

# S O P D



Senior Officer Professional Digest

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The **Senior Officer Professional Digest** is a  
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Feedback regarding this publication is welcome  
and should be addressed to the Director.



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## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

This month the editors of the *Senior Officer Professional Digest* recommend ten articles drawn from current literature on warfighting, national security and recruitment themes.

The War in Iraq continues to dominate the attention of military leaders, academics, and commentators. Lawrence F. Kaplan and Jon B. Alterman both question America's revised strategy for the Iraq War. F.J. Bing West looks beyond the end of the Iraq War and insists that the leaders of the US Army and US Marine Corps must prepare for the post-conflict environment. Daniel Helmer, through his examination of the Israeli Defense Force's performance against Hezbollah, provides a cautionary tale on over-specialisation in counterinsurgency warfare. Jerry M. Long stresses the need for the United States to change how it presents itself to the world in general and the Arab people in particular.

Essays on logistics are a rarity in non-support Corps publications. However, this month the SOPD is fortunate to be able to recommend an award-winning article from the US Army's *Military Review*. In 'Paradox of Logistics', Marian E. Vlasak uses the example of the Vietnam War to contrast the strength and weaknesses of the insurgent and counterinsurgent logistic systems.

Military professionalism is the subject of two of this month's recommendations. James H. Baker, in an award-winning essay, considers whether the officer's code of ethical conduct is flexible enough to survive the civil-military tensions created by the Long War. In addressing a similar theme, Paul T. Mitchell questions the US professional military education system and its responsiveness to contemporary conditions.

The survival of NATO is the subject of Andrew A. Michta's article. With ADF personnel serving in Afghanistan alongside NATO forces, the continued relevance of this alliance is of concern to Australia.

The SOPD again addresses the fate of warrior youth. Cheryl Benard offers a radical new slant on the attraction of radical Islam to adolescent males. George E. Dexter provides our From the Vault feature. Like Benard, he focuses on motivation for enlistment in an insurgency, but the ideology he examines is not Islam but communism.

Enjoy  
The Editors

**Lawrence F. Kaplan, 'The Wrong Surge', *The New Republic*, Vol. 236, No. 8/9, 19 February 2007, pp. 16–19.**

Lawrence F. Kaplan, a senior editor at *The New Republic*, takes exception with the Bush Administration's new strategy for Iraq. However, unlike most popular commentators, he does not consider the emotive issues of whether the war is won or lost or whether the United States and its allies should withdraw. Instead, Kaplan critiques the intent of the strategy and, unfortunately, finds it wanting.

Kaplan acknowledges the superior work done by American soldiers, such as Colonel Sean MacFarland, the commander of 1st Brigade Combat Team (1st Armoured Division), and Colonel Michael Kershaw, the commander of 2nd Brigade Combat Team (10th Mountain Division), in quelling the insurgency outside of Baghdad. Even Ramadi, in the Sunni-dominated Anbar Province, is now relatively tranquil as a result of MacFarland's counterinsurgency program.

If the United States is winning the war in the provinces, the situation in Baghdad is an entirely different matter. Here Kaplan is far less sanguine. In Iraq's capital, he argues, the chance to bring peace to the city passed two years ago, and the situation there has gone beyond that of just an insurgency. Now the challenge facing General David Petraeus is not to isolate the insurgent from the population but to isolate the population from itself. This is a task for which Petraeus does not have the resources. Instead, Kaplan provocatively suggests that the United States keep its focus on the provinces where they can still make a difference. He does not advance a solution for Bagdad—perhaps there isn't one.

**Jon B. Altman, 'Managing Iraq', *Middle East Notes and Comments*, Center for Strategic & International Studies, February 2007, < [http://www.csis.org/media/isis/pubs/0207\\_menc.pdf](http://www.csis.org/media/isis/pubs/0207_menc.pdf) >.**

Dr. Jon B. Altman is the Director of the Middle East Program at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC. In this brief commentary Altman raises the question of the definition of victory in a counterinsurgency campaign. He believes that the concepts of winning and losing no longer have meaning for the situation in Iraq. The United States, Altman maintains, is neither likely to win nor lose this battle. Rather, the most likely outcome is a tie in which the United States would do better to manage the situation to its advantage rather than seeking a neat solution.

