiar tones of post-traumatic stress disorder and exhaustion—and realising that this experience is immune to time. Hallett's work is a perfect reminder of that, because she does not paint a romantic picture of nursing. This is not a book to bolster recruitment into military nursing services. Rather, she uses the words of those who were there to tell their truth. This was perfectly captured in a letter from a British nurse who wrote:

You could not go through the things we went through, see the things we saw, and remain

the same. You went into it young and light-hearted. You came out older than any span of years could make you. But at the time you did not reflect on it much, or on anything else. You did not dare to. Instead, you filled your mind with concrete facts—pulses and temperatures, dressings and treatments—because you soon learned that if you concentrated hard enough on them it stopped you remembering other things.

Sound familiar? The effect of war, Hallett reminds us, is timeless.



The Shadow Men: the leaders who shaped the Australian Army from the Veldt to Vietnam

Edited by Craig Stockings and John Connor
NewSouth Publishing: Sydney, 2017,
288 pages
ISBN: 978-1-7422-3474-8
\$34.99

Reviewed by Jim Truscott, OAM

The 12 contributing authors and the two editors are to be commended for this thoroughly enjoyable and informative read. The book contains ten short biographies of Lieutenant General Edward Hutton, Major General William Bridges, General Cyril White, Major General James Legge, Brigadier John O'Brien, Lieutenant General John Northcott, Lieutenant General Sydney Rowell, Colonel E.G. Keogh, Lieutenant General

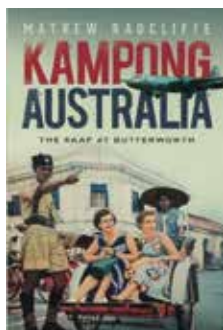
Thomas Daly and Lieutenant General Mervyn Brogan, all of whom made a significant contribution to the Australian Army.

The 'shadow men' title is intriguing as I actually thought that the ten characters were already relatively prominent and well-known figures in Australian military history. However, it presumably refers more to the new insights that the biographies provide, which 'retrieve the people from the gloom', as well as breaking new ground and correcting some misconceptions (that I held and) which may also be held by others.

One of the editors notes in the introduction that 'biography is the most popular form of history'. He also contends that 'biography is an exacting form of historical writing' and that the aim of the editors is for the stories to provide 'the contextualized life [of the individual officers] as part of a wider sequence of events and occurrences'.

Having served in the Army's Directorate of Plans and been part of some Army reorganisations during my 26 years of military service—and having read about many other changes in the past—I found the stories very useful to put the development of the Australian Army into overall context in both peace and war. Interestingly, the time that the ten 'shadow men' spent in actual command of troops was typically quite short, some ending in death and others in ignominy; rather, it is in their staff experiences that most of their shadows lay.

The obvious question is why these ten were selected over others who may have been more obscure or less notable but still played an important part in the 'management of organised violence'. Its publication begs more books to be written along similar lines. They are certainly much easier to read, and the information is much easier to absorb than what can be gained from books published with the conventional approach to historical writing. The Shadow Men should be compulsory reading for Army officers under training, and by every commander and staff officer contemplating leadership or change.



Kampong Australia: the RAAF at Butterworth

Mathew Radcliffe
NewSouth Publishing: Sydney, 2017,
297 pages
ISBN: 978-1-7422-3514-1
\$39.99

Reviewed by Air Commodore Mark Lax, OAM, CSM (Retd)

It is about time that the story of the RAAF's or, more correctly, the ADF's presence in Butterworth was told as it was such a major undertaking and an important part of Australia's military history. As well as Air Force, Australian Army members also were posted there on rotation for base and area defence duties—and no doubt a few members of the RAN also spent time on attachment.

For over 30 years, countless thousands of Australian servicemen and -women made Butterworth or more likely Penang Island their home as part of Australia's contribution to forward defence in Southeast Asia. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve provided deployed forces for the defence of the Malay peninsula and, after 1971, the Five Power Defence Arrangements agreed to continue that commitment.

