A CENTURY OF SERVICE: 100 YEARS OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY

BACK TO THE FUTURE: THE ONE-ARMY CONCEPT IN A TIME OF CHANGE

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> [T]here can be no question of unhealthy rivalry or jealousy between the Regular Army and the Citizen Forces. In Australia we have only one Army. The regular and non-regular elements are both essential parts of it, each is complementary to the other:
> Lieutenant General Vernon Sturdee, Chief of the General Staff, 1948 [1]

The issue of the integration of the regular and reserve components of the Army has been a running sore in the history of Australian defence planning. The 'Total Force' concept that Dr T.B. Millar advocated twenty-seven years ago has not yet been realised, though the passage of legislation freeing up the reserves for operational deployments means that, once again, the opportunity is within our grasp. In the past, the aim of forging a cohesive and complementary team has been frustrated through a combination of mismanagement by successive governments, political game-playing by Reservist pressure groups and attempts by many members of the Regular officer corps to realise exclusive control over the profession of arms. If the Australian people are to get the very best return for their investment in land forces, we would do well to learn the sorry lessons of our past failure to build 'one army'.

So much has been written and said about the place of the citizen soldier in Australian military history that there is danger of 'issue' fatigue setting in. All too often, what emerges from a reading of past accounts of army history are the prejudices of different cliques within the defence establishment. Instead of confirming these limited perspectives, institutional history must challenge the comfortable patterns of thought that take root in organisations such as the Army. The real issues in the Reserve debate are obscured by a century of myth making by an often overly romantic Reserve lobby and the equally destructive counter-cynicism of many Regular soldiers. There is, in fact, no Reserve debate. The real issue is how in a changing society the Australian Defence Force (ADF) can maximise its access to, and use of, the limited human resources available to it.

At the Defence Strategy Seminar held in June 2000 to inform the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committees, Mr Hugh White, Deputy Secretary Strategy in the Department of Defence, frankly admitted that:

> It does seem to me to be a perfectly legitimate response to what has happened to us recently that we need to have more highly mobile land forces ready to go at short notice, able to do tasks like East Timor and so on, than we have had available ... we have succeeded in the past in drawing very effectively from forces we have kept developed for other purposes the resources needed to do those sorts of tasks. But when East Timor came along, we found that we were stretching ourselves pretty thin. Too thin? That is not for me to say.[2]

Nonetheless, it needs to be said that the necessity to lead, deploy and sustain the International Force East Timor (INTERFET) exposed a critical vulnerability in our modern, lean, technologically advanced defence force. Contrary to the expectations that had underpinned Australian defence planning since the Dibb Report was submitted in 1986, the defence force had not run out of 'high tech' capabilities; it had very nearly run out of people. If a one-off, low-intensity operation that was well supported by the international community faced this problem, where might the Army be if it had to find forces to sustain a medium-intensity operation at short notice? The problem also arises if the tempo of operational commitments increases and the Government calls on the Army to supply forces for a number of small missions to contribute to regional stability.

Our current perception of the way in which we can configure and employ our Army is obscured by three persistent institutional fallacies that have grown out of the way in which our defence force, and the Army in particular, has developed. The first of these three fallacies is that of the 'skeleton force'—that we can entrust our national security to an army that can be rapidly mobilised on the foundations of a skeleton peacetime militia. Second, there is the fallacy that a country as small as Australia can maintain and afford a viable, full-time force that can be sustained on operations requiring the deployment of brigade-sized groups for extended periods. Third, there is the fallacy that, in conditions of modern technological warfare, reserve forces will not be able to perform combat functions, but are restricted to combat service and combat service support roles. If we are to escape being trapped as prisoners of our history, we need to understand how these fallacies came to be so widely accepted and reconsider them in the context of Australia's present security dilemma.

This essay focuses on the postwar development of the Australian Army because the idea of the 'total force' has particular implications for land forces. The manpower needs of the Army are greater than those of the other two services and—unlike the Air Force and the Navy, which are also reliant on reserve capabilities—the Army has a greater need for a large pool of trainable, but essentially non-technical, personnel. Accordingly, while the ADF as a whole is reliant on reservist labour, the Army has a particular need for manpower who provide not only supplementary skill sets but a 'surge capacity' to enable the Army to deal with contingencies requiring additional troops.

The Failure of the 'One Army' Concept Since 1945

In his excellent, recently published history of the Australian Army, Jeffrey Grey argues that the raising of an expeditionary force for service abroad in the First World War established the beginning of the tensions that have marked relations between regular and citizen forces this century.[3] In fact, the causes and nature of these problems are more complex than that. Until the establishment of the Regular Army in 1948, the conflict was more between two concepts of citizen soldiering than between the alternatives of having a professional, standing, full-time combat force or a part-time citizen force.

The 1903 *Defence Act* specifically forbade the creation of regular infantry battalions, and it was only with the establishment of the Royal Military College (RMC), Duntroon, in 1911 that Australia started to grow its own professional officer corps.[4] The Defence Act provided that only volunteers could serve overseas; therefore in 1914 and again in 1939, rather than enact the necessary legislative changes to release the militia for overseas service, the governments of the day elected to raise separate expeditionary forces for overseas service. Although both the First and the Second Australian Imperial Forces were long-service forces, they were almost exclusively comprised of citizens who enlisted for the duration and who did not expect to remain in the army in peacetime. As a British regular officer described the members of the First AIF to 'Jo' Gullett in the Western Desert, 'I saw something of your chaps in the last war. Very few of them professional soldiers. But very professional men of war'.[5]

Australia's small permanent peacetime establishment consisted only of a regular Staff Corps, an instructional cadre for the militia and some permanent gunners for coastal emplacements. In 1922 the total strength of the army was only 31 000, of whom only 1600 were full-time personnel.[6] By 1929 there were only 259 Staff Corps officers.[7] In an almost counter-intuitive fashion, these professional officers were regularly passed over in rank by their militia counterparts and were denied opportunities to exercise command. Denying Regulars command represented something of a self-fulfilling prophecy—regulars could not command (citizen) soldiers because they had no experience of command. While still a Colonel, Duntroon graduate Lieutenant-General Sir Frank Berryman expostulated: 'We were to be the hewers of wood and drawers of water. We the only people who really knew the job, were to assist these militia fellows'.[8]