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**'We need to calculate more, and panic less.'**

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Altman closes by addressing the need for the United States to develop a new notion of victory. American interests in the Middle East have not been well-served by the established paradigm of a decisive battle followed by a surrender ceremony. Rather than seeking total victory, he suggests, the United States should focus on mechanisms to maximise its interests.

F.J. Bing West, 'Waiting for Godot in Iraq', *Military Review*, Volume LXXXVII, No. 1, January–February 2007, pp. 2–11, <  
<http://usacac.leavenworth.army.mil/CAC/milreview/English/JanFeb07/West.pdf> >.

F.J. Bing West is a former Assistant Secretary of Defense and is a Marine Corps Vietnam veteran. He has authored two books on the Iraq War: *The March Up: Taking Baghdad with the 1st Marine Division* (with Major General Ray L. Smith) and *No True Glory: A Frontline Account of the Battle of Fallujah*.

As the Bush Administration continues its struggles to find and implement a workable plan for the Iraq War, West joins a growing number of commentators who have decided that the United States has lost the opportunity to set the strategic agenda. The United States, he concludes, no longer controls the central actors in Iraq, and, at best, all its troops can hope to achieve is to keep a lid on the violence.

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**'So how do we prevail? We don't.'**

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The Iraq War, however, contains risks other than defeat, and it is these that West seeks to address. He believes there are four trends that need correction if the United States is to secure the future health of the Army and Marine Corps.

The trends West identifies are:

- 1) *Battlefield Performance and Risk*: The military leaders in Iraq must make sure that troops continue to perform to a high standard and maintain an aggressive posture. West believes that units must not be allowed to fall into a 'counting the days till we go home' survival mentality.
- 2) *Strategic Credibility*: West believes that military commanders must set a higher standard. When mistakes are made officers must acknowledge error.
- 3) *The Social Contract*: West believes that the most commonly expressed emotion by the American public of service in Iraq is that of pity. This, he states, must change. West hopes that the new Secretary of Defense will shape a new debate on the value of soldiering and thereby increase its public perception of worth.
- 4) *Strategy and Budgets*: West forecasts a bleak post-war budgetary environment for the ground forces. He uses this article to urge senior Army and Marine generals to develop a strategy that will better position their services in the coming resource struggle with the USAF and USN.

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**'The unspoken social contract between the people and the Soldier has changed. ... Duty, obedience, and separation from family are expected of the Soldier, but valor—risking one's life—is not publicly esteemed.'**

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West's article is of interest because it looks beyond the current Iraq War—which must one day end—to the period in which the US Army and Marine Corps must rebuild for the next conflict.

**Daniel Helmer, 'Not Quite Counterinsurgency: A Cautionary Tale for US Forces Based on Israel's Operation Change of Direction', *Armor*, Vol. CXVI, No. 1, January–February 2007, pp. 7–11, < <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-159390664.html> >.**

Daniel Helmer, a Captain in the US Army, presents a cautionary tale of the consequences of over-specialisation for particular mission types. After its withdrawal from South Lebanon, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) shifted its mission focus to urban insurgency suppression against Hamas fighters in Gaza and the towns of the West Bank. As Helmer points out, in the process of mastering this mission, the IDF sacrificed much of its combined-arms and manoeuvre experience and competency.

It should raise concern that, according to Helmer, 'approximately 10 percent of the IDF's 400 Merkavas were damaged by an enemy without a single armor or helicopter platform.' Even guerrillas, it appears, can obtain and effectively use weapons that are capable of knocking-out one of the world's best AFVs.

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**... it [Hezbollah] was not a regular army but was not a guerrilla army in the traditional sense either. It was something in between.**

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The competency of Hezbollah and the nature of the South Lebanon environment are unlikely to be unique. The US Army is presently transforming itself at a tremendous rate from a force designed to win a conventional conflict to one that can defeat an insurgency. The Israeli experience in Lebanon illustrates the danger of over-specialisation and the speed with which higher-level combat capabilities can atrophy. While military organisations must adjust to the requirements of the Long War, the problems the IDF faced against Hezbollah demonstrate the necessity of being able to respond immediately to an escalation in threat.