It was not just the mainly RAAF and Army members who served an overseas posting in Malaysia but also their families. When the base was at its height in the early 1980s, and given the average family size of partner plus two or

three children, it was estimated that over 5000 dependants were living there. Between March 1965 and July 1987, over 1000 children were born in the RAAF hospital's maternity ward and countless family members treated for their various ailments at RAAF expense.

Many youngsters did their schooling at the RAAF school on Penang Island which had been established to cater for their education, and many sporting and social clubs were established for time-off. All who went to Butterworth will have memories of their time in 'Kampong Australia', although some memories as this book recalls were not so happy.

The book is a social history of Australians in Butterworth and hence its title referring to a kampong or village in Malay. There is little about the base, the squadrons, the flying or defence exercises—that is not the point. Author Mathew Radcliffe was one of those children born in Butterworth and wanted to study the Australian social experience for his PhD.

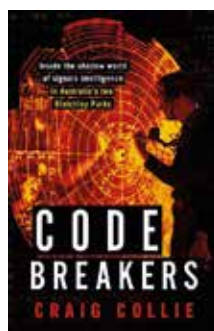
The story begins with the British and what Radcliffe calls Menzies' 'Cold War failure'—the forward basing of Australian defence personnel as part of the Menzies' Government commitment to regional stability. This basing was at Butterworth as, from 1955, the RAAF's No. 2 Airfield Construction Squadron further developed the old RAF station over a three-year period, after which Butterworth was handed over to the RAAF. In 1970, the base was in turn handed to the Malaysians and the RAAF entered a user agreement with the Malaysian Government. With changing defence policy, the RAAF withdrew its permanent presence in 1988 and, with that, the units closed and families came home.

As part of his study, Radcliffe returned to Butterworth in 2012 to research and no doubt reminisce. To assist him in his study, he sent out surveys to many former RAAF and Army members and their families to gauge what it was like living so far from the familiar surroundings of Australia and family and friends. Their many responses give life to the story—sometimes happy, sometimes sad.

However, to my mind, the book overly concentrates on the negatives: the inherent racist attitude of many who were posted there, the bad behaviour of some of the men, mostly single,

especially with respect to their treatment of the locals, and what the reader might presume was the prevalence of venereal disease resulting in much of Penang being placed 'out of bounds'.

I also felt that most of the story is devoted to the period from the 1950s to early 1970s—there seems little about the more recent experience of the 1980s leading up to withdrawal. As one who was in Butterworth on numerous occasions during that period, the changes were noticeable but unfortunately are not covered. Nevertheless, the book will certainly bring back memories of those who served in Butterworth and of their families who accompanied them. For that, it is worth the read.



Code Breakers: inside the shadow world of signals intelligence in Australia's two Bletchley Parks

Craig Collie
Allen & Unwin: Sydney, 2017, 400 pages
ISBN: 978-1-7433-1210-0
\$32.99

Reviewed by Jim Truscott, OAM

Signals intelligence was an Allied success story in World War 2 and it is incredible that it has taken so long for a book like this to be published. The author explains how it was not an easy book to write after a 40-year embargo on the release of information and with research uncovering a labyrinth of themes including tension between the

communications and intelligence functions; the Army, Navy and Air Force acting in near isolation of each other; and the oft overriding power struggles between the Allies manifesting itself at unit level.

It is enthralling reading and not too technical. While it is written with an Australian focus, it places the actions of signals intelligence within the overarching British and American context, as well as describing the impact of their own country's objectives. There is frequent reference to 'blinkered US protection' of information as some intelligence actually went to the US before it came back to MacArthur's headquarters in Australia.

I would have liked to have read more from Japan's perspective, which clearly lagged behind the Allied success. But apart from an oblique reference to the Japanese reading the Australian covert operations code from East Timor, this research remains to be done. There is a strong focus on multiple key personalities and their bottom-up rather than top-down impact on operations. The development of capability, especially when it came to the constant, arcane and tedious process of code-breaking, is a feature of the story.