This resentment was the source of tension between staff corps and citizen officers during the Second World War, but it cannot be said that the tension arose from a rejection of the notion that citizen soldiers had the ability to serve or that regular and citizen soldiers could not work

together. In fact, the great majority of Second AIF officers were drawn from the ranks of the militia. As the war went on, despite initial poor enlistments, substantial numbers of AIF other ranks had previous militia experience.[9] David Horner has convincingly demonstrated that the experience of war rapidly melded the regular and citizen officers within the AIF together so that, by the middle of the war, they began 'to think of themselves as belonging to one Army'.[10] However, until 1948, that army was a citizens' army. Australia did have a record of maintaining two armies in time of war, but that was a consequence of the disastrous political decision in both wars to raise a volunteer force overseas and maintain a separate part-time home-service force. Even this distinction was rendered irrelevant from 1942, when militia units were sent to fight in New Guinea and the island campaigns. The fact that the Army could get on with the job regardless of the origins of its members demonstrated that the one-army concept could be a reality. As the war progressed the performance of the militia battalions proved that it was the quality of the men, their training and their officers that counted—not whether they were nominally identified as overseas forces or a home army.

The announcement of the Labor Government's postwar defence policy by the minister for defence, John Dedman, on 4 June 1947 marks the point at which a standing army began to supplant what had been a primarily citizen-soldier tradition. Although the postwar peacetime army was based, as it had been since Federation, on a part-time force (known as the Citizen Military Force or CMF), for the first time provision was made for the existence of a small permanent combat force based on an infantry brigade group.[11] This was a drastic departure from prewar policy.

What had changed was the recognition by both military and political circles that the ad hoc mobilisations that had occurred in both World Wars were not appropriate for Australia's changed strategic circumstances in the nuclear age. Australia was no longer simply a small dominion of the British Empire perched on the periphery of a Eurocentric world order. The war had demonstrated that international security was truly global and the Asia-Pacific had, if anything, greater strategic significance than Europe in the emergent Cold War. Planning for the postwar army, the Vice-Chief of the General Staff, Major-General Sydney Rowell, identified the key implication of Australia's position as a Pacific rim power:

> The peacetime organisation of 1939 and earlier years affords no real basis for consideration of what is needed today. It was based on a conception of local defence against raids on, or invasion of, our country and carried no commitment, express or implied, in a wider strategical sphere. Even for its limited outlook, it was woefully inadequate for its primary task as events were subsequently to prove ... [the size and readiness of the peacetime army] ... must be directly related to the commitments we have entered into, or expect to meet in war. It is thus essential that it should be capable of taking the field unhampered by the dislocation and inefficiency which result from a major reorganisation on the outbreak of war.[12]

Rowell had the foresight to determine that Australia's security in an international environment that remained characterised by conflict was not simply a matter of the defence of Australian sovereign territory. The postwar world was riven by great power conflict and subject to enormous stresses as emergent national groups sought statehood. Like the present, in the years following the war the likelihood of attack on Australian soil was remote, but Australia existed in a region that was undergoing considerable political, social, religious and ethnic ferment. To protect its vital national interests and to contribute to international and regional peace and security, Australia had to possess the capability to deploy ground forces rapidly and to contribute those forces to coalitions with allies. Such deployments were not possible without a high-readiness, standing combat force.

Still, the small regular field force that was formed in 1948 on the return from Japan of two of the three British Commonwealth Occupation Force battalions was hardly likely to make much impact on the regional balance of power. The Chifley Government's '1947 Five Year Plan' made provision for a permanent force of 19,000 and a CMF of 50,000. The primary function of the permanent force was still to support the CMF. Of the planned regular forces, only 4470 were intended to serve in the independent brigade group, while 13,380 were assigned to fixed

defences, as base and administrative troops; a further 1150 were assigned as cadres to CMF units.[13] The Army was given four tasks: to provide forces for United Nations operations; to provide forces for British Commonwealth Defence; to constitute the expansion base; and to cover requirements for the local defence of mainland Australia.[14] Of these tasks, the new regular force was only responsible for, and capable of, providing units for short-term UN and Commonwealth commitments, and even then it is worth noting that the brigade group did not actually eventuate. The strain of sustaining the force in Korea led to the plan being shelved, and it was not until 1958 that a regular brigade was formed.[15]

The creation of a full-time combat force (however small) did represent a major turning point in the development of Australia's Army. For one thing the professional officer corps had finally come of age, with permanent officers with wartime command experience distributed throughout the Army. Where the prewar Staff Corps had simply been too small to exercise much influence, the war had finally seen the officers who had graduated in the first classes at RMC reach general officer rank. In July 1941 only one RMC graduate was a Major-General; a year later there were eleven.[16] Critical mass had been achieved, and young regular officers now had the opportunity to fill full-time command positions from graduation and not just support CMF units. With this opportunity to hone their skills to a level denied their part-time colleagues also came the chance to gain experience on a range of operations short of war. The career of the postwar regular officer was to take a very different path from that of his predecessors.

Although it was to take some time for change to occur, and even longer to be appreciated by the CMF, the ascendancy of the citizen soldier within the Army was over. As Graeme Sligo pointed out in his work on the postwar army, from 1945 until the CMF was re-established in 1948 the part-time force remained in 'suspended animation'. During that period, there were also no CMF generals serving as principal staff officers or on the Military Board. Even when Major-General Wootten (a RMC graduate in 1914) was appointed to the board, his role was limited to providing advice on matters affecting the Citizen Forces.[17] Although on a semi-formal basis, groups of officers conducted tactical exercises without troops, 'held information and teaching sessions and lobbied government for positive action on defence', the prevailing sentiment within society was to focus on postwar reconstruction.[18]

Perhaps the most important paradigm shift that had occurred after the war was the changed emphasis on the role of the Army. Even though the CMF maintained a numerical preponderance on paper, its functions were limited. It existed to be called upon in time of war and even then its members had to volunteer before they could be sent overseas. In the meantime, it was unavailable for the growing range of military operations short of major war that were becoming increasingly common. The postwar CMF was structured to provide forces for conflicts similar to the two World Wars. What actually occurred was a succession of limited wars and counterinsurgency operations. In those circumstances the CMF rapidly lost relevance while the regular army won the laurels of almost continual operational experience. As Jeffrey Grey put it:

> The young regular officers who graduated from Duntroon from the late 1940s and, increasingly, from Portsea after 1952 found themselves repeatedly on active service for twenty years; the platoon commanders of the Korean War were the battalion commanders in Vietnam. The 1960s confirmed the process, begun in the 1950s, whereby the regular army formed the centre of the policy and thinking on the land defence of Australia, usurping the role which had given meaning to the CMF for over half a century.[19]

At the same time, the professionalisation of the Army led to the growth of bitter rivalry between the CMF establishment and many regular officers, who questioned the relevance of a mass army in the light of their own experiences of limited war. In 1971, writing about the expansion of the regular army officer corps in the 1950s, Peter Young made the savage observation that, '[a]s all of this took place, the CMF began its inevitable decline; the brilliance and dedication they had inherited from World War II gave way to the solicitor-soldier on the social make'.[20]

There is no doubt that the fifteen years after the end of the war saw the balance of experience tip from the largely citizen-soldier veterans of the AIF to the younger professional soldiers of the Cold War conflicts. Ten years represents an entire generation in military careers; in a rapidly changing strategic environment, military thinking and organisations must adapt or lose relevance.

It would be easy to dwell on the history of the antipathy that developed between many members of both the regular army and the CMF in the postwar period. The focus of this essay, however, is not on the political machinations that took place, but on the organisational failures that prevented the creation of effective synergies between the two components. In any case, in his doctoral thesis, soon to be published as a book, Dayton McCarthy has done a brilliant job of charting the erosion of CMF influence and relevance over the 1950s and 1960s. His is a frustrating tale of missed opportunities, poorly thought-through reorganisations and an obdurate refusal by both citizen soldiers and regulars alike to recognise the limitations imposed by their particular form of service. He concludes that in the postwar period, governments have accepted the dilemmas of the 'two army' conundrum and have continued to inflict them on our defence structure.

On successive occasions reviews have been conducted and reorganisations entered into (or were at least contemplated) that might have made a difference. Nothing came of any of them. As the inquiry in 2000 into the Army by the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade concluded: 'Despite all these reviews and enquiries, fundamental and sustainable reform to produce a useful reserve has not eventuated'.[21] Leaving aside the unspoken assumption that this was a reserve issue and not a 'one army' issue, we need to ask ourselves: 'What has gone wrong?' A brief examination of some of the moments when a 'total force' seemed within our grasp provides some answers.

Compulsory Service in the Postwar Period

On two occasions, first between 1951 and 1959 and then from 1965 to 1972, the Army found itself making up its numbers with conscripted personnel. The two schemes were quite different in nature. The 1950s scheme applied to all eighteen-year-olds and imposed an active training obligation of 176 days on those who elected to complete their service in the Army. This service obligation was broken down into 98 days of full-time training and 78 days of CMF service. The justification for national service was that Australia's Army would not be large enough, or ready enough, for a major war without a guaranteed supply of trained men. The idea of national service was to provide a pool of ready, trained members of the CMF who could be deployed at short notice. In this first scheme, the national servicemen were members of the CMF—not short-service regulars.[22] As far as the Government was concerned the army that they would send to war was to be the nation in arms, not just a regular brigade-sized force. Prime Minister Menzies broadcast his 'Defence Call to the Nation' in clear and uncompromising terms. Given the fact that his comments represented a recognition that Australia's strategic circumstances had changed forever, and that this new environment required a whole new army, it is worth dwelling on his comments:

> In each of two World Wars months elapsed after the declaration of war before our own troops were substantially engaged. We therefore had time specially to enlist an AIF and train and equip it. Citizen Force units became disintegrated so that an entirely separate AIF could be created. If there is to be a third war, it is most unlikely that we shall have leisure to prepare for it. It will probably come without declaration and with the violence of a sudden storm. If this is so ... it would be suicidal to go through the old process of improvising an expeditionary force. We must either stand promptly beside our great allies and friends in the real place of contest, or let them, and ourselves down to disaster. Hence the CMF must be enlisted and trained as a force which, with the regular units fed into it, is itself an expeditionary force ...
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> ... It is hoped and believed that most of ... [the] ... National Service trainees will enter the CMF as trained recruits and so become part of a force, continuous in its character and enriched by honourable history, available for war. I have heard some people say

> that with National Service the volunteer Citizen Military Forces are not needed. This is completely wrong. If we are to have a real Army, the recruit trained under National Service must have a force and units into which to go. The system we are now introducing is parallel with that in Great Britain under the advice of Field Marshal Montgomery. There they have the Regular Army, the Territorials, and the National Service-men, making up one Army.[23]

Menzies' 'one army' was still designed to be employed as the First and Second AIF had been—as a keystone of British Commonwealth strategy in the Middle East, should global war break out again.[24] However, while national service might have provided some basis for expansion in times of mass mobilisation, it was not what was to be required for an army that was to spend two decades fighting in limited wars and counterinsurgencies. At the time, it was generally assumed that in a national emergency Parliament would pass legislation to make all members of the Army liable for overseas service. In fact as the scheme progressed, the CMF fell prey to a whole range of differing service obligations. National servicemen could not be called upon to serve overseas unless they first volunteered; from September 1950, however, all those who voluntarily enlisted in the CMF were liable for overseas service, but only when the CMF was called out by proclamation in the case of a major war. National Servicemen who were commissioned as officers had to volunteer for overseas service in times of war, but those who were promoted to noncommissioned rank did not. National servicemen who volunteered for further service in the CMF on the completion of their initial obligation had to re-volunteer for overseas service and could, in any case, apply at any time for transfer to the inactive list. Only regular soldiers remained liable for service anywhere, anytime. With such uncertainty as to who would be available for deployment, the CMF was not a credible basis for an expeditionary force.[25]

The outbreak of the Korean War demonstrated the hollowness of a one-army concept, which was based on such a truly bewildering and bizarre variety of service commitments. At a time when the Army was flooded with troops undergoing national service, the regular army faced a critical shortage of personnel for service in Korea. The shortfall was so great that the Army had to seek recruits from Britain.[26] It was impossible to characterise the Army as a unified force when only a small percentage were liable for combat service and the great majority had only achieved a basic level of training. The Korean War also led to an obvious schism in the Army's ranks: between those with combat experience and those who, despite their training, were unlikely to see action in circumstances short of global war. Although at the time the prospect of a third world war seemed quite likely, from a psychological perspective the existence of a class of soldiers with operational experience, first in Korea and then Malaya, drove a deep wedge through the Army.