**Jerry M. Long, 'Confronting an Army Whose Men Love Death: Osama, Iraq, and the U.S. Foreign Policy', *JFQ*, Issue 44, 1st Quarter 2007, pp. 79–84, < [http://www.ndu.edu/inss/press/jfq\\_pages/editions/i44/25.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu/inss/press/jfq_pages/editions/i44/25.pdf) >.**

Professor Jerry M. Long is the Director of Middle East Studies at Baylor University. In this article he calls for the United States to change how it presents itself to the world in general and the Arab people in particular.

Long commences his analysis with an overview of the historical origins of al-Qaeda's ideology. This is an interesting section and it helps to place Osama bin Laden's pronouncements into a rationalist framework, rather than them being simply the ignorant ranting of a madman. In doing so, Long suggest that understanding the context of radical Islam is the first step in counteracting the terrorist's message.

Long then turns to the primary point of his article: the interaction of US foreign policy with the Middle East's belief systems. He does not contend that the United States cannot play an active role in the region. Rather, it is how the United States announces and implements its foreign policy program that it must address and change. He raises five areas in which the United States must especially modify in its approach to the region. They are:

- 1) recognise deep history at work;
- 2) no new contracts;
- 3) adopt a more subtle approach through coalition building;
- 4) recognise the attitude continuum; and
- 5) adopt less categorical language.

Long does not believe that all is lost in Iraq or in the War on Terror. However, he insists that the United States will only achieve success in the long-term if it adopts a more nuanced and balanced foreign policy methodology and agenda.

**Lieutenant Colonel Marian E. Vlasak, 'The Paradox of Logistics in Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies', *Military Review*, Volume LXXXVII, No. 1, January–February 2007, pp. 86–95, < <http://usacac.leavenworth.army.mil/CAC/milreview/English/JanFeb07/Vlasak.pdf> >.**

Lieutenant Colonel Marian E. Vlasak was a research fellow at the Combat Studies Institute in 2005. This led to the writing of a book, *Tracking the Goods—Methods of Critical Supply World War II to the Present*, which is awaiting publication. She is currently working on a PhD at Syracuse University.

Vlasak's objective is to explain 'how this of type of warfare [insurgency] is materially sustained.' This is an interesting question, and one that is refreshingly different from the routine focus of analysts on the operational and ideological aspects of asymmetric warfare. The art of logistics is the overlooked aspect of counterinsurgency warfare and its study demands greater attention. From this perspective, Vlasak's article is timely.

The heart of Vlasak's argument is that insurgencies require a two-tier supply system in order to gather the materials needed to sustain and advance the movement. The first level is the standard one, namely that insurgents exist among the people and sustain themselves from the people. However, onto this practice Vlasak adds a second layer. She explains that insurgents also must gather the resources they need from the forces of the counterinsurgency. Her point is that while it is essential to separate the insurgent from the population, counterinsurgent forces must also minimise the leakage of their own materials to the enemy.

Vlasak shapes her argument through the context of the Vietnam War. She demonstrates the high level of sophistication that the communists achieved in providing for their movement's support—including their ability to access US and South Vietnamese support networks. Vlasak also examines American errors in judgement, whose effect was to ease the insurgent's supply situation. For example, the USAF B-52 raids against the Ho Chi Minh trail left craters that the communists converted into fish ponds, and the massive supply depots that the US Army established created opportunities for theft and bribery.

In the article's conclusion, Vlasak connects her ideas on Vietnam to the present war in Iraq. While useful, her effort on this last point is hurried and should be an article in its own right.

James H. Baker, 'A Normative Code for the Long War', *JFQ*, Issue 44, 1st Quarter 2007, pp. 69–73, < [http://www.ndu.edu/inss/press/jfq\\_pages/editions/i44/23.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu/inss/press/jfq_pages/editions/i44/23.pdf) >.

Lieutenant Colonel James H. Baker is a graduate of the National War College and currently serves on the staff of the Undersecretary of Defence for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics. This article won the National War College Alumni Association Writing Award for Ethics in 2006.