The story commences with the formation of the Signals Intelligence Branch in Melbourne in 1940—with the Americans joining in after their flight from the Philippines, while the Australian Navy Fleet Radio Unit Melbourne (FRUMEL) remained a separate entity—and the 'if only' signals intelligence failure that was Pearl Harbor. Signals intelligence came of age in the Battle of the Coral Sea, where the intercepts were most interesting as I had not read about this level of detail before. Indeed, the subsequent Battle of Midway was an intelligence coup won in Melbourne. Central Bureau was then formed in April 1942 by the US and Australian Army and Air Force (with the Australian Navy not part of it).

Army units were sent to Darwin and Port Moresby and, in July 1942, Central Bureau moved to Brisbane following the deployment there of MacArthur's headquarters. With an impasse between FRUMEL and Central Bureau, it took a long time for Central Bureau to break the high-level Japanese codes, although there were useful liaison visits to overcome these dilemmas. The Battle of the Bismarck Sea

was another Allied code-breaking success, as was the shooting down of Admiral Yamamoto, although it risked Japan learning that the Allies had broken its codes.

The book traces military successes and failures along the north coast of New Guinea from a signals intelligence perspective, during which time buried Japanese codes were located and also recovered from a sunken Japanese ship. General MacArthur was actually able to listen to the Japanese Army Command in New Guinea using air patrols as plausible cover. Central Bureau sent units to Hollandia as part of his headquarters, and Australian wireless units were the only Army units in the US-led invasion force of the Philippines.

Central Bureau remained in Brisbane with a forward base in Hollandia and an advance unit in the Philippines. By August 1945, there were 1000 Australians working with Central Bureau in Manila. The book finishes with a subsequent focus on the Soviet Union and its even more complex codes, leading to the formation of an embryonic Australian Defence Signals Branch. This book is an important contribution to Australia's secret military history as it places all other past and purely kinetic accounts into a new relativity.



Rebooting Clausewitz: 'On War' in the 21st century

Christopher Coker

Hurst and Company: London, 2017,

188 pages

ISBN: 978-0-1906-5653-9

£15.99

Reviewed by Craig Beutel, Department of Defence

Carl von Clausewitz remains a primary text in military academies, staff colleges and war studies programs more than 200 years after the Napoleonic wars. But could an observer of the Battle of Borodino really relate to the Battle of Mosul?

Indeed, the Prussian general has had his fair share of detractors. To Basil Liddell Hart, Clausewitz was the prophet who misled the World War 1 generation, a sentiment backed by German General Erich von Ludendorff who claimed that 'all of Clausewitz's theories should be thrown overboard'. Contemporary commentators such as Martin van Creveld, John Keegan and Mary Kaldor have also questioned the relevance of Clausewitz in explaining modern-day conflicts.

In *Rebooting Clausewitz*, Professor Christopher Coker from the London School of Economics aims not to prove that Clausewitz is still relevant but rather demonstrate that he has been vindicated both by modern conflicts and contemporary thinking. He contends that while Newton may no longer be read in the science syllabus, Clausewitz is still compulsory reading

for strategists and military practitioners, as 'he knew more about war than anyone else and he also knew more than he realised'.

One of the challenges in reading Clausewitz (even when translated into English) is the length and impenetrability of his writings. Coker notes that modern students often just want the facts, a 'Dummies guide to war', favouring instead the 'how-to' dictums of Sun Tzu. But he contends that the richness of Clausewitz is his ability to teach one how to think about war.

In *Rebooting Clausewitz*, Coker aims to achieve accessibility and relevance through a conversational format, as a time-travelling Clausewitz speaks with various audiences at West Point, a think-tank and over dinner at a private club. Accordingly, the book tends to read as historical fiction, although the dialogue is interesting—sometimes question and answer, sometimes monologue—which keeps the pages turning.

To create this world and justify his role as Clausewitz's muse, Coker's seeming mastery of everything from theology to biology—and every discipline between—makes the text unnecessarily dense. In some sections, Coker also becomes academically indulgent, basking in the freedom of fiction to demonstrate his own expertise. Coker also writes at times in an opaqueness mirroring that of Clausewitz, which runs counter to the book's proposed purpose.

Nevertheless, *Rebooting Clausewitz* is an enjoyable read for those well versed in Clausewitz and interested in exploring the deep recesses of his work in a new and entertaining presentation. There are some real gems of insight, particularly in testing Clausewitz's thoughts against modern research and in suggesting avenues for further research on Clausewitz and the study of war.