The introduction of the second postwar experiment with conscription in 1965 further marginalised the CMF and exacerbated the rift within the Army. Unlike the earlier scheme, which provided for universal training, this second scheme was a selective service model with only a limited percentage of those liable being selected by ballot. Service was full time initially, for a period of two years, and servicemen were posted to regular units. On the conclusion of their obligation the national servicemen were required to render three years part-time service. What distinguished this scheme from any system of conscription that had preceded it was that, for the first time, draftees could be compelled to serve outside Australia in circumstances short of a major war posing an immediate threat to national security. On 6 May 1965, one week after the announcement of the commitment to Vietnam of an Australian battalion, the Government introduced amendments to the National Service Act to make conscripts liable for overseas service.[27] For all intents and purposes this made the conscripts short-service regular soldiers. There might have been nothing inherently wrong with this approach, but it did mark the final abandonment of the notion that its citizen army would fight Australia's wars.

The final indignity that was heaped on the CMF was the option that made it possible for those enlisting in the CMF to defer their national-service obligation. By opting for six years service in the CMF, potential draftees could 'dodge the draft'. At its worst this option meant that enlistment in the CMF could be used as a form of insurance policy. Until January 1971 men could join the CMF before they registered for national service and if their birth date was not

drawn in the ballot, they could then resign from the CMF and not be liable for further call-up.[28] Although the loophole was belatedly closed, the damage had been done. The CMF that had inherited so many of the proud traditions of the Second AIF as well as many of its former members was now firmly marked with the stigma of the 'chocolate soldiers'.

Dayton McCarthy sums up the postwar decline of the CMF with the pithy observation:

> In the period from 1947 to 1966, the CMF's role in the Army's plans had slipped from that of the 1st XI (but trained by the regulars) to a distant 3rd XI, with little chance of performing its nominal role of serving in a defence emergency.[29]

In less than twenty years the notion of what the Army was had been completely inverted and the 'one army' concept was abandoned with little consideration of the consequences.

The Pentropic Disaster

The most dramatic shift in force structure that occurred in that twenty-year period took place in the brief period between the two compulsory service schemes. The Pentropic experiment was intended to provide 'a lean, powerful, versatile organisation, readily adaptable to any type of operation in which it is likely to be involved in South-East Asia'.[30] Introduced in March 1960 the reorganisation was designed to be compatible with the 'Pentomic' organisation that had been adopted by the United States (US) Army in the late 1950s. The failure of this reorganisation has been adequately covered by a number of authors and there is little value in raking over that ground again.[31] Nonetheless, it is worthwhile to remark briefly on the impact that the process had on the concept of the one army.

Sold to the public as the 'new army', the Pentropic structure broke the numerical superiority of the CMF within the army. With the abolition of national service the size of the CMF fell from approximately 50,000 to 20,000. The axe fell most obviously on the CMF infantry battalions, which were reduced from thirty-one to seventeen and then again to eight, grouped into state regiments. In his work on the reorganisation John Blaxland has demonstrated how the CMF lost almost half of its senior command and staff appointments in the field force while at the same time the number of regular army appointments quadrupled.[32] Not surprisingly this reorganisation created great bitterness and charges from some quarters of a regular-army plot 'to reduce the capacity of the CMF to a nullity'.[33]

Clearly there was something in this charge. The Pentropic organisation was not well thought through, or even trialled prior to implementation. As the Australians were preparing to implement their structure, the US had made up its mind to abandon the Pentomic ideal. Although the Australian planners were not aware of this decision at the time, the fact remains that the Army's force structure was being predicated on the basis of a supposed compatibility with our number-one ally, although no-one was apparently consulting with that ally.[34]

At the command level the reorganisation confirmed the ascendancy of the regular officer corps. Blaxland has shown that the members of the Military Board were aware that the restructure could bring about the demise of the CMF and proceeded with it anyway. Although the trend to the professional dominance of the officer corps was well entrenched by the early sixties, the manner in which the scheme was implemented smacked of a purge. In a very short time the CMF lost much of its senior leadership, including large numbers of officers with wide experience in the AIF. While change to bring the structure of the Army into line with its actual functions was clearly overdue, little thought seems to have been given to the social and political fallout of that change. This insensitivity to the feelings of those who had invested a large part of their lives in the Army was the cause of much bitterness. Ultimately, the failure to develop consensus within the Army proved counter-productive since it confirmed many reservists in their hostility to change.

In November 1960 the editor of the *Australian Army Journal*, Colonel E.G. Keogh, published an impassioned defence of the need for an integrated army. His words ring true today, though it is clear that the Pentropic structure was not the way to achieve his objective:

> All elements of the Army, and all the training problems peculiar to them, are complementary. We cannot separate them, think about them, in watertight compartments without damaging the structure as a whole. If that basic concept is kept steadily in mind, discussion can proceed with profit to the army and the nation. If we fail to keep it in mind, not only in debate but in everything we do or say, much harm will inevitably result.[35]

Instead, from the perspective of the one army, perhaps the most damning judgment on the advocates of the Pentropic idea was that it was implemented in a clumsy and destructive way. Major General Paul Cullen, CMF Member of the Military Board from 1964 to 1966 and a noted partisan of the citizen-soldier cause ever since, has since commented that:

> integration ... was clumsily done, and was an additional factor causing disillusion, discontent, disruptions and resignations. The effect of integration on the Regular component was also adverse ... [This] in turn had the effect of further disturbing the Reservists ... In some instances in technical units, [Postmaster General] technicians in the signals unit were so superior to the Regular technicians, that it generated friction and jealousy. In . . . other units, the superiority of the Regulars had a similar effect. There were all types of psychological superiority-inferiority side effects.[36]

Again, those psychological factors remain as big an issue in reserve-regular relations today as they always have. A clear lesson that should have been learnt from this experience, but one that remains an issue, is that the two components of the army need to be complementary if they are to succeed. Reservists are not part-time regulars, they bring different skills, experiences and domestic circumstances to the Army. The trick is how to make those factors an asset, rather than a liability.