In this article, Lieutenant Colonel James H. Baker examines the relationship between senior officers and government in the Long War. While the position of the Services and the place of officers in the Western-form of Civil-Military Relations are well established, Baker is right to question whether the present code needs modification in order to

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**'the nature of the Long War calls into question the notion of a separation between the military and civilian spheres of responsibility'**

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operate properly under the tension of a lengthy asymmetric conflict. The reality is that modern service conditions require officers to operate in new territory that is well beyond the boundaries of a military organisation's traditional functions.

To examine this issue Baker poses several questions, including:

- What should be the role of senior officers in determining the policy of the United States?
- How should senior military leaders react to civilian encroachment onto operational and tactical matters?
- When should military commanders resign in the face of bad policy?

Baker employs the existing US military ethical guidelines to address these questions. These include the Oath of Office and the appropriate clauses of the US Constitution. Baker concludes that these guidelines are malleable enough to withstand the tests upon military professionalism that are created by the Long War.

The author pays particular attention to his last question. In his analysis Baker identifies three conditions—which must be met simultaneously—for it to be appropriate for an officer to submit their resignation. If these conditions are indeed met, an officer has no choice other than to resign. Moreover, if these conditions do not exist then an officer cannot in good faith resign. Although Baker is writing from the perspective of the US military, his ideas will resonate with the Australian Defence Force.

**Paul T. Mitchell, 'Reforming the Military Schoolhouse', *RSIS Commentaries*, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, 21 February 2007, < <http://www.ntu.edu.sg/rsis/publications/Perspective/RSIS0112007.pdf> > .**

Associate Professor Paul T. Mitchell is based at the Revolution in Military Affairs Programme at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies - Nanyang Technological University, home of the

Institute for Defence and Strategic Studies. Previously, he was the Director of Academics at the Canadian Forces College, Toronto.

In this brief article, Mitchell tackles an old topic from a new direction. Professional military education and the role of doctrine in the training of soldiers are traditional themes for theorists. However, Mitchell believes that as military organisations re-orientate themselves from the waging of conventional warfare to the conducting of the Long War, they must also adjust the policies and outcomes of their educational institutions. The key point that Mitchell makes is that the waging of the Long War will require flexible rather than indoctrinated minds.

Mitchell also calls for a stronger academic/military partnership and interaction, particularly the employment of more university-style approaches to learning and the greater use of critical thinking within military educational institutions.

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**'Success in this world will depend most not on the excellence of technology, nor on rigorous planning, but on the inherent flexibility and adaptability of military thinking.'**

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Mitchell does overstep the mark because he overlooks the need within academia for the acceptance of wider partnership with the military. Despite this slight flaw, Mitchell article is important as it highlights the need for military organisations to address the educational requirements of waging the Long War.

**Andrew A. Michta, 'What Next for NATO?', *Orbis*, Vol. 51, No. 1, Winter 2007, pp. 155–64.**

Andrew A. Michta is Professor of National Security Studies at the George C. Marshall European Centre for Security Studies in Germany. He has recently published *The Limits of Alliance: The United States, NATO, and the EU in North and Central Europe*.

Michta identifies the core problem that the NATO Alliance members face is the removal of the Soviet Union as a feared opponent. Alliances, he points out, are most effective when there is a visible, dangerous and agreed-upon threat. For the United States the world post-11 September 2001 has provided it with a military focal point. However, most of America's European allies have failed to rate terrorism as a significant threat to the same degree as that of the United States. This difference of opinion threatens to tear the alliance apart.

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**'... the organization [NATO] functions and matters only to the degree that the United States remains engaged.'**

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According to Michta, NATO is in flux because of its member's failure to define a single strategic vision. The United States seeks to enhance the alliance's capabilities and transform it into a global expeditionary force. By contrast, key European states, including France and Germany, prefer a more regional and defensive role. The policies of the United States have served to exacerbate this schism. In Afghanistan, and later Iraq, the Bush Administration has advocated a go-it-alone mentality that has encouraged input only at the margins, when at all.

Another factor in the re-defining of NATO has been its incorporation of new members. Each new member state brings with it another voice with veto power over NATO councils. However, most of the new arrivals are small entities that are capable of making only a minor military contribution to the alliance's operational capabilities. As a result NATO suffers from declining capability but increasing complexity.