In considering what Clausewitz would make of this book, Coker suggests the question best be left unasked. But on the question of whether this book is useful to practitioners of war, my answer is yes. Although readers will not enjoy every page, they will certainly gain a better understanding of Clausewitz and his enduring relevance.



The Rag Tag Fleet: the unknown story of the Australian men and boats that helped win the war in the Pacific

Ian W. Shaw

Hachette Australia: Sydney, 2017,

336 pages

ISBN: 978-0-7336-3729-2

\$32.99

Reviewed by Jim Truscott, OAM

This little-known story is a long overdue record of how a small fleet of Australian trawlers not much larger than gunboats supplied US and Australian forces in the attack on Buna and subsequently across the Pacific in the Philippines and China. Evolving from an exploratory US mission, it quickly became obvious that there were very few deep-water ports or port facilities in the Southwest Pacific area of operations, and that there was a need for a Small Ships Section to fill the gap until specialised US vessels would become available in mid-1943.

The US Army strategy to acquire these Small Ships commenced in June 1942 and, aided by the Australian Shipping Control Board, the Section searched for commercial fishing trawlers that could winch themselves off a beach. Soon there were some 17 crewed trawlers berthed in Sydney, repainted grey and armed with machine guns, along with an array of sail-boats and punts and a 280-tonne schooner as a mobile floating command post. As the Japanese sought to sever the supply line between America and

Australia, bases for the Small Ships were established in Townsville and Port Moresby, with Milne Bay becoming a major base.

Coordinated by the Combined Operations Services Command, the Small Ships became integral to the build-up for the attack on Buna. As air resupply was thwarted by bad weather, limited airfields and a shortage of aircraft, the Small Ships became a critical pipeline carrying men and munitions for the allied assault on Buna, Sanananda and Gona. The sea lines of communications from Milne Bay were absolutely vital to moving parts of the assaulting force into positions and in their resupply.

In the build-up, a Japanese air raid destroyed four of the Small Ships just before the attack, with a crucial loss of artillery guns and ammunition. Then two more Small Ships were damaged leaving only one operating. The story reminded me of the equally dire resupply situation just a couple of days before the International Force in East Timor was about to be lodged in Dili but without adequate commercial ships for supply.

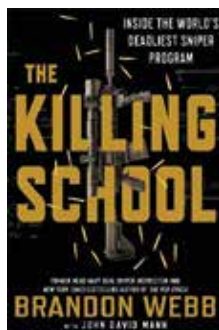
The assault on Buna began but it ground to a halt for lack of resupply. Air supply could not match sea supply and the direction was given for all Small Ships between Sydney and Port Moresby to go to Milne Bay. The changing of US commanders at Buna made little difference to the bogged-down assault, when it was armour and more artillery that was needed. The account highlighted the chestnuts of unsupported infantry attacks being unworkable and that air supply alone usually cannot deliver the tonnage required.

Soon eight light Stuart tanks were delivered by the Small Ships and specialised landing craft started to arrive which allowed the landing of the Australian 18th Brigade. Even though steel barges that could be towed were also introduced, enabling supply bases to be better set up, there was still the constant risk of the Small Ships running aground by night and being strafed by day including by friendly fire.

The battle for the beach-heads was over by January 1943 and, from that point on, amphibious warfare became the norm in the Pacific. Large ocean-going tugs and landing ships, constructed in Australia and the US, started to arrive in 1943 and a training program was set up in Sydney to build up Australian crew numbers. The Small

Ships were then absorbed into the US Army Transportation Service and subsequently involved in operations in the Philippines and China before being closed down in January 1946.

I would have liked to have seen more images and a coastal chart of New Guinea but, nonetheless, this book is an important contribution to the military history of both the US and Australian armies. It also redresses the lack of acknowledgement of the involvement of Small Ships in the war in the Pacific. It finishes with the long overdue recognition by the Australian Government in 2009 when the Australian members of this US Army unit were finally granted entitlement to Australian Defence honours. It is a thoroughly enjoyable read.