The Millar Report

Discussing this issue with a student at Staff College recently, who was charged with writing an essay on the future employment of the Reserves, I was disturbed to find that he had never heard of the Millar Report—it had not even surfaced in his research. This is a matter for concern, as the *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Citizen Military Forces* is perhaps the most cogent analysis of the functions of the Australian Army ever undertaken.[37] The Report was tabled in Parliament in April 1974, and Dr T.B. Millar of the Australian National University chaired the committee that wrote it. In some ways this report exceeded its principal terms of reference, which were:

> a. To report on the role of Citizen Military Forces as part of the Australian Army in the strategic circumstances of the 1970s and 1980s.
>
> b. To report on the military capabilities and specialist support which could be efficiently and economically provided to the Australian Regular Army by Citizen Military Forces as at present constituted.[38]

In fact the report concluded that it was not possible to consider the two components of the Army in isolation, and its findings went beyond just the CMF to reflect on what sort of organisation the 'total force' should be. The committee found that:

> There is only one Australian Army. There are obvious advantages in forging the two components into a common team, and bringing them into close contact and association, for they are substantially interdependent and will become more so in the future. But there are limits beyond which it would not be wise to go, because there is no escaping the fundamental differences of service on a part-time and full-time basis. We believe a better term than 'one army' is 'total force', whereby the assets of the Army Reserve and the Regular Army are welded into a single total effort.[39]

Coming up with the phrase 'total force' was more than an exercise in semantics. The idea of the 'one army' and the buzz phrase the 'new army' had fallen into such disrepute that the idea needed to be redefined if it was to have any meaning. Accordingly, and controversially, the CMF was renamed the Army Reserve—a change that more accurately reflected the fact that the citizen forces no longer constituted the primary deployable force, but were the enabling force that allowed the Army both to sustain operations and to call on a varied skill base. Of the many reorganisations attempted before it and the multitude of reports conducted since, the Millar Report came closest to showing how in the strategic circumstances of the foreseeable future the Army's personnel assets would be best employed. With some adjustments for the changed strategic circumstances of today and taking changes in the nature of employment into account, the principles identified by the committee still apply today.
The three key findings of the committee were that:

> a. a Reserve of partly trained army units and personnel is an essential component of the defence of Australia;
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> b. such a Reserve is only possible and effectual if the Government of the day, the community, the Regular Army and the Reserve believe it has a role that gives it present significance, which provides for effective action in the future, and which it is known the Government will implement if necessary; and
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> c. any Reserve component must be prepared for total integration with the rest of the Army in the event of call-up for full-time duty, and that in peace both Regular and Reserve components should be treated and act as part of a single force.

Three verities emerged from these findings and have been long understood within the Army, though the ability to translate the philosophy into reality has so far evaded us. These facts are that the Army requires an expansion base in times of defence emergency; that these Reserves require a role that is 'relevant, achievable and credible'; and that on mobilisation there could be no distinction between soldiers as to where or how they could be employed.[40]
Unfortunately, the Committee's recommendations were only partly implemented, with the consequence that the Reserve once again lost units and personnel, but did not receive the legislative protection on call-out that was necessary to provide some degree of security for their families. Most critically, the distinction in the Defence Act between the regulars and reserves in terms of their differing liability for call-up in circumstances short of war remained.
Millar was disappointed with the patchy implementation of what was a carefully considered and coherent force review. His comments were not just sour grapes, but accurately described the problems faced then, as now, by those who try to bring about meaningful change. Today's force planners would do well to heed Millar's comments:

> The processes of change in an institution as large, bureaucratic and conservative as the Army will always be slow and cumbersome. I confess I did not appreciate ... how much resistance or apathy the recommendations would encounter, in both the Regular Army, the CMF and the Defence Department. Parliament has shown almost no interest. Financial restraints aimed at short-term savings will have inestimable long-term costs ... [I]f—as is presently the case—the recommendations are implemented in dribs and drabs with modest momentum and little enthusiasm at the top, then despite the devoted labours of many Regulars and Reservists we are in fact frittering away a great human and national asset.[41]

The Millar Report, founded as it was on an appreciation of the Army's history and a critical appreciation of its needs, should remain essential reading for all of those involved in force development and capability planning. It is notable that it has taken over twenty five years for many of the same proposals to re-emerge as undertakings in the Government's recent White Paper. This paper announced that the Reserves would be made available for a wide range of operations in peace as well as in war; different categories of reserve service appropriate to reservists' circumstances would be introduced; and legislation would finally be introduced to protect the jobs of reservists and support their families and employers.[42]

That legislation was finally passed in the Senate on 7 March 2001. On commencement it will enable the Governor-General to call out the Reserves for continuous full-time service for a range of operational deployments—not just in the case of war or defence emergency. The circumstances in which reservists may now be called out include peace operations, civil aid, humanitarian assistance, civil emergency or disaster relief, and support to community activities of national or international significance.[43] Other changes involve protecting reservists' capacity to deploy by providing financial incentives as well as protection against discrimination in employment and education arising from reservists' obligation to serve.[44] Protection against financial loss is covered by compensation to employers and self-employed reservists for losses incurred while members are absent on full-time service. In finally receiving legislative support for the total-force concept the Army has taken a big step towards accomplishing the Millar Committee's vision. However, even now the achievement of this ideal depends on bringing about the cultural changes that will produce a 'seamless' force. This cultural evolution will only be attained by finally killing off the three fallacies that have so bedevilled the Army in the past.

The Fallacy of the 'Skeleton Force'

The recent parliamentary inquiry into the Army concluded that, as a consequence of its historical development, the Army had developed an 'unsuitable personnel model' and that:

> For legislative and cultural reasons Dr Millar's concept of a total force has not been realised. The failure to realise this concept practically has been costly. It has directly resulted in the need to increase the Army's trained manpower by 3,000 as a result of East Timor. This is despite a theoretically available total force of nine brigades. The personnel structures are clearly not suitable to the tasks repeatedly demanded of the Army.[45]

In large part this failure is due to the historically based assumption that the reserve component represented a skeleton force on which a mass mobilisation would be based. Not only is the prospect of Australia having to mobilise the bulk of its available manpower for war highly unlikely, but such an approach would not deliver Australia the combat edge that it would require in a major conflict.