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**'In order to be viable, an international security organization must effectively address current security challenges and be ready to use credible capabilities ... to deal with them.'**

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Michta believes that the critical moment in the survival of NATO has arrived. Moreover, the battleground that will determine its future is not Iraq, or even Europe itself, but Afghanistan. Michta is not hopeful, and he expects that the alliance will be unable to arrest its declining utility.

In his analysis of NATO's future role, Michta makes important points on alliance maintenance and the need of member states to balance individual visions with a broader mandate. While Australia is not a member of NATO, its key allies are, and the alliance's collapse or redefinition will possibly have an effect on the Commonwealth's national security situation.

**Cheryl Benard, 'Toy Soldiers: The Youth Factor in the War on Terror', *Current History*, January 2007, pp. 27–30.**

Cheryl Benard is a senior political scientist with the RAND Corporation where she serves as the Director of the Initiative on Middle East Youth. The focus of Benard's research is the question of when adolescent males attain adult maturity.

Benard employs studies of the development of the male brain to argue that boys do not achieve full adult-level judgement and risk-assessment capabilities until they are in their early- to mid-20s. The inference of this scientific evidence is that the tendency of many young men to participate in excessive risk-taking behaviour and to make poorly thought-out choices is a result of the relatively slow rate of maturation of the male brain.

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**'the problem lies in the propensity of young men to take risks, to misjudge or ignore danger, and to make erroneous split-second decisions ...'**

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Benard's article hints at a new approach to countering the attractiveness of terrorist organisations as perceived by male youth. Terrorism, as a high-risk activity, may be a seductive lure to those males whose brains have not yet reached adult maturity. Benard does not provide any suggestions for making male youth more risk averse, or less responsive to a terrorist organisation's message, but does maintain that solutions should take into account the flawed logic and impulsive nature of the immature mind.

In making her argument, however, Benard can not avoid the morality of recruiting immature males into the military organisations of the developed nations, including Australia. With further research ethicists may wish to visit this issue as well.

*This month the LWSC recommends:*

**Lieutenant Colonel George E. Dexter, US Army 'Uncle Ho Wants You! A Study of Viet Cong Motivation', published by the *Australian Army Journal* in Issue No. 221, October 1967, pp. 33–9.**

Dexter was concerned with the motivation behind the voluntary enlistment of fit young men into the combat arms of the Viet Cong military in South Vietnam before and during the American war in Vietnam. In his study, he excluded those who might sympathise or support the communist insurgency but who were unwilling to serve as fighters. Dexter's interest was two-fold. First, he wanted to clarify the measuring and gauging of victory in non-conventional warfare. Secondly, he wanted to understand the individual motivation behind those who join an insurgency so that the government and military forces of the counterinsurgency may implement countermeasures.

Dexter identified several motivation factors. These include the ability of insurgent leaders to identify issues of social dissatisfaction and to present credible plans for their amelioration, and the psychological tendency of young men to respond to idealism, adventure and hero worship. Dexter also concluded that the emotion of hate was a powerful motivator. He found that many of the recruits who joined the insurgency did so in order to seek revenge for the death of relatives and friends from collateral damage.

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**'If the answer to this question [insurgent motivation] can be found it may well provide us with valuable information for use in ... other areas of the emerging world.'**

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Interestingly, Dexter found that communist ideology performed relatively poorly as a recruitment inducer. In fact, communist cadres recognised the liabilities of their doctrine and did not emphasise it in their recruitment efforts.

Of the various motivators that Dexter identified, probably the most significant was that individuals tended to enlist in the Viet Cong when they believed that the communists were winning. During the period prior to US combat intervention in South Vietnam in 1965, the Viet Cong enjoyed numerous victories against a hapless ARVN. With each success the Viet Cong's numbers grew, more than offsetting casualties. The motivation of these new recruits was not ideological; it was a desire to be a part of the winning side. It is not possible to make a direct correlation between the Vietnam War and the present conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, but one of the consequences of a Coalition defeat may be a surge of recruits for al-Qaeda.