The Killing School: inside the world's deadliest sniper program

Brandon Webb, with John David Mann
Hachette: Sydney, 2017, 480 pages
ISBN: 978-1-2501-2993-2
\$32.99

Reviewed by Lex McAulay

This is really two books in one. Part of the content is the establishment of a US Navy SEAL sniper school, and part is the battlefield experiences of some US snipers in Mogadishu, Iraq and Afghanistan, though these experiences are not related directly to expertise acquired at the sniper school described.

According to the content, Brandon Webb and a colleague, Eric Davis, both relatively junior Petty Officers, were ordered to establish a sniper school for SEALs. The next senior ranks were two distant Senior Chief and Master Chief Petty Officers. There is no reference to commissioned officers in command or as instructors, and no reference to the administrative support necessary for student selection, travel, accommodation, food and messing, vehicles and a budget. Apparently, all that happened elsewhere and, by implication, two junior NCOs decided on course policy, final course content, acquisition of training accommodation, use of shooting ranges and instruction.

A major theme of this part of the book is the decision to make a radical departure from the usual hassling of students and the in-your-face aggression from instructors who want students to fail. Instead, it was decided to greet students in a friendly manner, treat them from the beginning as intelligent adults who have reached an acceptable standard of training and expertise, and bring them to a superior level of sniping capability. Mistakes in weapon handling and errors in shooting were not used to cudgel the student and berate him as a nincompoop, on the usual pretext of performance under stress, but as a learning aid quietly acknowledged.

The entire structure of the course was revised, so that shooting came as the final phase, preceded by instruction in all other aspects. It was also recognised that some people are excellent practitioners of a skill but cannot teach. This problem is acknowledged in both civilian and military fields. Webb does make the point that qualification in instructing and creation of a lesson plan and course syllabus was vital to success.

Webb and Davis created a course that raised the level of instruction, standardised the course content (previously US East Coast and West Coast content were different in some aspects), integrated modern science and technology, trained the student to operate alone and introduced a mentorship program. Surprising results were achieved and became known throughout the US military establishment. Webb does acknowledge the people and writings that brought about this change, and that the two distant Chiefs had compiled much of the course content, but contends that he and Davis refined it.

The first 100 or so pages of the book relate the early life, enlistment and careers of the men whose experiences comprise the 'in the field' final component of the book, then comes the establishment of the sniper school, and finally memoirs of operations in Mogadishu, Iraq and Afghanistan. Some readers, like this reviewer, might find the memoirs presented in an irritating way. Rather than have a complete section devoted to one man or team, the account gives about two pages to, say, Mogadishu in 1995, then jumps to another, to others, then back to Mogadishu and so on. The maps are gathered at the front of the book, which is convenient when working through the 'interwoven' memoirs. The photos are a mixture of those people mentioned, as youngsters, in training, and in the field.

Throughout the book, reference is made to a famous deceased US Marine Corps sniper from the Vietnam era. Several of his exploits have

been repeated in various books without question as to veracity and been re-enacted for some sniping DVDs on TV channels. This reviewer has contacted several of those publishers with questions for the authors of these books, for official operational details of date, time, place, enemy unit, any relevant US medal citation and so on to authenticate these feats but has not received any reply. Some of the claimed shooting feats have been tried on US ranges in good weather and without operational stress, and cannot be replicated.

These points aside, the book is interesting. The reviewer has no knowledge of current Australian Army training methods but hopes those involved in Army shooting, and recreational shooters also, will find something of interest in this book. Basically, a good read about 'thinking outside the square' to achieve perfection. Recommended.

Future themes

We are planning to include a themed section in future issues. Likely topics are:

- Issue No. 204 (March/April 2018) – Air power in the 21st century
- Issue No. 205 (July/August 2018) – Design thinking in the ADF
- Issue No. 206 (November/December 2018) – Ethics and leadership
- Issue No. 207 (March/April 2019) – Women in combat

Contributions will be welcome, ideally three months before the publication date (ie by mid-January for the March/April 2018 issue), either in the form of commentary/opinion pieces between 1000-2000 words or more standard articles around 4000 words.

Submission guidelines are on the website at www.defence.gov.au/adc/adfj/



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