It is necessary to be blunt about the justification for the continued existence of Reserve forces in a work force increasingly defined by a trend to specialisation. Francis Fukuyama has demonstrated that the world:

> of abundant low-skill, blue-collar work disappeared during the 1970s and 1980s. As a result of international competition, deregulation, and (most important) technological change, many new high-skill jobs were created and many low-skill jobs began to disappear . . . put in its starkest form, an information age economy substitutes mental for physical labor ... [46]

The nature of work has changed, and with it the comfortable assumption that workers will enjoy conditions of security and guaranteed long-term employment. This radical change in career profiles has drastic implications for the Army, which now has to plan for a more mobile and highly skilled work force with substantially higher expectations than those of earlier generations. As defence commentator Malcolm McGregor has pointed out: 'there is no strict correlation between numbers and capability ... [t]he age of the mass mobilisation is over'.[47] With it has gone the idea that the Reserves form the base for the mass mobilisation of Australian society. There are virtually no conceivable circumstances in which Australia will need a mass army of hurriedly trained citizen soldiers. In his recent history of the Army, Jeffrey Grey concluded that:

> Too often, schemes to boost the Reserve have concentrated on numbers or retention, not on capability. The army must find ways to attract and retain people with the skill and educational levels needed, in a globalising economy where such people are widely sought. Traditional notions of a service career and the military vocation do not sit easily with currently fashionable ideas about a multiple-career working life. If the emphasis is to be on quality not quantity, the rewards must match those offered elsewhere or ... people will not join.[48]

On the face of it, traditional Reserve forces, which by their very nature do not achieve high levels of efficiency in peacetime, do not appear to fit the new paradigm in the nature of work. The question that has dominated the one-army debate with increasing urgency since 1948 is whether there is still place for citizen-soldiers alongside their more highly trained, generally fitter and more easily deployed Regular counterparts. As the Millar report pointed out:

> The regular officer or soldier has to be brought repeatedly to his peak of training. The reservist usually never reaches it, or reaches it only once. The training of a reservist is far less continuous than that of a regular. On the other hand, some reservists bring to the Army special skills the Army has not paid for. Also, the voluntary 'amateur' enthusiast will sometimes achieve remarkable levels of professionalism, perhaps higher than are achieved by some people occupationally engaged in the same pursuit.[49]

From an organisational perspective, if the Army is to be able to access reservists' potential easily and efficiently, then reservists need to be employed in such a way that, when the call to serve comes, they are individually and collectively ready to go. The best way to achieve rapid deployment is not to pretend that reserve formations should mobilise and deploy under reserve command. Given the short periods of notice that characterise modern conflict, the model of deploying the 'nation in arms'-style expeditionary force is too slow and inefficient. Australia also risks repeating the errors of 1942 when under-trained, under-equipped and unready AIF and militia soldiers were deployed to Malaya, New Guinea and the northern archipelago.

Instead, the Army needs to be able to access trained teams—units and sub-units that can easily integrate into deployable forces at short notice. Membership of these units needs to be defined by current levels of capability, not potential capability. A combat unit, for instance, cannot wait to deploy because some of its members need to be brought up to an acceptable level of readiness or because it does not have sufficient equipment. At the point when they are required, reservists need to be ready to go.

The imperative that reservists be easily and rapidly deployable requires us to rethink our image of the employment of the reservist and to make distinctions between the high-readiness combat forces we require and the range of other functions that reservists can perform. Combat soldiers are young people, and it is really only the young—school leavers and university students—that have the available time to devote to the level of training required to make them rapidly deployable. Once reservists reach their thirties, it is likely that family responsibilities and the demands of their civilian career are going to interfere with their ability to find time to stay ready to deploy at short notice. Accordingly, it makes sense that our reserve combat component be largely drawn from younger people who do not belong to a skeleton force, but constitute a part of the force in being.

The best way to achieve this objective is to tailor-make units that will facilitate access to young peoples' time, without damage to their civil prospects and in away that will enhance the contribution that they can make. The experience of reserve forces overseas provides a number of useful precedents. We might emulate the United States Marine Corps and institute a system of high-readiness, short-service soldiering with an ongoing part-time commitment. Alternatively, we might accept that tertiary education is now the norm rather than the exception and do away with the idea that students should automatically train to be officers. University regiments might return to their dual role of providing military training to undergraduates and officer training to selected members. A number of countries have

recognised the value of institutionally based infantry units that tailor their training to the academic year and provide military training at a range of levels. Opening up the university regiments to general enlistments would enhance the Army's access to a pool of labour that is available for training, capable of learning and will represent the surge combat capability that the ADF so sorely needs.[50]

The Army does not consist solely of high-readiness combat troops. Any modern army requires a wider range of capabilities than can be provided by its 'warriors'. Reservists who do not fit into the 'ready to deploy' category fill the need for skill sets that a peacetime regular army cannot maintain. While there is no justification for retaining personnel who do not contribute to the defence force, what of those reservists who, having completed the high-readiness phase of their military careers, wish to continue serving, but with a reduced commitment? Again these personnel represent an asset in terms of their time and expertise, but they can rapidly become a liability if their service degenerates into a job-creation scheme for members who do not deliver easily realised capability. Posting members to units where they actually derogate from the team's readiness is foolish. The Army needs to cast off its traditional ad hoc and lazy approach to reserve personnel management and start to employ its resources more professionally. This change means abandoning the industrial-age model of bloc unit formation and adopting more flexible, information-age employment practices. A register of reservist civil qualifications would enable the Army to access skills hitherto untapped. The terms of reservists' military employment must reflect their degree of readiness. The Army must adopt a tiered structure of reserve units and job opportunities that accurately reflects members' competencies and availability to serve. Reservists and regulars who expect to continue serving must accept that, as in every other occupation, their employer is more interested in the capability they deliver than their sentimental attachment to their job.

In an article in the *Australian Defence Force Journal* published in 1997, Lieutenant Colonel Gary Tamsitt demonstrated that much of the Reserve's time was wasted on internal administration and in training its own members.[51] While this self-sufficient approach makes sense if the Reserve is to be the basis for a national mass mobilisation, it makes no sense in the context of the one army. Standards of readiness will only improve if the Army emulates the model of the British Territorial Army and the US Marine Corps Reserve and outsources these functions to the full-time component or civilian staff.[52] In a one-army concept, what matters is not providing the individual with a rounded career experience, but ensuring that the most is made of the resources available.