Although the Long War and Vietnam are different situations, many of the challenges the United States and its Coalition partners face today in the Middle East are not new. Therefore, Dexter's ideas on insurgency recruitment should resonate with those who are responsible for the waging of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

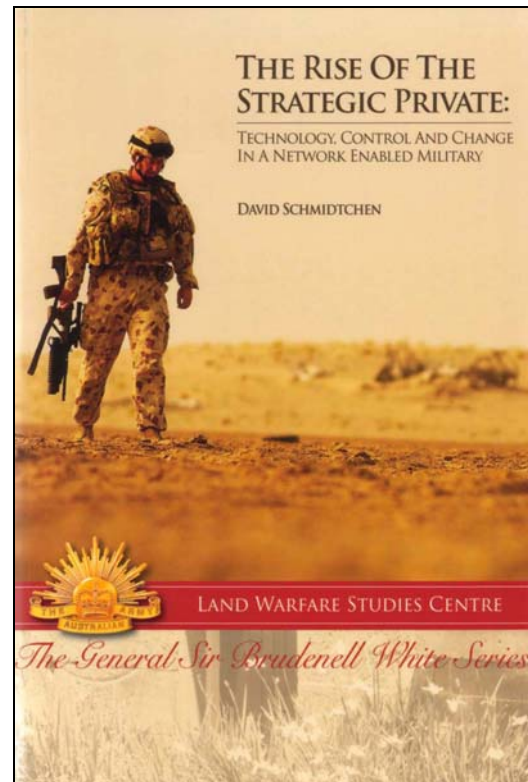
### *The General Sir Brudenell White Series*

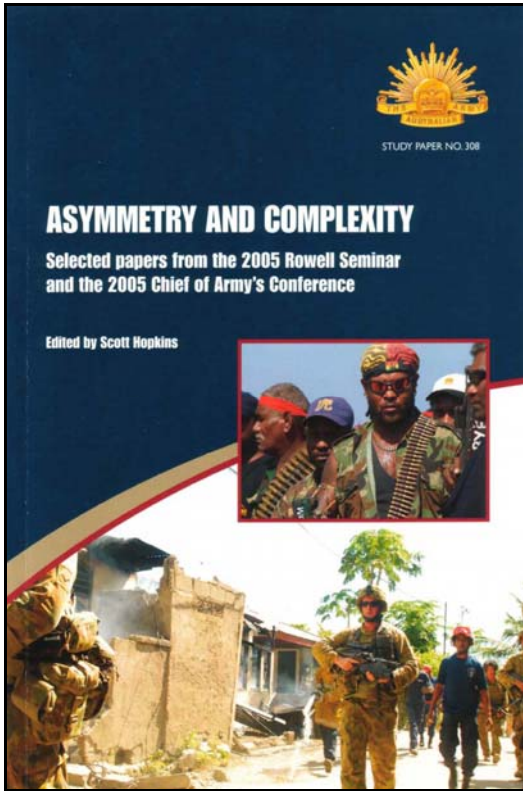
The Land Warfare Studies Centre is pleased to announce the publication of *The Rise of the Strategic Private: Technology, Control, and Change in a Network Enabled Military* by Lieutenant Colonel David Schmidtchen. The release of *Strategic Private* also marks the launch of a new Land Warfare Study Centre's initiative, *The General Sir Brudenell White Series*.

Schmidtchen argues that Network-centric Warfare is a social rather than technological phenomenon. As he explains, NCW is not a new weapon system, rather it is an organisational philosophy and one that he believes will have profound and far-reaching effects on the Australian Army.

In *Strategic Private*, he offers an alternative theory to force transformation that is not based on traditional top-down directed strategies and ideologies. Instead, Schmidtchen maintains that four independent factors guide transformation: technology, ideas, people and organisation.

*The General Sir Brudenell White Series* is named in honour of one of the Australian Army's foremost soldiers. It is the LWSC's flagship monograph series. Later this year the LWSC will publish the second book in the series: *Stabilisation Operations in an Interagency Context: Lessons from the Solomon Islands and Iraq* by Lieutenant Colonel James Bryant.





### *Study Paper Series*

Also in March, the LWSC released Number 308 in its Study Paper Series. *Asymmetry and Complexity* contains selected papers from the 2005 Chief of Army's Conference and the 2005 Rowell Seminar.

The papers in this edition canvass the issues of conventional forces operating in complex environments against unconventional foes. Featured authors include Coral Bell, Jonathan Bailey and Stephen Biddle. *Asymmetry and Complexity* is available from the LWSC.