The skeleton force model does not provide the sort of capability that our current strategic circumstances demand. Our history demonstrates that the decision not to deploy the militia in either world war failed to maximise its potential. The marginalisation of the citizen-soldier in the postwar period similarly failed to utilise the potential of a major national resource. Organisational change is required to enable individuals and teams to move as rapidly as possible to their peak of training. Accordingly the employment of reservists in peacetime must be as close as possible to their wartime roles.

The Fallacy of a Sustainable 'All-Professional' Deployable Force

In many ways it would be 'neater' to dispense with the messy problem of a mixed force of full-time and part-time soldiers, by getting rid of reservists altogether. It is a solution often bandied about by regular officers who see resources being wasted on reserve units that currently return very little in the way of capability. However, as the problem of sustaining even a small force in East Timor demonstrated, Australia simply cannot afford a standing army large enough to sustain protracted operations of any size. While INTERFET largely consisted of regular troops with only about 100 specialist reservists participating in the operation, the follow-on forces that made up the Australian contribution to the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) were heavily reliant on reservists. In the 6th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment (6RAR) alone, 186 members were general reservists on full-time service and fifty-five of them subsequently transferred to the regular army.

Oddly, no figures have been collated for the overall contribution of Reservists— specialist or otherwise—to this operation. As they were serving on full-time duty they were counted as regulars for all administrative purposes. While this is a heartening recognition of the principle of the total force, it does make it difficult to quantify the contribution that the Reserves are capable of making to operational deployments. Not only was the reserve contribution important in terms of 'boots-on-the-ground' in East Timor, but reservists were integral in force administration in Australia. One prominent example was the Deployed Forces Support Unit—Darwin, which was responsible for managing the training, preparation and deployment of contingents departing for East Timor. Commanded and largely staffed by reservists, the unit was integral to the success of the operation, but its contribution has largely gone unnoticed.[53] That omission reflects the '2nd XI' attitude to reserve employment and is not in keeping with the needs of a modern, professional force. Now that reserves are available for call-up for a range of operations, it will become important to identify and recognise the extent to which current and future deployments depend on supplementary forces.

In the area of specialist skills at least, the Army has long recognised that it cannot afford to pay 'market rates' for the many specialist skill-sets that a force conducting operations requires. These skill sets include those of medical specialists, lawyers, linguists, civil affairs officers and information technology experts and logisticians. The ADF's reservist medical specialists, in particular, are in danger of experiencing deployment 'fatigue' as many of them have been repeatedly utilised on operations ranging from Somalia and Rwanda to disaster relief in Papua New Guinea and more recently in East Timor. On peace operations in particular, civilian skill-sets that the Army does not usually emphasise in its primary warfighting role are in great demand. The INTERFET deployment demonstrated that the focus on maintaining 'sharp-end' capabilities in the ADF had resulted in the loss of a broad range of capabilities that are required to sustain offshore operations.[54] If the ADF is to carry out many more deployments, particularly those humanitarian-style operations that require the military to replicate or support the civil infrastructure, it will need to identify those civil specialists that it wants in uniform. Accordingly, not only are Reserves still required, but they need to be more closely integrated into the total force and included as one of the key elements in contingency planning.

The Fallacy of the Noncombatant Reservist

Those who argue that Reservists cannot achieve adequate standards of physical fitness or professional competence to carry out combat duties often invoke Professor Samuel Huntingdon's famous assertion that:

> Before the management of violence became the extremely complex task that it is in modern civilization, it was possible for someone without specialized training to exercise officership. Now, however, only the person who completely devotes his working hours to this task can hope to develop a reasonable level of professional competence.[55]

Putting aside, for a moment, the distinction between officers and enlisted personnel, we need to examine the blanket assertion that individuals need to be fully engaged in military service to be capable of performing well in combat.

To open this analysis I will break my own rule and make one anecdotal point drawn from experience. Over a decade ago, somewhere in northern Germany at the end of a battalion assault one early dawn, a bright twenty-year-old (regular) lieutenant acting as an umpire for the exercise turned to a twenty-five-year-old (reservist) lieutenant and smugly observed: 'You're getting a bit old for this, aren't you'?' That lieutenant was taken aback—and I might possibly have been even more mortified if I had known that I would be a lieutenant for nine years in total, specialising in the command of rifle platoons. In fact I—like most of my colleagues—gained very little wider military experience outside the battalions of which I was a member and was quite content not to receive the more rounded staff qualifications that my regular contemporaries gained.

The point is simple: reservists, be they officers or enlisted personnel, do not expect to have the same balanced military career structures that their regular counterparts have. There is little incentive to 'punch their tickets', and indeed most reservists prefer to concentrate on their one speciality—be that as a rifleman, a small-unit commander or some form of combat technician. Realistically, no reservist imagines that their training will equip them for the command of armies in war. In any case, it appears improbable that the type of general war that requires mass mobilisation will ever occur again. In the current strategic environment, people serving in the military need to be competent, and professional competence—contrary to Huntingdon's assertion—is not a function of a lifetime dedication to a chosen profession; it is judged by whether the individual can do the job on the day.

While the Army is unlikely to have to expand in the same way as the First and Second AIF had to in the two World Wars, the primary function of peacetime military establishments remains largely unchanged. Perhaps the best formulation of that role was set down by the Cardwell Committee, which accomplished wide-ranging reforms in the British Army of the 1870s. That task was:

> 1. to place in the field immediately on the outbreak of war, in the highest state of efficiency, as large a force as is compatible with the peace-time military expenditure; and
>
> 2. to maintain that force in the field throughout the continuance of hostilities undiminished in numbers and efficiency.[56]

Making allowances for the fact that the modern army will need to deploy forces for more contingencies than interstate war, the Australian Army must still be capable of providing an immediate response, an acceptable range of military response options to government and the ability to sustain a force in the field for the duration of the operation. It cannot rely on a slow mobilisation and in any case would be hard-pressed to manage a general mobilisation. If a war requiring a national call-up were to break out an army of 26,000 regulars and 21,000 reservists would be quite inadequate to train and lead the nation-in-arms.

The need to provide forces at short notice and to continue to sustain them means that a significant proportion of the Army's combat forces must inevitably be in the Reserves to enable the Army to relieve and rotate forces as well as replace the casualties that inevitably occur. In their *Review of the Ready Reserve Scheme* published in 1995, Lieutenant-General John Coates and Dr Hugh Smith argued that the Reserves could provide the infantry, in particular, with a 'surge' capability that regular forces simply could not maintain in peacetime.[57] Employment as infantry is probably the best use of 'non-specialist' reservists. Although the skills of the infantryman require rigorous training and a high level of physical fitness, it is possible to produce competent, collectively trained infantry in a reasonably short time—certainly faster than it takes to produce an armoured vehicle crewman or combat engineer.[58] This observation represents no reflection on infantry, whose multi-skilled professionalism is essential to almost any conceivable land operation. In fact the potential shortfall in the 'infantry labour pool' represents perhaps the greatest threat to the sustainability of land operations in the future.

Experience has demonstrated that the standard of young Australian reservists is high and that, given adequate training, they can match their regular counterparts.[59] If they are to be deployed on combat operations, they need to achieve the standard described in the recent Officer Professional Effectiveness Review for the Army (Project OPERA) as 'fit for purpose'. There is no room for any 'fat' in a combat unit: individually and collectively soldiers and officers need to be 'physically vigorous and have the stamina to endure the rigours of combat and military support operations'.[60] Inevitably this requirement means that our combatant reservists will be almost exclusively young.

Most soldiers do not spend their lifetimes performing the same tasks as the trained rifleman; however, this is a role that young people (traditionally men) are relatively easily trained for, and can remain effective in—generally only for a limited number of years. Skill levels and

standards of physical fitness fade over time, as inevitably does the level of commitment that the individual possesses. Accordingly, it makes sense to fit the available labour to the most suitable employment category. If the Army wishes to maximise the enthusiasm, ability to serve and physical fitness of the young people who represent its primary reserve force demographic, it must organise itself to utilise them.

Conclusion

An understanding of the history of the 'One Army' or 'Total Force' concept in Australia is essential if we are to understand how Reserve issues have been an ongoing impediment to force structure development. However, such an account would be a specious exercise if the purpose of dredging up the past was only to refight old battles and re-raise past antipathies. In fact the social conditions that gave rise to most of the staff-corps/ militia, Citizen Military Forces/Regular disputes have changed irrevocably, though something of the antipathy that these conflicts caused lingers on. Consequently, there is little value in ascribing blame, given that the Army we have inherited exists in circumstances very different from those that gave rise to the earlier conflicts. What is needed is not more consideration of the future of the Reserve, but the implementation of holistic planning processes that do not make a 'special case' of the Reserve in army planning. This was recognised twenty years ago when the Chief of the General Staff's Advisory Committee submitted that:

> Proposals and plans cannot be considered and implemented in isolation without assessing their total and future effect. There is an interrelationship between force structure, equipment, manpower, facilities and level of activity; one factor cannot be altered without effect on the others. In addition, Army development proposals have to be considered in relation to their impact upon the other Services, the Department of Defence and other Federal and State instrumentalities.[61]

Instead of this approach, it has to be admitted that within the Department of Defence reviews of the Reserve have attained the status of a cottage industry. At any stage there are several taking place. This tendency to duplicate the staff processes of the past is not due to any fault of those tasked with investigating the Reserve, but is due to the lack of an institutional memory. In fact, most of what we need to know about the employment of Reservists within a 'total force' is to be found in the pages of the Millar Report. Developing a greater appreciation of where we have already been would obviate the need for each generation to reinvent the wheel.

In addition, not only do we need to improve our historical awareness of the manner in which the contemporary army has developed, but we need to understand something of the changing relationship between the Army and the society it serves. This is not simply a matter of understanding how the Army stands in public estimation. Force planning also needs to consider the relative demographic composition of the civil and military communities; the impact of changing patterns of work in the post-industrial era and the changing expectations of the domestic responsibilities of members of the work force. With the record of past failed attempts to forge a single army before us, any more attempts will simply take us back to our future. Having made so many errors in the past, we have no excuse for not being aware of the pitfalls now.

It makes no sense to talk of the Army Reserves purely as a mobilisation base, or as a separate force optimised for vital asset protection, or as units providing niche capabilities only. These, and the many other proposals that regularly float around the defence organisation, smack of a job creation scheme and reflect a grudging acceptance of the (quite incorrect) proposition that the main justification for the existence of the Reserve is that it is politically impossible not to have one. As the Millar Report pointed out '[T]here is only one Australian Army'. Put simply, that Army exists to meet the operational demands imposed on it by the Government. The Australian Army is, and always has been, too small to afford to devote over half its available combat power to second-tier or 'boutique' tasking. To prescribe that large sections of the force-in-being will not be available for short-term deployment is to fall into the same trap that saw two completely new expeditionary forces raised for overseas

service in the two world wars, while the pre-existing forces were kept idle at home. In the conditions of global conflict during the industrial age, Australia could (only just) afford a relatively slow mobilisation—in the conditions of modern conflict it is always 'come as you are'. If the 'Total Force' is not part of a continuum of readiness, capable of deploying, sustaining, relieving and replacing troops from day one of an operation, then the Australian Army has no business hanging out its shingle at all.

Forty years ago, in a novel reflecting on the divisions within France's Army during the Algerian War of Independence, Jean Larteguy identified the tensions that exist between the conservative and progressive vision of the army. He wrote:

> I'd like France to have two armies; one for display, with lovely guns, tanks, little soldiers, fanfares, staffs, distinguished and doddering generals, and dear little regimental officers who would be deeply concerned over their general's bowel movements or their colonel's piles; an army that would be shown for a modest fee on every fairground in the country.
>
> The other would be the real one, composed entirely of young enthusiasts in camouflage battledress, who would not be put on display but from whom all sorts of impossible efforts would be demanded and to whom all sorts of tricks would be taught. That's the army in which I should like to fight.[62]

We too need to question continually the cost of maintaining two armies. Historically, laziness, ambition and indifference have combined to prevent the realisation of the one army ideal. The legislative changes to enable the utilisation of reserves on operations represent a significant opportunity for the Army. However, to translate that initiative into the reality of one army requires the Australian Army to overhaul its internal culture radically. Whether we are capable of building the Army in which we would like to fight depends on whether we have the will to overcome the institutional truths and inertia of our past.

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